

## Creating the Annotated Bibliography

1. Choose your research topic. Use your assignment requirements to guide your selection process and narrow and define your topic ideas so that they fit the space that you have to fill (for example: 10 page paper)
2. Use research tools, such as periodical indexes, the online catalog, and search engines, to identify possible appropriate sources on your topic of research
3. Critically evaluate your sources and select those that are best for the topic of research and that meet your assignment requirements. Pay attention to such things as publication date and the credibility of the author to help you determine the value of the information for your research.
4. Obtain your selected sources and begin your preliminary review of the value and appropriateness for your research topic. Begin taking notes. These notes may later become the sentences in your annotations. Make sure that you can always connect your notes with the source you were using.
5. Carefully note the details that identify each publication so that you will be able to fully cite your sources within your text and in your reference lists. Be aware of unique bits of identifying publication information that distinguish different kinds of information sources. A citation for a book contains some different information than a citation of an article or a web site. Consult a "style" manual or handbook, such as the [MLA Handbook](#) or the [Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association](#), for specific details on how to organize and present the publication information in your citations.
6. After selecting all your sources, organize them in alphabetical order by the author's last name. If there is more than one author, alphabetize by the first author's last name. If there is not author, use the first word of the title to place it in alphabetical order.
7. Once your sources are in alphabetical order, you can now write annotations for each of the sources. An annotation is an evaluative/descriptive note and follows the publication information of each source. The spacing will vary depending on the "style" you are using.

Some common elements of annotated bibliographies in all the different styles are:

- Arranged alphabetically by the author's last name
- First line of the citation goes to the left margin and all the following lines in the citation are indented 5 spaces (hanging indentation)
- Annotations are descriptive/evaluative notes that give specifics about the pertinent information on the topic of research that was found in the source being cited
- Annotations are generally 1-5 sentences long or 30-150 words
- Annotations need not be grammatically complete sentences but should begin with a capital and end with a period. MLA **does not** require complete sentences. APA **does** require complete sentences
- An annotated bibliography may include books, articles, interviews, electronic/online sources in one alphabetical list
- Generally, double space within and between annotations. Single space to save space

Annotations should include comments about the credibility/authority of the author(s), the value of the information as it relates to your topic of research, and any special relevant features, such as maps, charts, graphs, statistics, etc.

**Common errors: Capitalization, spacing, and punctuation**