



Annotated Bibliographies

HOW TO WRITE AN EFFECTIVE ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Welcome to the tutorial on Annotated Bibliographies. Many courses require this type of assignment as either a stand-alone assignment or as a brainstorming activity for a research paper. It is important to learn how to complete this assignment effectively, as a proper annotated bibliography will leave you well prepared to write your final research paper.

Objectives

- ❖ Finding Sources
- ❖ Reference Citations
- ❖ Summaries
- ❖ Formatting
- ❖ Reviewing and Proofreading

In this tutorial, we will cover writing an annotated bibliography from beginning to end. We will cover locating sources, formatting reference citations, writing summaries, formatting the paper following APA style, and finally reviewing and proofreading.

What is an Annotated Bibliography?

- ❖ Consists of 2 parts
 - Reference citations
 - Summaries

The annotated bibliography is a brainstorming activity. It is used to help you organize your sources and your thoughts before you begin writing your research paper. When I was in school, we would go to the library to do research. If we found a source we wanted to use, we would get a notecard and write the reference citation and a summary of the source on the notecard. That would be like a key for us when we went back to the library later to write the paper. The annotated bibliography is kind of an electronic version of this notecard practice. It helps you organize your sources and your thoughts about them, so when you go to write your actual paper, you have a good starting place. Some courses require an annotated bibliography as a stand-alone assignment, meaning there is no research paper to follow. Even with these assignments, imagine you will be writing an actual paper using this information. Stand alone annotated bibs are meant to train you to do research and prepare you for courses in which long research papers are required.

The annotated bibliography contains two main parts: reference citations for your sources and short summaries of your sources. We will look at both of these parts in detail as well as how to format them within the paper.

Finding Sources

- ❖ Peer-reviewed journals
- ❖ Credible sources only
- ❖ Utilize the CSU Online Library
 - 877-268-8046
 - thevirtuallibrarian@columbiasouthern.edu

Before you begin looking for sources, make sure to have a clear idea of what your topic is. As you do research, you might have to tweak your topic a bit based on the sources you find, but it is important to have a good idea of what you want to write before you start your research. Researching without a clear topic could lead you to having incompatible or disjointed sources. The most important thing about research is finding credible, peer-reviewed sources. Sources such as Wikipedia, Ask.com, Answer.com, and Tutor.com contain user-generated material and should not be used. The best place to start doing research is within the databases in the CSU Online Library. The library has many databases at your disposal in which you can filter to find credible, peer-reviewed sources. CSU also has librarians who are more than happy to help you navigate the databases and find your sources. You can reach the librarians by phone during normal business hours at 877-268-8046. You can email them any time day or night at thevirtuallibrarian@columbiasouthern.edu.

Once you have your sources, you are ready to begin formatting your reference citations.

If you decide to do some research on the internet, a good rule of thumb is to avoid .com sites. Credible sites tend to be .gov, .edu, or .org.

Reference Citations

- ❖ Construct the reference citations first on a separate page
- ❖ Utilize the References Tutorial
- ❖ Contact the Success Center for troublesome sources

The first thing to do once you've found your sources is to go ahead and format the reference citations. Don't try to do this as you put together the actual annotated bibliography, as you'll want your sources to be in alphabetical order. The best advice would be to format your reference citations first on a separate document. I recommend putting the reference citations in alphabetical order as that is how you will organize your annotated bibliography. Save this document as you can use it for all drafts of the research paper. Once you start putting together your actual annotated bibliography, you can copy and paste the reference citation from the reference master list and paste them into your annotated bib.

The Success Center has many resources to help you format your reference citations. Beware of citation generators. Most of the time, these generators (even the ones within the library databases) are not correct. APA requires certain decisions to be made in the reference citation (like whether a word is a proper noun), so it is important to format the references yourself. The Success Center has a references tutorial that goes through many different types of sources and the steps of formatting the references. Please contact the Success Center if you would like access to that tutorial. If you have a reference that you just have no idea what to do with, contact the Success Center and we will work on it together. We are happy to help with troublesome sources.

Summaries

- ❖ Covers material related to the paper topic
- ❖ Around 100-150 words
- ❖ Include the author's point of view

Now that you've got your sources organized, you will start writing the summaries of each source. The summary covers material from the source related to the paper topic. It does not include your opinion about the topic, but rather just includes a short synopsis of what the source discusses. It should be around 100-150 words. If the author of your source has a specific point of view or a bias, make sure to point that out in the summary. For example, if the topic is gun control and the author writes his source leaning toward increasing gun control, make sure to indicate in your summary that the author is pro-gun control.

