

Building an Annotated Bibliography

An **Annotated Bibliography** is essentially a list of citations which describe the sources used in researching a particular topic. Each citation is followed by a brief description of the source and an evaluation of the document's relevance.

Unlike an **Abstract**, an annotated bibliography evaluates and analyzes the work without summarizing its content.

To compose an Annotated Bibliography:

1. Locate resources and choose which documents to use for research. Review and examine each work in order to determine its relevance to the research and why it is an appropriate source to use.
2. Create citations using the appropriate citation style. (When giving the assignment, your professor should have told you which citation style to use). For assistance in building citations, refer to the Library's [Cite Your Sources](#) page.
3. Annotations are usually about 150 words, so in writing the annotation, you must be precise and to the point in order to include all the necessary pieces of information. Each annotation should include all or most of the following information:
 - a. Discuss the central theme and scope:
 - i. What is the author proposing in his or her work?
 - ii. What idea is supported by the source?
 - b. Evaluate the authority or background of the author
 - i. Who is the author?
 - ii. Is he or she part of a larger university or institution?
 - iii. Was the document written as part of a conference or research study?
 - c. Intended audience
 - i. For whom was the source written? College students? The general public? Fellow academics?
 - d. Explain how the work is relevant to the topic and the information is related to the thesis.

To effectively write the annotation, you will need to establish two items: a clear understanding of the topic and the information for which you are searching, and a critical analysis of the work. For the analysis, read the work, highlight the main points, and identify the theme and perspective of the author. The better understanding you have of the source document, the more accurate your annotation will be.

The bibliography or list of citations will be presented in alphabetical order, followed by the annotation and look something like the examples below.

The following example uses the APA format for the journal citation:

Goldschneider, F. K., Waite, L. J., & Witsberger, C. (1986). Non-family living and the erosion of traditional family orientations among young adults. *American Sociological Review*, 51, 541-554.

The authors, researchers at the Rand Corporation and Brown University, use data from the National Longitudinal Surveys of Young Women and Young Men to test their hypothesis that non-family living by young adults alters their attitudes, values, plans, and expectations, moving them away from their belief in traditional sex roles. They find their hypothesis strongly supported in young females, while the effects were fewer in studies of young males. Increasing the time away from parents before marrying increased individualism, self-sufficiency, and changes in attitudes about families. In contrast, an earlier study by Williams cited below shows no significant gender differences in sex role attitudes as a result of non-family living.

This example uses the MLA format for the journal citation:

Waite, Linda J., Frances Koblin Goldscheider, and Christina Witsberger. "Non-family Living and the Erosion of Traditional Family Orientations Among Young Adults." *American Sociological Review* 51 (1986): 541-554.

The authors, researchers at the Rand Corporation and Brown University, use data from the National Longitudinal Surveys of Young Women and Young Men to test their hypothesis that non-family living by young adults alters their attitudes, values, plans, and expectations, moving them away from their belief in traditional sex roles. They find their hypothesis strongly supported in young females, while the effects were fewer in studies of young males. Increasing the time away from parents before marrying increased individualism, self-sufficiency, and changes in attitudes about families. In contrast, an earlier study by Williams cited below shows no significant gender differences in sex role attitudes as a result of non-family living.

Any questions? [Stop by the Reference desk or give us a call!](#)