Annotated Bibliography

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| What | An annotated bibliography is a list of sources one has used to research a particular topic. Each source is summarized and evaluated for its relevance and credibility by the researcher and each source includes proper documentation in MLA format (i.e. author, title, publisher, etc). |
| Why | An annotated bibliography is an excellent method and tool for beginning research. Because the researcher must include a summary and evaluation of the source, the researcher is forced to read the source carefully and thoroughly. This task compels the researcher to read more critically (how credible the source is and its relevance to the research topic and question) as opposed to simply collecting information. Additionally, undertaking an annotated bibliography allows the researcher to see what is currently written about the topic in question and what the current perspectives are on the topic which in turn develops the researcher’s understanding and personal point of view of the topic. |
| Format | * An annotated bibliography begins with the source information ***in MLA format.*** * A **summary** of the source: what are the main arguments? What topics are covered? If someone asked you what the source was about, what would you say? * An **assessment** of the source: is the source relevant to your research? How does it compare with other sources in your bibliography? Is it reliable information? Is it biased, objective? What the goal of the source? * A **reflection** of the source: how does it fit into your research? Was the source helpful? Does it change your perspective of your topic? How can you use this source in your research?   Below is an example of how an entry would appear in an annotated bibliography.  Almond, Steve. *Candy Freak.* Orlando: Harcourt, Inc, 2004.  In Candy Freak, Almond presents a solid history of the candy industry in 20th century America. After describing his love of candy and chocolate in particular, Almond takes the reader on a tour of candy factories across America while discussing how three large corporations (Hershey, M&M/Mars, and Nestle) managed to squeeze out hundreds of candy brands that were produced regionally in this country.  This source provides a basic understanding of the history of candy but doesn’t go much further than that. The author’s humorous tone makes it interesting to read and also provides some insight in the author’s perspective (he seems a bit biased against the big three candy corporations). The information seems reliable but Almond does not provide a bibliography for his book so the reader should take that into consideration while reading. Almond’s personal tours through candy factories and conversations with candy makers do lend reliability to his work.  This source will work well for my basic understanding of corporate influence in the free market. I can use this source in my introduction but it doesn’t provide much beyond the general. However, Candy Freak does provide a possible model for an explanation of how “mom and pop” stores have been supplanted by large corporations in the United States. It may offer insight into how the drink industry and beer industry have evolved over the last 100 years.  In the example above, you see the documentation information for the source, a summarization, an assessment and a reflection of the source. The level of detail in the annotation indicates that the researcher did indeed read the source carefully.  Keep in mind, the length of your annotations will determine how detailed your summary is. It is recommended that your annotations are detailed. |