Annotated Bibliography FAQs

Metro State Writing Center, Fall 2023

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## **What is a bibliography?**

A bibliography is a list of sources used in research, papers, or large projects, and are usually organized alphabetically by the author’s last name. It covers all relevant sources consulted, unlike a References or Works Cited page, which list only those sources actually cited in a project. Its purpose is to provide context or stimulate discussion.

## **What is an annotation?**

An annotation is a detailed description of a source, usually in a single paragraph underneath a reference entry. It should both summarize the work and evaluate its contribution to a field or a research project.

## **How do I make an annotated bibliography?**

Remember to always check the assignment instructions for specific requirements. Otherwise, follow these steps:

* Define a topic and search for resources using key words
* Read and take brief notes to identify relevant sources
* Summarize each source
* Note how the sources relate to one another and to your topic
* Create an annotated entry for each source chosen

**Reference & Annotation Paragraph Outline**

1. Create a reference entry for the source in either APA, ASA, MLA, Chicago/Turabian, or another citation system and place it at the top of the entry.
2. Write a paragraph of 5-6 sentences about the source and your research:
   1. Summarize the source’s topic and main points in 2-3 sentences.
   2. Evaluate how the source fits into its academic field in 1 sentence. Try asking these questions:
      1. Does it apply existing methods to a new area of research?
      2. Does it break new ground or is it continuing established practices? Does it present established ideas in a new way?
      3. Is it affirming or challenging theories in the field?
   3. Explain how the source is relevant to the research topic in 2 sentences. Try asking these questions:
      1. How is this source related to my topic?
      2. Does this source address my research question? How does it do so?

# **Example Annotated Bibliography Paragraph**

**Reference Entry Examples:**

**APA 7th Style**

Eco, U. (2015). *How to Write a Thesis.* (C. Mongiat Farina & G. Farina, Trans.) MIT Press.

**ASA 6th Style**

Eco, Umberto. 2015. *How to Write a Thesis.* Translated by C. Mongiat Farina & G. Farina. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

**Chicago 17th/Turabian 9th Notes & Bibliography Style**

Eco, Umberto. *How to Write a Thesis.* Translated by Caterina Mongiat Farina and Geoff Farina. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2015.

**MLA 8th Style**

Eco, Umberto. *How to Write a Thesis.* Translated by Caterina Mongiat Farina and Geoff Farina, MIT Press, 2015.

## **Annotation Paragraph:**

The book’s central claim is that integrating sources well is an art all writers should master, and it begins with strong research. Ironically, this is both easier and harder in the digital age. In a preface, the translators comment on the paradox of research advice from the era before the internet was relevant. Students can now access nearly anything from anywhere. Yet, such abundance may lead to losing a sense of where ideas came from and how they relate to each other. Eco emphasizes how the systems set out in the book instill fundamental academic virtues which then aid in owning both the process and the product of research. He maintains that while it may seem trivial, understanding the bibliographic details of sources is essential to using them effectively. *How to Write a Thesis* offers not only sound advice on how manage a project but also a profound understanding of scholarship. It is useful for researchers who wish to communicate their findings to others.