

Annotated Bibliography

Definition of genre

An annotated bibliography is an analytic guide to academic resources on a research topic. For each resource (book, article, documentary, etc.), it includes a citation and a brief (2-4 sentence) description and evaluation, or annotation. The annotation is intended to assess the relevance and quality of each resource.

Questions to ask

- What is the subject matter of each source? What is the main argument?
- What type of evidence does the source employ?
- What does the source contribute to your research topic?
- Is the source helpful and interesting or not? Why?

Actions to take

- Find and record citations to books, articles, and other resources on your research topic. Examine each item and select those that provide the most useful material on your topic.
- Check with your instructor to determine which documentation style is required for your class: APA, MLA, Chicago/Turabian, etc.
- Summarize each source's content. Include ideas about the subject matter, main argument, and evidence it uses.
- Assess the source's strengths and weaknesses. State why the source is interesting or helpful or why it is not.
- Combine your summary and analysis into a 3-4 sentence paragraph.

Helpful links

<http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/skill28.htm#annot>

“How to Prepare an Annotated Bibliography,” from Cornell University Library.

<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/AnnotatedBibliography.html>

A brief guide to annotated bibliography writing, from the University of Wisconsin-Madison Writing Center.

Example

Waite, Linda J., Frances Kobrin Goldscheider, and Christina Witsberger. "Nonfamily Living and the Erosion of Traditional Family Orientations Among Young Adults." *American Sociological Review* 51 (1986): 541-554.

The authors, researchers at the Rand Corporation and Brown University, use data from the National Longitudinal Surveys of Young Women and Young Men to test their hypothesis that nonfamily living by young adults alters their attitudes, values, plans, and expectations, moving them away from their belief in traditional sex roles. They find their hypothesis strongly supported in young females, while the effects were fewer in studies of young males. Increasing the time away from parents before marrying increased individualism, self-sufficiency, and changes in attitudes about families. In contrast, an earlier study by Williams cited below shows no significant gender differences in sex role attitudes as a result of nonfamily living.