

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES

An annotated bibliography is a list of books (or articles) on a research topic with a critical 'annotation' with each entry. The annotated bibliography records and comments on (or notes) relevant information about the content of the text.

An annotated bibliography lists bibliographic details like any reference list. These are structured according to referencing conventions (Harvard, APA, MLA or other).

Content

People who read annotated bibliographies want to gain from the experience of the person who has read and used the book (or article). They need a summary of the contents, and they may also want a critical evaluation of the text.

They may want to know:

- aims and philosophical or theoretical bases of the source
- the intended audience
- its place in—and relationship to—the wider field of research
- how it adds to the research in the field
- strengths and weaknesses of the source
- if the information is sound, logical and well researched
- if it is broad and balanced

In short, the reader of an annotated bibliography wants a quick and effective insight into some of the books you have used, to get an idea of whether they would be useful for their own research. The reader is likely researching a similar topic to that covered by your essay or thesis. Therefore the bibliography writer should give a generalised description and broad evaluation of the book (or journal or article).

Language and focus

The language of an annotated bibliography should be formal and objective, following the style of academic writing. They are normally written in full sentences but some use brief and incomplete sentences when space and brevity are particularly crucial. The focus is on the source ('the article outlines...', 'the book covers...') and it is written in paragraphs with complete sentences and is generally in the present tense.

In an annotated bibliography you are required to outline the type, level and/or the quality of the information, it is important not to fall into discussing or summarising the information in the text. Think of yourself as a reviewer of the material. Tell the reader about the text, what it covers and in what way. Avoid discussion of the specific details of subject matter.

STUDY TIPS

Sample of a critical annotation

Look at the following sample of an annotation with the elements outlined on either side:

Any information apparent in the title of the text can be omitted from the annotation.

Be concise – you're writing a brief summary.

Write complete sentences, using standard English.

Mention only significant and relevant details.

This example discusses only one text so there is no need to cross reference or use in-text citations.

Raghuram, S, Garud, R, Wiesenfeld, B & Gupta, V 2001, 'Factors contributing to virtual work adjustment', *Journal of Management*, vol. 27, pp. 383-405.

This article explores the factors that facilitate or hinder employees' adjustment from a conventional office-based environment to a virtual work environment, situated either distantly or at home. The article suggests that structural factors (such as work independence and clear evaluation criteria) and relational factors (such as feeling of trust in colleagues and management, and a sense of connectedness to the company) are key facilitators of successful adjustment. Researchers also explore issues such as age, gender and experience of virtual work as moderators of the key indicators.

The report is highly readable and there is a logical progression in explaining the rationale of the study design. The results are supported statistically and simple graphic representations distil the important findings. Although the research sample was generally a representative cross-section across genders, job categories and management hierarchy, it may be biased in the fact that only telecommunication industries were selected. Furthermore, all results correlate to measures of the employees' adjustment to virtual work; however, these completely rest upon 'self-perceived adjustment'. Whether or not this is a reliable and true measure of their adjustment has not been addressed.

The finding that organisational connectedness is a powerful factor in the adjustment to virtual work for men has informed the present research on women in IT. The article is useful to my research topic as Raghuram et al. find that although a correlation between feeling connected to the company and successful virtual work adjustment still remains, it is much less significant for females. This potentially supports the notion that women are well suited to being the pioneers of the virtual work environment.

Starts with full bibliographic details of the text.*

Provides a brief summary of the content, including the aims.

Outlines the main findings and conclusions.

[Identifies the research methods if applicable.]

Gives a critical evaluation of the article.

Includes a critical evaluation of the methodology and the content.

Identifies possible limitations of the text.

Indicate how this material may be relevant and useful for your research.

* Annotations are listed in alphabetical order by author.