

Annotated Bibliographies

Handout courtesy of Dr. Brian Nudelman

An annotated working bibliography is an organized list of potential research sources for a research project. The sources that you choose to annotate should be relevant to the issues that you will be addressing in your assignment. There are three sections to each annotated source:

1. An MLA-formatted citation
2. A *summary* paragraph of 4-5 sentences
3. An *evaluation* of 3-4 sentences.

Summary

- Begin your summary paragraph with one sentence that captures the central claim of the source.
- Then, aim for the complete gist of the source. Delete extraneous details or examples.
- Assume you're writing for an audience unfamiliar with the source; you need to explain to them the key issues and perspectives addressed in the source.
- Paraphrase. Uses quotes only when absolutely necessary, and document any direct quote with page number.
- Offer transitions between major thoughts and paragraphs. The summary should be coherent and should "flow."
- Sentence combining will help you tighten your prose and offer your reader more information in less space.

Evaluation

The Evaluation paragraph should assess the source's strengths and weaknesses. That is, you get to say why the source is interesting or helpful to you, or why it is not. In doing this, you should think ahead to the writing of your assignment, and evaluate the source's potential usefulness for your work/thesis.

Sample Annotated Citation

London, Herbert. "Five Myths of the Television Age." *Television Quarterly* 10 (1) Spring 1982: 81-89.

Herbert London, the Dean of Journalism at New York University and author of several books and articles, explains how television contradicts five commonly believed ideas. He uses specific examples of events seen on television, such as the assassination of John Kennedy, to illustrate his points. His examples have been selected to contradict such truisms as: "seeing is believing"; "a picture is worth a thousand words"; and "satisfaction is its own reward." London uses logical arguments to support his ideas which are his personal opinion. He doesn't refer to any previous works on the topic. London's style and vocabulary would make the article of interest to any reader.

I think that London's ideas can best be used early in my paper. He raises some interesting points about the subtle power of television, points that I should be able to help build the case I am making about the dangers of television. Ultimately I think that this essay can help me really argue my thesis, and use London's expertise as a method to help strengthen my own authority on the subject.