

LUC WRITING CENTER – “HOW TO MAKE AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY”

What is an Annotated Bibliography?

An annotated bibliography is a list of sources that includes a summary of the source and can include an evaluation of the source and how it will be used in your research.

What types of Annotated Bibliographies are there?

There are two types of annotated bibliographies: **Descriptive/Informative** and **Analytical/Critical**.

1. **Descriptive/Informative:** This type of annotated bibliography provides a summary of the source, a summary of the author’s methodology, and how it will be useful for your project *without* giving an evaluation of the source’s argument.
2. **Analytical/Critical:** This type of annotated bibliography provides a summary of the source and its methodology and how it will be useful for your project. However, it *also* provides an evaluation of the source’s argument and whether or not the argument is helpful.

However, many times you will end up using a combination of these types in your annotations!

How is an Annotated Bibliography different from an Abstract?

Both an annotated bibliography and an abstract provide information about the source. However, the annotated bibliography is more specific because it describes *how* you plan to use the source and *why* the source will be helpful. An annotated bibliography also typically contains a number of sources while an abstract is generally about only one source and may not be related to a specific project.

When are Annotated Bibliographies used?

Annotated bibliographies are used to show that you have thought about your project and have started to do research. Annotated bibliographies not only help you to understand the source (because you have to summarize and evaluate it) but they also show that you know what you are talking about and have done your research. They are also helpful for other scholars interested in your research and your project.

How to write an Annotated Bibliography:

The format of an annotated bibliography varies depending on the assignment as well as the citation format you are using. Always remember to check your assignment sheet to make sure you follow any specific requirements. In general, each entry in an annotated bibliography is around 100 to 200 words and contains the following information (depending on the type of annotation):

- Source citation according to your specific discipline, i.e., MLA, APA, Chicago
- Description of the content/summary of the source:
 - Author’s main arguments
 - Source’s scope and audience
 - Author’s methodology
 - Important features included in the source (graphs, annotations, bibliography)
- Explanation of how the source will be used in your project and how it is useful to your field
- Evaluation of the actual source (what kind it is, the author’s expertise) and the author’s argument (what do you think of the source?)
- Explanation of where and how you found the source (database, book, online)

See the following page for sample Annotated Bibliography Entries¹

¹ All annotations from Purdue Owl’s “Annotated Bibliography Samples” [page](#).

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MLA:

Lamott, Anne. *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*. Anchor Books, 1995.

Lamott's book offers honest advice on the nature of a writing life, complete with its insecurities and failures. Taking a humorous approach to the realities of being a writer, the chapters in Lamott's book are wry and anecdotal and offer advice on everything from plot development to jealousy, from perfectionism to struggling with one's own internal critic. In the process, Lamott includes writing exercises designed to be both productive and fun.

Lamott offers sane advice for those struggling with the anxieties of writing, but her main project seems to be offering the reader a reality check regarding writing, publishing, and struggling with one's own imperfect humanity in the process. Rather than a practical handbook to producing and/or publishing, this text is indispensable because of its honest perspective, its down-to-earth humor, and its encouraging approach.

Chapters in this text could easily be included in the curriculum for a writing class. Several of the chapters in Part 1 address the writing process and would serve to generate discussion on students' own drafting and revising processes. Some of the writing exercises would also be appropriate for generating classroom writing exercises. Students should find Lamott's style both engaging and enjoyable.

APA:

Ehrenreich, B. (2001). *Nickel and dimed: On (not) getting by in America*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

In this book of nonfiction based on the journalist's experiential research, Ehrenreich attempts to ascertain whether it is currently possible for an individual to live on a minimum-wage in America. Taking jobs as a waitress, a maid in a cleaning service, and a Walmart sales employee, the author summarizes and reflects on her work, her relationships with fellow workers, and her financial struggles in each situation.

An experienced journalist, Ehrenreich is aware of the limitations of her experiment and the ethical implications of her experiential research tactics and reflects on these issues in the text. The author is forthcoming about her methods and supplements her experiences with scholarly research on her places of employment, the economy, and the rising cost of living in America. Ehrenreich's project is timely, descriptive, and well-researched.

Chicago:

Davidson, Hilda Ellis. *Roles of the Northern Goddess*. London: Routledge, 1998.

Davidson's book provides a thorough examination of the major roles filled by the numerous pagan goddesses of Northern Europe in everyday life, including their roles in hunting, agriculture, domestic arts like weaving, the household, and death. The author discusses relevant archaeological evidence, patterns of symbol and ritual, and previous research. The book includes several black and white photographs of relevant artifacts.