



Creating an Annotated Bibliography

Note: The format and structure of an annotated bibliography can vary; therefore, it is important that you ask your instructor for specific guidelines.

A Bibliography vs. An Annotated Bibliography

- A **bibliography** is a list of sources used to research a topic. A bibliography may include books, journals, periodicals, websites, and other forms of media. A typical entry includes information such as author, title, and publication details.
- An **annotated bibliography** is a list of sources in which each entry offers bibliographic information as well as an account of the source's content, quality, and/or relevance to a particular paper or project.

Format

- Annotations should be written in complete sentences.
- Annotations should start on line below the full citation for the source.
- Annotations and citations should be double spaced.
- Your citations should be formatted with a hanging indent. This means the first line of the citation should be flush with the left margin and all subsequent lines should be indented half an inch.
- Annotations should be indented half an inch from the left margin all the way down. Do not use an extra indent for the first line.
- Entries may be organized alphabetically or grouped by content.

General Tips

- Be concise.
- Write in the present tense.
- Use your own words. Do not plagiarize.

Types of Annotations

- There are two main types of annotations: **descriptive** and **evaluative**.
- Be sure to ask your professor which type of annotations they are looking for.



Descriptive Annotations

- Focus on summarizing the source.
- Convey the major points addressed by the source.
- Include the author's argument or purpose.

Sample Descriptive Annotated Bibliography Entry (MLA)

Busfield, Joan. "The Female Malady? Men, Women and Madness in Nineteenth Century Britain." *Sociology*, vol. 28, no. 1, 1994, pp. 259-277. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/42855327. Accessed 6 Oct. 2020.

Busfield's purpose in this article is to refute Elaine Showalter's claims in *The Female Malady* that, in the Victorian Era, madness emerged as a primarily female concern. She challenges the validity of the data Showalter cites regarding the asylum residency rates and questions Showalter's claim that the cultural representation of madness at the time became overtly feminized. To support this, Busfield uses three examples of explicitly male categorizations of insanity: the mad genius, the criminal lunatic, and the masturbatory lunatic. She asserts that while conceptions of madness in Victorian society were distinctly gendered, they were not explicitly feminized, and that Showalter's idea of madness as a female malady is fundamentally flawed.

Speaking and Writing Center [1]: Here, the annotation establishes the purpose and primary argument of the source.

Speaking and Writing Center [2]: Here, the annotation describes the main points the source makes and the primary lines of reasoning the source uses to support its argument. It does not go into great detail or explain every single point the author makes. The summary should be kept relatively brief.

Speaking and Writing Center [3]: Here, the annotation reiterates the primary argument of the source.



Evaluative Annotations

- Include a brief summary of the author's main points and argument/purpose.
- Focus on evaluating the content of the source.
- Questions to consider:
 - Are you convinced by the author's argument?
 - Is the work reliable and up to date?
 - Is the piece organized effectively to convey the author's point?
 - What additional information or perspective did this source offer that was not found in other sources?
 - Was the source useful to you? Why or why not?

Sample Evaluative Annotated Bibliography Entry (MLA)

Barton, Lucy. "Why Not Costume Shakespeare According to Shakespeare?" *Educational Theatre Journal*, vol. 19, no. 3, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967, pp. 349–55, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3205244>.

In this article, Barton argues about the style of costuming for a production of a Shakespeare play, recommending analysis of the text itself to find resources for design. She mentions how it can be appropriate to utilize modern dress, as the costuming of Shakespeare's time would have been such, but there are instances where modern dress goes against the plot as style becomes more androgynous in current times. This source has become slightly dated, calling into question the relevancy of some of Barton's claims about "modern" dress. However, This source is a good reference for examples of how to analyze the text of Shakespeare as a guide for costuming, which will be useful in my proposal of costumes in my production.

Speaking and Writing Center [4]: Evaluative annotations should still begin with brief summarizations of the source and its primary argument(s).

Speaking and Writing Center [5]: Here, the annotation moves from summary of the article into evaluation. Evaluation can vary based on the context of the assignment. Many times, annotated bibliographies are written as preliminary steps for a research proposal or larger paper, and so the evaluation should address how the source would be applicable to that process. Other annotated bibliographies may not be tied to specific later assignments, so the evaluation may simply address the overall credibility and convincingness of the source. Note that it is often appropriate to use the first person when evaluating a source.