



Learning Centre

## CREATING AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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An annotated bibliography is a bibliography that provides descriptive and/or evaluative comments after each citation. An “annotation” can explain, critique, and link the sources listed in the bibliography. For a bibliography to become an annotated bibliography, it must provide a 50-300 word summary under each source, with the length of the annotation depending on assignment instructions and source contents.

### The Three Types of Annotated Bibliographies:

1. **Descriptive:** A descriptive annotated bibliography provides a summary of the source’s main points and an outline of how it came to those points.

Example with MLA style citation:

“A Very Rare and Fine Set of Amulet, Key-Holder.” *Harubang Antiques*. Trocadero, 2009.

Web. 28 Nov. 2009.

The short paragraph provided by Harubang Antiques provides pertinent information about the history of the Korean amulet key-holder. It explains the accessory as a happiness charm and gives vivid details as well as a photo of an amulet. It also provides a short description of how the amulet was used and how those purposes later changed.

2. **Analytical:** An analytical or critical bibliography provides a critique of the source's strengths and weaknesses as well as the author's authority in the specific field and how the source might relate to your own essay.

Example with APA style citation:

A Very Rare and Fine Set of Amulet, Key-Holder. (2009). *Trocadero*. Retrieved from <http://www.trocadero.com/harubang/items/684153/item684153.html>

This website provides no references as to how the information about the Korean amulet Key-Holder was gathered. Although research available on the amulet is very limited, this site does provide a phone number where those interested can question Harubang Antique's information. The lack of research on the amulet makes this site an essential component of this paper because of its short but detailed descriptions of the amulet's various uses.

3. **Combination:** A combination annotated bibliography is the most common annotated bibliography. It describes the source as a descriptive annotation does and critiques the contents of the source similarly to an analytical annotation.

Example with Chicago style citation:

Harubang Antiques. "A Very Rare and Fine Set of Amulet, Key-Holder." *Trocadero*.

<http://www.trocadero.com/harubang/items/684153/item684153.html>.

The short paragraph provided by Harubang Antiques provides information about the history of the Korean Amulet Key-Holder that few resources found in research engines provide. Although it explains the accessory as a happiness charm, Harubang Antiques may not be the most credible source available. Harubang seems to be a reputable antiques dealer, but their information is not cited.

## Preparing to Write the Annotation:

To begin preparing an annotated bibliography, find the main points of your source.

How to identify the main argument(s) of the source:

- Check the introduction, conclusion, table of contents and abstract.
- Look for repeating ideas or terms.
- Look for sections, headings and subheadings or discussion sections in the source and think about the main idea of each section.

Once you have found the main arguments of your source, ask yourself questions to prepare to write your annotated bibliography:

- Is the author's background related to the topic of the writing assignment?
- Is the chosen resource reliable and relevant?
- What are the resource's strengths and weaknesses?
- Is the resource somehow connected to another resource in the bibliography, and how does this source differ from or compare to the other resources?
- What is your reaction to the resource?

After reading or skimming through your resource for its main points, read through the following checklist to see if you have what an annotated bibliography needs.

## Writing Your Annotation:

Depending on your assignment instructions, you can be writing a descriptive, analytical or combination annotated bibliography, so make sure you include what is necessary for your assignment. Every annotated bibliography needs to be accompanied by a complete bibliographic citation based on the style asked for in your assignment instructions.

Depending on the type of annotated bibliography, it may include:

- a third person point of view perspective (E.g., not "I" or "you")
- the author's background, which reflects his/her authority on the subject he/she writes about
- any biases or weaknesses, as well as any strengths
- the intended audience
- your evaluation of the source and why/how it is relevant or useful in your writing assignment

## Formatting an Annotated Bibliography:

Your annotation will depend on the style of citation your professor asks for, e.g.: MLA, APA, or Chicago style. Remember, an annotated bibliography is also double spaced like the citation.

### How to make Hanging Indents:

“Hanging Indents” is when the first line begins at the left margin but subsequent lines are indented towards the right. To automatically format hanging indents using Microsoft Word, highlight the part of your writing that needs to be indented. Right click in Microsoft Word, and choose “Paragraph.” In the “Paragraph” box that appears, look for “Special” under “Indentation,” and choose “hanging.” This should indent the highlighted portion of your writing. If this option is unavailable in the software you are using, use tab or 4 spaces for each line that needs to be indented.

