

Annotated Bibliographies

An annotated bibliography is a list of sources (books, journals, websites, etc.) one has used for researching a topic. An annotated bibliography usually includes bibliographic information of sources used in a research paper: author's name, title of work, publisher, date, and any other information required by an instructor. If the instructor has provided a guideline, always follow those instructions.

An annotated bibliography usually includes your summary and/or evaluation of each of the sources. Depending on your assignment, your annotations may do one or more of the following:

- **Summarize:** What are the main arguments of the work? What is the point of the work? What topics are covered?
- **Evaluate:** Is the work a useful source for your paper? How does it compare with other sources in your bibliography? Is the information reliable? Is this source biased or objective?
- **Examine:** How does the work benefit your research? Was this source helpful? How can you use this source in your research project? Has it changed how you think about your topic?

An annotated bibliography may include some of the above aspects, all of these aspects, or other aspects. Remember: always get specific guidelines from your instructor.

Format

The exact format of an annotated bibliography can vary, so it is important to ask your instructor for specific guidelines or preferences (MLA, APA, etc.).

The annotations for each source usually are written in paragraph form following the bibliographic information. The lengths of the annotations can vary significantly from a few sentences to a few pages.

MLA

- Title an annotated bibliography as “Annotated Bibliography” or “Annotated List of Works Cited.”
- Following MLA format, use a hanging indent for your bibliographic information: The first line is not indented, and all the other lines are indented four spaces.
- After the bibliographic citation, drop down to the next line to begin the annotation.
- Always follow instructor’s specific guidelines.

Example

Sherman, Pollyanna. *Texting While Driving: A Legal Conundrum*. Los Angeles: Terlingua Press, 2012. Print.

This article examines the legal issues of texting while driving. One of the main issues that the author addresses is the conflicting laws among various states. The author argues that states should cooperate to introduce common legislation, including penalties, to help address this common problem. Although I agree with some of the author’s points, I believe that his arguments could have been better proven with the use of more statistical data and opinions from other experts.

APA

- Annotated bibliographies for APA format do not require a special title. Use the usual “References” designation.
- Following APA format, use a hanging indent for your bibliographic information: The first line is not indented, and all the other lines are indented four spaces.
- After the bibliographic citation, drop down to the next line to begin the annotation.
- Indent the entire annotation an additional two spaces (each of its lines will be six spaces from the margin).
- Always follow instructor’s specific guidelines.

Example

Sherman, P. (2012). *Texting while driving: A legal conundrum*. Los Angeles: Terlingua Press.

This article examines the legal issues of texting while driving. One of the main issues that the author addresses is the conflicting laws among various states. The author argues that states should cooperate to introduce common legislation, including penalties, to help address this common problem. Although I agree with some of the author’s points, I believe that his arguments could have been better proven with the use of more statistical data and opinions from other experts.