Writing the Summary Tips

- ❖ Take notes as you read your sources
- ❖ Write your summary using only your notes
- ❖ Show the authority of the source and the relevance to your paper topic
- ❖ Avoid Direct Quotations

As you read your sources, jot down notes. These notes should be key words and phrases, not full sentences. You just want to make a kind of map of the ideas so you can recall the information later. Once you've finished reading the source and making notes, take a break: take a walk, have a snack. Come back after 5 or 10 minutes and try to write your summary using only your notes, not looking at the original source. This will help prevent accidental plagiarism and encourage you to include good paraphrases and summaries. Make sure to mention the authority of the source: is it written by an expert in the field? Also show the relevance to your topic. Do not include information in the summary that does not pertain to your topic. If you are using a book and only two chapters of that book relate to your topic, only summarize the two chapters, not the entire book. I recommend starting with the first source from your alphabetical reference list. At this point, you can start putting together the actual annotated bibliography. You can copy and paste the reference list from your reference page and copy it into you annotated bib. Then, you will write the summary beneath the reference. You will do this for each source. Now, we will talk about the formatting requirements for the annotated bib.

Formatting

- ❖ Formal uploaded assignment with title page and running head
- ❖ Sources placed in alphabetical order
- ❖ Use the hanging indent
- ❖ Check your course for a template

Annotated Bibliography

Armstrong, C. (1996). Deborah Tannen comes to class: Implications of gender and conversation in the classroom. *English Journal, 85*(2), 15.

In a conversation with a male student, Armstrong thought she was being "helpful" and "supportive" when she "nodded vigorously" and punctuated his words with "yes." The male thought she was "rude" and "intrusive." Concerned at the failure of the conversation, Armstrong read Deborah Tanner's *You Just Don't Understand*, which helped Armstrong understand the ways men and women interrupt each other. Men see interruptions as "conversational bullying." Women see them as "cooperative overlapping." What Armstrong thought was support and involvement the male student saw as manipulation.

Gergen, M. (2001, June 6). Book review: *Talking difference: On gender and language* [by M. Crawford]. *Archives of Sexual Behavior 30*(3), 338. Retrieved from InfoTrac database.

The annotated bibliography is a formal assignment that is uploaded into Blackboard. As such, APA requires that it be formatted as a formal assignment, with a running head and properly formatted title page. Also, it will need appropriate margins, font, spacing, and indents. You can find detailed information about formatting in the Citation Guide located in the myCSU Student Portal.

As I mentioned, the sources in the annotated bib should be placed in alphabetical order, so make sure to start with the correct source.

The annotated bib is kind of formatted like a reverse paragraph. In a typical paragraph, the first line is indented ½ inch. In the annotated bib, it is the opposite. The first line (which will be the first line of the reference citation) will be flush left. All additional lines, including all lines of the summary, will be indented ½ inch. This is called a hanging indent. You can find detailed instructions for formatting the hanging indent in the Citation Guide located in the myCSU student portal.

Finally, check your course syllabus to see if you have been provided a template. Many courses will have templates available to show you how the annotated bib should work.

Reviewing and Proofreading

- ❖ Double check your references using the Citation Guide
- ❖ Read each summary aloud
- ❖ If you are concerned about specific skills, submit a Writing Center Request

Double check your reference citations using the Citation Guide. Make sure to pay attention to the punctuation, the capitalization, italics, and hyperlinks. Again, if you have a difficult reference, don't hesitate to contact the Success Center.

Read your summaries aloud. Many sentence errors can be prevented if you read your work aloud. This forces you to read what is actually on the page rather than what you know it is supposed to say. Our brains will automatically add words sometimes to make a sentence correct. Reading aloud helps to find these mistakes and missing words.

Again, if you are concerned with APA or with specific writing or grammar skills, the Success Center is here to help. If you would like to submit your annotated bib for coaching, fill out a Writing Center Request form.

Contact the Success Center

Questions or comments? Contact the Success Center

➤ teamsucceed@columbiasouthern.edu

➤ 1-800-977-8449 ext. 6538

To submit a Math or Writing Center Request:

➤ Go to the myCSU Student Portal

➤ Click on Online Forms, then Courses

➤ Select and complete the Math or Writing Center Request form

Disability Services

➤ disabilityservices@columbiasouthern.edu

➤ 1-800-977-8449 ext. 1434

If students have ANY questions about any of this information or if they need help with APA, we in the Writing Center are here to help. Students can contact the Writing Center any time they have questions or concerns about APA or writing in general. If students have a question or just need help with a reference citation, they can call us during our business hours at 800-977-8449, extension 6538. Our hours are Monday through Thursday 8:00 to 5:00 Central Time and Friday 8:00 to 3:00 Central Time. Also, students can email their questions to teamsucceed@columbiasouthern.edu. In addition, if students would like to work with a writing specialist on APA or paraphrasing skills, they can send their papers in before submitting them to the professor for a grade. In order to submit papers, log in to the My CSU Student Portal. Click on Online Forms. Then click on Courses. Towards the bottom of the list will be the Writing Center Request form. Simply fill out this form, attach the paper, and we will give instructions on skills that are needed. We will email the paper back with specific resources to help. Please be advised that writing specialists require up to two business days to process requests.

If you need assistance from the Office of Disability Services, you can email disabilityservices@columbiasouthern.edu or by phone at 800-977-8449, ext. 1434. I hope this information has been helpful. Again, please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns. Have a great day!