Annotated Bibliographies Activity Sheet

Getting Started

The most difficult part in creating an entry of an annotated bibliography is writing the annotation. Some students might find that writing a brief yet critical descriptive paragraph hard to start. The B.E.A.M. method is a good place to start in this process. B.E.A.M. stands for the Background, Exhibit, Argument, and Method, and it is a way of writing a critical analysis of a source. Using this method to approach an annotation in your assignment will help you get your thoughts about your source down in a constructive way.

The B.E.A.M. Method

The B.E.A.M. method is a simple and easy to use device in critically analyzing a source. In practice, you will take the meaning behind each letter and write one or two sentences on how that relates to your source. Once you have finished each letter of this method, you will bring your work together. With a bit of editing for flow and clarity, you will have a complete annotation.

Background: here you should write about the author’s authority on the subject and their credentials in doing so. Try to compile information from your source to build a foundation for the rest of your annotation.

Exhibit: for this section, you should write one or two sentences on how this source is being used as evidence or as an example to analyze your topic. Try to answer how this source is significant to your topic or explain how this source is necessary to your topic.

Argument: here you want to explain what the argument the author is trying to make. Make sure you address whether the argument is strong or valid. As well as, whether it is supporting your topic or in opposition to it.

From the Writing Center
at the Academic Resource Center

John Tyler Community College
Method: the last step in this device is to explain the method the author used in this source. Try to answer whether it was research oriented, an opinion driven article, or whatever category this source might fall under. Then, explain how that may affect their argument. Keep in mind that an argument that is supported by research will be stronger than one that is not.

Try it on Your Own

Now that you know how to use the B.E.A.M. method, try using it on your own. Find a source for a paper you are writing, and create the entry below. Or, if you aren’t working on a paper with sources, use this article from the National Geographic on George Washington’s spy network during the American Revolution: https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2017/07/george-washington-spy-letter/.

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Source Referenced