

Annotated Bibliography Assignment¹

An **annotated bibliography** is a list of citations for various books, articles, and other sources on a topic. The annotated bibliography looks like a Works Cited page but includes an annotation after each source cited. An annotation is a short summary and/or critical evaluation of a source. Annotated bibliographies can be part of a larger research project, or can be a stand-alone report in itself.

In this class, your annotated bibliography should include A minimum of six sources that you have carefully evaluated, read, and annotated (you only need three for the first draft). You should include the following information about each source:

1. **Bibliographic information in MLA style** (use your *Writer's Reference* and other resources we discussed in class)
2. **A Summary.** Make sure you read and annotate carefully. Avoid plagiarism by making sure you summarize in your own words and writing style. Your summary may answer such questions as the following: What are the main arguments? What is the point of this book or article? What topics are covered? If someone asked what this article/book is about, what would you say? The length of your annotations will determine how detailed your summary is.
3. **Reflection:** Once you've summarized a source, you need to ask how it fits into your research. Was this source helpful to you? How does it help you shape your argument? How can you use this source in your research project? Has it changed how you think about your topic?

Below is an example of an annotated bibliography entry. You can find this example in the Purdue Online Writing Lab website:

SAMPLE MLA ANNOTATION

Lamott, Anne. *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*. Anchor Books, 1995.

Lamott's book offers honest advice on the nature of a writing life, complete with its insecurities and failures. Taking a humorous approach to the realities of being a writer, the chapters in Lamott's book are wry and anecdotal and offer advice on everything from plot development to jealousy, from perfectionism to struggling with one's own internal critic.

In the process, Lamott includes writing exercises designed to be both productive and fun. Lamott offers sane advice for those struggling with the anxieties of writing, but her main project seems to be offering the reader a reality check regarding writing, publishing, and struggling with one's own imperfect humanity in the process. Rather than a practical handbook to producing and/or publishing, this text is indispensable because of its honest perspective, its down-to-earth humor, and its encouraging approach.

Chapters in this text could easily be included in the curriculum for a writing class.

Several of the chapters in Part 1 address the writing process and would serve to generate discussion on students' own drafting and revising processes. Some of the writing exercises would also be appropriate for generating classroom writing exercises. Students should find Lamott's style both engaging and enjoyable.

¹ This handout uses information gathered from the Purdue Online Writing Lab website:
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/common_writing_assignments/annotated_bibliographies/index.html