



The Writing Center

Directed Learning Activity



Annotated Bibliography

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Instructor: _____

Course: _____

About This DLA

Important Note

All the activities in the DLA must be completed in their entirety before receiving credit for completion. Students are welcome to meet with a tutor if they need help, but please be aware that students might need a second appointment for review and signature in that case. If your instructor wants evidence of this completed DLA, return the TSR (Tutoring Session Response) from your tutoring session as proof of completion.

Learning Outcomes

Through computer and other independent activities, this activity will familiarize you with annotated bibliographies and will help you learn how to develop one.

Activities (approximately 1 hour)

Read the information, complete the activities that follow, and be prepared to discuss your answers when you meet with a tutor.

What is an annotated bibliography?

An **annotated bibliography** is, essentially, a works cited or reference page with an annotation (summary and evaluation) of each source under each entry. There is no one right way to write an annotated bibliography, so make sure to ***carefully review your professor's assignment*** for the type of annotations required.

Major Elements of an Annotated Bibliography

If you do not have specific class guidelines for completing your annotated bibliography, you can use the following as a guide. These elements are considered the three major elements of a standard annotated bibliography.

Bibliographic Entry

The bibliographic entry is the source information written in MLA or APA format. This includes the source title, author, publisher, date, and other necessary information. Refer to the Writing Center's MLA and APA handouts for guidance on correctly formatting the bibliographic entry.

Summary

This part of your annotation includes a summary of the main and supporting points of the source. The summary should not include any opinion, analysis, or evaluation.

Evaluation

The evaluation is your assessment of the usefulness of the source. This part of your annotation often answers the questions, "How can I use this source in my research, and is this source reliable?" These annotations discuss your thoughts on the source and how you may use the source in your essay.

In addition to the above elements, you may also include a reflection on the source and identify how it fits into the larger picture of your research. Did this source help shape your argument or change your way of thinking about the topic?

MLA Annotation Sample—Summary and Evaluation

Landau, Elizabeth. "3 New Planets Could Host Life." *CNN*. Cable News Network, 21 Apr. 2013. <http://www.cnn.com/2013/04/18/us/planet-discovery/>. Accessed 28 May 2013.

In this article, Landau discusses the recent planetary discoveries by NASA's Kepler telescope. There are three new planets in total, with the most likely candidate for habitability being Kepler 62f. Kepler scientists also offer their educated opinions on what each planet maybe like. Since this news is recent and demonstrates NASA's ability to "expand our knowledge" effectively, I used it to support my argument that NASA funding should not be cut in 2014.

Why am I being asked to write an annotated bibliography?

Many professors will ask their students to include an annotated bibliography with a research paper. Why is this? The purpose of an annotated bibliography is to learn more about the topic being researched and to help readers or other researchers find more information about the topic. Also, an annotated bibliography helps students have a deeper understanding of the sources used in their essays. As you learned above, since an annotated bibliography requires you to summarize the main points of a source and determine how the source fits into your paper, it requires a more complete understanding of sources and the topic of the essay.

How do I write an annotated bibliography?

There are a few simple steps you can follow to write an annotated bibliography painlessly:

1. Determine your purpose and audience.
 - a. Should your annotations describe, summarize, and/or evaluate sources?
 - b. Is your bibliography for you, your professor, experts, or newcomers?
2. Prepare some questions before you read.
 - a. Is this source credible?
 - b. What is this source saying? What is its main point? What are its supporting points?
 - c. How can I use this source in my paper?

3. Conduct research.
 - a. Find several sources* that discuss your topic.

*If you are having a hard time finding sources, consider speaking with a librarian or coming to the Writing Center's Starting Your Research Workshop.
 - b. Create a citation for each source.
 - c. Under each citation, answer the questions from the step above.
4. Prepare your entries.
 - a. Working from your notes in the step above, draft a few sentences or paragraph on each source.
 - b. Make sure to follow any guidelines on formatting (e.g. MLA, APA, or Chicago) for your annotated bibliography. Check with your professor regarding the required citation style.
 - c. Revise and edit your entries for clarity, tone, and length. Remember that an annotation is a short summary and analysis of the source.
 - d. Make sure that your annotated bibliography follows all requirements from your instructor.

Activities

Check off each box once you have completed the activity.

1. Handout

Please go to our website (<https://www.mtsac.edu/writingcenter/handouts-master.html>) and review the [annotated bibliography handout](#).

2. Annotated Bibliography Review

- a. What is an annotated bibliography?

- b. Why do professors assign annotated bibliographies?

- c. What are the three major elements of an annotated bibliography?

3. Identify the Parts of an Annotated Bibliography

Look at the following MLA entry for an annotated bibliography. After reading it carefully, identify the following: the bibliographic entry, summary, and evaluation.

Bennett, William J. "U.S. Lag in Science, Math a Disaster in the Making." *CNN*. Cable News Network, 9 Feb. 2012. <http://www.cnn.com/2012/02/09/opinion/bennett-stem-education/>. Accessed 15 May 2013.

William Bennett describes America's dire educational state of math and science, citing statistics that compare our overall rank in these categories to other industrialized nations unfavorably. He then proposes five ideas to fix this, ranging from changing how classes are taught in preschool to requiring supplemental training for teachers in math and science. This article supports the idea that the engineering and science inspiration that only NASA can provide—with its ambitious and public missions using state-of-the-art technology, easily appealing to children and adults alike—is in fact an answer to a problem that necessarily needs to be solved to continue moving forward.

Choose activity 4a or 4b below.

4a. Revise Your Own Annotated Bibliography

Take out a current annotated bibliography you're working on for class. Identify the bibliographic entry, summary, and evaluation. Then make any necessary corrections. Bring this revised work with you to the DLA tutoring session (Step 5 below).

If you do not have your own annotation to work with, please complete the supplemental activity below (4b).

4b. Write an Annotated Bibliography

Read the following article "[White House Budget Would Trim NASA Funding Slightly](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/federal-eye/wp/2013/04/10/white-house-budget-would-slightly-trim-nasa-funding/)," which can be accessed at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/federal-eye/wp/2013/04/10/white-house-budget-would-slightly-trim-nasa-funding/>

Then create an MLA format bibliographic entry with annotation, including a summary and evaluation. If you need help with the bibliographic entry, please see one of our handouts on MLA format.

5. Review

Go to <https://mtsac.campus.eab.com/> and use the [Mt. SAC Writing Center Appointment System](#) to make a DLA appointment either online or in-person in the Writing Center. During your session with a tutor, explain your understanding of the information you've learned so far. Consider the main concept you learned in this DLA and how you might use this in your future assignments/classes.

Sign-off procedure:

- **Attach TSR (Tutoring Session Response) to your DLA. There will be a check box that the tutor will select to indicate that you have completed the DLA or that the DLA is still in-progress.**

Resources consulted:

"Annotated Bibliography." *OWL: Purdue Online Writing Lab*. Purdue University, 2012. Web. 22 Oct. 2012.

"What guidance should I give my students for preparing an annotated bibliography?" *The MLA Style Center*, Modern Language Association, 4 Nov. 2016. Web. 23 Aug. 2017.

If you are an individual with a disability and need a greater level of accessibility for any document in The Writing Center or on The Writing Center's website, please contact the Mt. SAC Accessible Resource Centers for Students, access@mtsac.edu, (909) 274-4290.

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