Annotated Bibliographies Study Sheet

Goals of this Study Sheet

The purpose of this study sheet is to cover the ins and outs of an annotated bibliography. Here we will go over what an annotated bibliography is, why it is important, what comprises it, and how to create one step-by-step.

What is an Annotated Bibliography and Why it is Important?

An annotated bibliography is a list of citations of books, articles, and documents that are related to your topic. Each citation should be followed by a brief descriptive paragraph around 150 words. This paragraph is referred to as the annotation. Its purpose is to inform the reader on the quality, relevance, and accuracy of the sources cited. This kind of assignment is to show a critical evaluation of your sources. This means you should describe the author’s point view, their authority on the subject, and the clarity and appropriateness of expression.

What Comprises an Annotated Bibliography?

An annotated bibliography often consists of several entries. Each entry will have a citation followed by annotation. The citation should follow whatever format and style your professor assigns.

How to Create an Annotated Bibliography Entry Step-by-Step

1. The first step in creating an annotated bibliography is to locate sources whether they are books or articles that contain useful information and ideas on your topic. It is important in this step to choose works that provide a variety of perspectives.
2. The second step is to cite the works you collected using the appropriate format like MLA or APA. If you are unsure which format your citations should be in, check with your instructor for which one they would prefer you to use. This citation is the same for any bibliography or work cited page you would include in a paper.

3. The next step is to write an annotation under your citation. Here you will write a short descriptive paragraph that is roughly 5-7 sentences or 150 words in length. As stated previously, an annotation is a critical analysis of the source. You should not summarizes the source, but explain how this work illuminates or adds to the discussion of your topic. Your annotation should include:
   a. Information to explain the authority and/or the qualifications of the author
   b. The point of view of the author
   c. The scope and main purpose of the work
   d. Explain how it is useful to your topic
   e. Any biases you detect
   f. Who the intended audience is
   g. The relationship, if any, to other works in the area of study

Example of an Entry in MLA Formatting


The alphabetically arranged entries include one page each for the artist biography and black-and-white reprinted art. The subjective choices for inclusion reflect a pronounced American corporate bias. This slant and the blurry comic-book reproductions render the title a cut below Goulart's usual high standards.