

WRITING AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

What is an annotated bibliography?

An annotated bibliography includes:

- bibliographic information and
- annotations.

The **bibliographic information** is an alphabetical list, by author, date, publisher, volume, page number etc. of books, journals, etc. that you have read as part of your assignment.

The **annotations** follow each bibliographic entry and are summaries, evaluations of, and reflections on, the main points of the book, chapter, article, etc. you have read.

Why write an annotated bibliography?

Annotated bibliographies can help you keep track of texts you read and assess what is significant about them for your research.

You may have to write an annotated bibliography as an assessment for a unit. Alternatively, you may decide to compile one as part of your Honours, Masters or PhD research process.

Below is an example of an annotated bibliography entry on the topic of the impact of disruptive technologies on higher education.

Flavin, M 2012,'Disruptive technologies in higher education', *Research in Learning Technology*, vol. 20, pp. 102-111. Available from: <http://www.researchinlearningtechnology.net/> [24 August 2016].

Flavin's article discusses the impact of disruptive technologies in higher education. It reports that students and lecturers tend to use a narrow range of technologies familiar to them, rather than the wide range of teaching and learning technologies provided by their institutions. According to the author, these findings have important implications for higher education institutions and the monitoring of student learning. Flavin's article is relevant and useful because it links directly to my research question on the impacts of and responses to disruptive technologies on higher education. It seems reliable and credible, given that the article was published in the peer-reviewed *Research in Learning Technology* journal, and the argument is supported by research and references to the literature. Moreover, the information is relatively up-to-date, with the article published in 2012. A limitation of the article, however, is its small sample size, with the conclusions based on 48 surveys, 7 observation studies and 5 interviews at King's College in London. As such, it would need to be supplemented by similar studies at other institutions. Nevertheless, it provides a useful foundation for my own research.

Key

Citation with bibliographic information

Summary of the sources and any relevant findings or conclusions

Evaluation of the usefulness of the source to your research and any limitations

Reflection on how this source will fit in with your research

How can I evaluate sources?

Appropriate sources are **relevant and useful**. That is, they link to your research question and provide helpful information on your topic. They might be key texts or cover new ground.

They are also **reliable and credible**. That is, you know who produced them, when and how. Authors should be unbiased experts in their field, and present rational, well-supported arguments. Information should be up-to-date, contain references and be peer-reviewed.

How long is an annotated bibliography?

They vary from a few sentences to a few paragraphs depending on the assignment requirements or your preference if you are doing it for your own purposes. 100-200 words is a common length.

What information do I include in the bibliography section?

All the information you would include in an end-of-essay/thesis reference list. Make sure the bibliographic information is in the referencing style recommended by your discipline.

What information do I include in the annotation section?

Depending on your purpose, consider including the following information.

Summary

- The author's intention or argument.
- The topic and scope of the text.
- The intended audience.
- The research methods.
- The findings or conclusions.

Tip

When choosing texts to annotate, ask

- Is this text relevant to my research?
- Is this a key text on my topic? Does this text cover new ground?

Evaluation

- An assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, limitations of the text.
- An assessment of the theoretical concepts used.
- An assessment of the strength of the evidence.
- A comment on any biases you have observed.
- An assessment of the credibility of the authors/text.
- A comment on the readability of the text.

Reflection

- Your reaction to and/or perspective on the text.
- A comment on the suitability of the text for your research purposes.

Tip

- Only mention significant details.
- Don't use in-text citations or footnotes.
- Write in sentences but be concise.
- Use academic vocabulary.

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