### Example in MLA style:

An MLA annotation is in hanging indents which means that the first line of the citation stays beside the left margin while subsequent lines are indented. An indent is 4 spaces or a tab from the left margin.

Arora, Poonam. “Sanctioned and Proscribed Narratives in Indian Cinema: A Bicultural reading of the Courtesan Film.” *Order and Partialities: Theory, Pedagogy, and the Postcolonial.* Ed. Kostas Myrsiades and Jerry McGuire. New York: State University of New York Press, 1995. 59-86. Print.

The author has researched and published works on the political ideologies behind romantic narratives within tawaif films in order to show the significance of tawaif films as a media which allows Indian Hindus and Muslims a neutral space where cultural aspect from both backgrounds are momentarily unified outside of the external conflicts present in India. Arora interprets Daisal Devji’s essay “Hindu/Muslim/Indian” and finds that Devji’s theory of the “rape-fantasy” occurs through the Muslim woman in the tawaif film.

**Annotation Tips:** Reveal the author’s background in relation to his/her writing. Show the main points of your source and reveal any weaknesses the source has.

**Example in APA style:**

As with MLA, in an APA style annotated bibliography, the first line of the citation begins on the left margin, and the subsequent lines after the first line of the citation are indented as hanging indents. What's different with the following APA example is that, for the annotation underneath, the entire annotation is indented several more spaces to the right so that the annotation is clearly separated from the bibliographic information in the citation.

Mihalopoulos, N., Auinger, P., & Klein, J. (2008). The freshman 15: Is it real?

↔ *Journal of American College Health*, 56(5), 531-533. Retrieved from

<http://www.acha.org/Publications/JACH.cfm>.

↔ The study was conducted on unmarried students living on campus in an American university. The National College Health Assessment questionnaire was provided and participants recorded their own height and weight. 582 students were randomly chosen through an email selection but only 121 students were eligible. 50% of the participants gained weight and 15% lost weight after seven months. Weight varied from losing five pounds to gaining twenty pounds, and although this study proves the Freshman 15 to be false, there is the possibility of participants underestimating their weight and height.

**Annotation Tip:** Reveal any weaknesses the source has.

**Example in Chicago Style:**

Van Kirk, Sylvia. "‘Women in Between’: Indian Women in Fur Trade Society in Western Canada." *Communications*, Winter (1977): 30-46. <http://www.mendeley.com>.

Historian and Professor Sylvia Van Kirk analyzes the roles of Aboriginal women in the fur trade with well documented sources but fails to find confirming evidence for her argument that Aboriginal and European men used Aboriginal women as “women in between” to increase their economic advantages. By referring to journals written by Europeans such as George Nelson, Alexander Henry and Governor James Knight, Van Kirk attempts to analyze their writings by excluding racial and gender biases, but because not all traders were literate, Van Kirk selected and presented the few journals written by educated traders as her primary sources. Because of a lack of personal accounts from Aboriginal women and Van Kirk’s reliance on the writings of European men, Van Kirk’s article simply offers a speculative perspective on the roles of Aboriginal women.

**Annotation Tips:** Explain your source’s background to show his/her authority and reliability as a source. Summarize the author’s argument. Reveal any biases and weaknesses apparent in the source.

❖ Chicago Style annotations can follow either MLA or APA formatting.

**Additional Resources:**

Cite Your Source: APA Style Guide, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Douglas College Library  
[http://www.douglas.bc.ca/\\_shared/assets/APA\\_styleguide\\_6thed61965.pdf](http://www.douglas.bc.ca/_shared/assets/APA_styleguide_6thed61965.pdf)

Cite Your Source: MLA Style. Douglas College Library  
[http://www.douglas.bc.ca/\\_shared/assets/APA\\_styleguide\\_6thed61965.pdf](http://www.douglas.bc.ca/_shared/assets/APA_styleguide_6thed61965.pdf)

Purdue Online Writing Lab: Annotated Bibliographies  
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/01/>