

Why Create an Annotated Bibliography?

Annotated bibliographies show you've done thorough research and help readers understand the value of your sources. Your own annotations should align with your research focus and assignment guidelines. Annotations may summarize, evaluate, and/or reflect on a source's relevance to your project—some may do all three. When deciding what to include, consider the purpose of your bibliography and your instructor's instructions.

An annotated bibliography should:

- Prove you've read and understood your sources
- Establish your credibility as a researcher
- Situate your research within ongoing scholarly discussions
- Explain the source's relevance to your project
- Help others decide if a source is relevant to their work

Elements of an Annotation

An annotation might include:

- Citation in the appropriate style (MLA, APA, etc.)
- Summary of the main points and purpose
- Evaluation of the author's credentials
- Comments on the source's relevance and usefulness
- Note of the source's perspective or bias
- Links to related sources or contrasting viewpoints

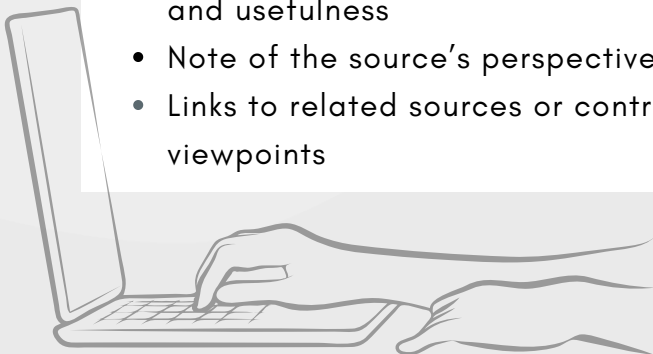
Citation Styles and Formats:

MLA (Modern Language Association)

- Used in humanities disciplines like English and cultural studies
- Title your list "Annotated Bibliography"

APA (American Psychological Association)

- Used in social sciences like psychology and sociology
- Title your list "References"



Sample MLA Annotation

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

In *Bird by Bird*, Anne Lamott gives honest and funny advice about what it's really like to be a writer. She talks about common struggles like dealing with perfectionism, jealousy, and self-doubt, and she shares personal stories to show how she's worked through them. The book covers practical tips on things like plot, character, and finding your voice, but it also focuses a lot on the emotional side of writing. I'm using this book in my research to show how writing isn't just about skill—it's also about staying motivated and handling setbacks. Lamott's relatable tone and focus on perseverance make this a helpful source for understanding how writers deal with the ups and downs of the creative process.

Sample APA Annotation

AICPA sets ethical standards for outsourcing. (2005). *Journal of Accountancy*, 199 (1), 8.
Retrieved from <http://www.journalofaccountancy.com/>

This article presents the new standards for outsourcing developed by the AICPA ethics committee. The standards are summarized, and a brief discussion is included of the implications going forward for business and international trade. The authors indicate that changes to the business community will be relatively minor. This is a helpful source for getting an overview of the current ethics standards in outsourcing.

Why These Are Good Examples of Annotated Bibliography Entries

These two sample entries are strong because they both do two important things: they summarize the source and explain how it will be useful for a specific research project.

In the MLA example, the writer explains what Anne Lamott's book is about and how it connects to their research on motivation and the emotional challenges writers face. In the APA example, the writer gives a brief summary of the article's main points and clearly states that it will help provide background on ethical standards in outsourcing.

Both entries follow the correct citation format for their style (MLA or APA) and show how to write annotations that are clear, focused, and useful for research.