



WRITING AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

An annotated bibliography presents the research that has been done on a given topic. Just like any other bibliography, an annotated bibliography is an alphabetical list of research sources, the places where you obtained your information. However, as opposed to just a bibliography, an annotated bibliography contains both bibliographic data and a summary of each source.

To select good sources you will need to ask yourself the following questions:

- 1) what problem am I investigating? what is the question you want to answer?
 - try to formulate specific questions that address your topic
- 2) what kind of sources do I want?
 - are you looking for print or on-line sources? books or newspaper articles?
- 3) what are the essential sources on my topic?
 - keep an eye out for sources that other books/articles refer to

An annotated bibliography can list the contents of your source, or go a step further and identify its main argument. Depending on the type of annotated bibliography you are being asked for you may follow Example 1 or Example 2. In both cases, the annotation - the paragraph written about your source - will include a bibliographic entry according to the appropriate style guide (APA, MLA), the main topic discussed, and an overview of its contents.

1. A **descriptive annotated bibliography** only describes the source, and includes:
 - a bibliographical entry in a specific style (ask your teacher!)
 - a description of the contents

Example 1: MLA Style

Chrisholm, Patricia. "The ADD dilemma." Maclean's 11 Mar. 1996: 42-44. This magazine article looks at the use of Ritalin in Canada. Specifically it covers the drug's side effects, why there is so much debate surrounding its use and how teachers have come to rely on it to control problem students. The article is based on information taken from interviews, statistics and studies that were conducted.

Kirkey, Sharon. "Jury's still out on Ritalin." The Gazette 27 Dec. 2001: A1. This newspaper article focuses on a study published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal about the short and long-term effects of using Ritalin. According to this article, Ritalin may not be the answer for treating children with ADD.



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2. An **analytical annotated bibliography** goes a step beyond and includes:

- a bibliographical entry in a specific style (ask your teacher!)
- a description of the contents
- why the source is useful
- any strengths/weaknesses of the source
- the overall reliability of the source
 - evaluate how good the source is by looking at the author's qualifications, conclusions, and the references consulted
- your reaction to the source

Example 2: APA Style

Chrisholm, P. (1996, March 11). The ADD dilemma. *Maclean's*, 109, 42-44.

This magazine article looks at the use of Ritalin in Canada. Specifically, it covers the drug's side effects, why there is so much debate surrounding its use and how teachers have come to rely on it to control problem students. The article is based on information taken from interviews, statistics and studies that were conducted. Overall, it is well written and well researched.

Notice that the first part of the annotation is descriptive and that the last sentence is a brief evaluation.

Kirkey, S. (2001, November 27). Jury's still out on Ritalin. *The Gazette*, A1.

This newspaper article focuses on a study published in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* about the short and long-term effects of using Ritalin. The information comes from a reputable source and is based upon fact. This article was useful for my research as it helped support my idea that Ritalin may not be the answer for treating children with ADD.

Notice that the first few sentences of the annotation discuss the reliability of the article while the last sentence relates to its usefulness.

It is sometimes challenging to find the vocabulary in which to summarize and discuss a source. Here is a list of some verbs for referring to texts and ideas that you might find useful:

account for	clarify	describe	exemplify	indicate	question
analyze	compare	depict	exhibit	investigate	recognize
argue	conclude	determine	explain	judge	reflect
assess	criticize	distinguish	frame	justify	refer to
assert	defend	evaluate	identify	narrate	report
assume	define	emphasize	illustrate	persuade	review
claim	demonstrate	examine	imply	propose	suggest

The evidence indicates that . . .

The author identifies three reasons for . . .

The article assesses the effect of . . .

The article questions

based on:

<http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/annotatebib.html>

<http://library.concordia.ca/help/howto/annotatedbibliog.php>

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