

The Annotated Bibliography

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What is a Bibliography?

What is an Annotation?

An Annotation is a commentary a reader makes after critically reading an information source. It can include a summary of the reading, the reader's response to the reading, and/or questions/comments addressing the article's clarity, purpose, or effectiveness.

What is an Annotated Bibliography?

An Annotated Bibliography is a list of bibliographic citations that includes a descriptive and evaluative paragraph of each citation.

Its overall purpose is to support your study of a particular subject by providing a collection of succinct article summaries that will negate the need for rereading of an article.

Where do I start?

- Begin by critically reading the article. View the reading as an interactive process in which your interpretation of author's words is influenced by your own knowledge and experiences.
- Critical readers attempt to dialogue with the text by asking tough questions on the article's purpose, audience, language and content.

Questions to ask about an article

- Who is the author? His/her credentials?, biases?
- Where is the article published? What type of journal is it? What is the audience?
- What do I know about the topic? Am I open to new ideas?
- Why was the article written? What is its purpose?
- What is the author's thesis? The major supporting points or assertions?

Questions to ask about an article

- Did the author support his/her thesis/assertions?
- Did the article achieve its purpose?
- Was the article organized?
- Were the supporting sources credible?
- Did the article change my viewpoint on the topic?
- Was the article convincing? What new information or ideas do I accept or reject?

Writing the Annotation

A strong annotation contains:

- A summary of the article
- Your response to the article
- A list of interesting or meaningful quotes
- Questions connecting the article and your knowledge and experience.

The Summary Paragraph

- Begin by succinctly stating the article's thesis and major points.
- Describe/define key points and how they are connected or substantiated.
- Describe the usefulness and the limitations of the article
- Limit in length to 3-4 grammatically correct sentences

The Response Paragraph

- Describe your reaction to the article as a whole.
- Describe the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the citation and its conclusions.
- Document your response to the author's ideas, argument, writing style or any other notable aspect of the article.

Quotes

- Directly cite or paraphrase interesting or meaningful quotes from the article you wish to remember.
- The usefulness of the quote should be evident from its content.
- Be sure to note the page number of the quote or paraphrase for later referencing.

Questions

- Consider the article's clarity, purpose, or effectiveness.
- What do you question about the thesis or main points? Or the argument supporting them?
- What connections are there between your knowledge & experience, and the article's information?
- Avoid yes/no questions – they limit thought & dialogue.

Creating the Annotated Bib

- Start with the citation written in MLA style
- (hint: use NoodleTools, RefWorks, or any works cited generator)

- Pay attention to the details of a bib citation:
 - Capitalization
 - Punctuation
 - Use of italics

The Annotation

- Summarize each article's central thesis and respond critically to the major points supporting the thesis.
- Quotes – generally 3-4 quotes/article. Include page numbers with the quote.
- Questions – generally 2-3 questions. You are not expected to answer them – just raise them.

Use the Annotation/suggestions

- Attach a copy of your annotation to the article you are annotating. Add comments as you reflect on its content. Start an alphabetical file of your annotated articles.
- Use note cards to track and save the information you find in your articles

An example of an Annotation

This annotation was published in Meleis (1991). It has been shortened, but please note the lack of page numbers for the quotes included in the text:

Donaldson, S. K., & Crowley, D. (1978). The discipline of nursing. *Nursing Outlook*, 26(2), 113-120.

This article poses a series of significant questions. It begins by noting the question of the nature of nursing, but addresses this through a subquestion: What are the recurrent themes in nursing inquiry? These could suggest “boundaries” for systematic study of the discipline of nursing. There follows a long discussion of the nature of classification of disciplines. Nursing is seen as a “professional” discipline. It is noted as a discipline different from nursing science (“>”) and nursing practice (“>”). Finally, the structure of the discipline of nursing is considered, a generalization is offered (“nursing studies the wholeness or health of humans”), and some “major conceptualizations in nursing” are presented.

The article is poorly organized....

Nevertheless, this seminal work is challenging. It makes the point that nursing is a discipline and gives support to its focus.