

Annotated Bibliography FAQs

What is a bibliography?

A bibliography is a list of sources used in research, papers, or large projects; usually organized alphabetically by author name. It covers all relevant sources consulted unlike References or Works Cited, which list only those sources actually cited in a project. Its purpose is to provide context or stimulate discussion.

What is an annotation?

An annotation is a detailed description of a source, usually in a single paragraph underneath a bibliographic reference entry. It should both summarize the work and evaluate its contribution to a field of study or a research project.

How do I make an annotated bibliography?

Remember to always check the assignment instructions for specific requirements. Otherwise, follow these steps:

- Define a topic and search for resources using key words
- Read and take brief notes to identify relevant sources
- Summarize each source
- Note how the sources relate to one another and your topic
- Create an annotated entry for each source chosen

Reference & Annotation Paragraph Outline

I. Create a reference entry for the source in either APA, ASA, MLA, Chicago/Turabian, or another citation system and place it above the annotation paragraph.

II. Write a paragraph of 6-7 sentences about the source and your research:
Note: A & B are about the source only, C is about your topic and the source.

- A.** Summarize the source's topic and main points in two or three sentences.
- B.** Evaluate how the source fits into its academic field in two sentences.
Try asking these questions:
Is it applying existing methods to a new area of research?
Is it breaking new ground or is it continuing established practices?
Is it presenting established ideas in a new way?
Is it affirming or challenging theories in the field?
- C.** Explain how the source is relevant to the research topic in two sentences, ask:
How is this source related to my topic?
Does this source address my research question? How does it do so?

Example

I. Reference

APA 6th style

Eco, U. (2015). *How to write a thesis* (C. Mongiat Farina & G. Farina, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (Original work published 1977)

ASA 5th style

Eco, Umberto. [1977] 2015. *How to Write a Thesis*. Translated by Catarina Mongiat Farina, and Geoff Farina. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Chicago 17th /Turabian 9th Notes & Bibliography style

Eco, Umberto. *How to Write a Thesis*. Translated by Catarina Mongiat Farina, and Geoff Farina. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2015. Originally published as *Come si fa una tesi di laurea: le materie umanistiche* (Milan: Bompiani/RCS Libri S.p.A., 1977/2012).

MLA 8th style

Eco, Umberto. *How to Write a Thesis*. 1977. Translated by Catarina Mongiat Farina, and Geoff Farina, The MIT Press, 2015.

II. Annotation Paragraph

The book's central claim is that integrating sources well is an art all writers should master and it begins with strong research. Ironically, this is both easier and harder in the digital age. In a preface to this first version in English, the translators comment on the paradox of research advice from the era before the internet being relevant today. Students can now access nearly anything from anywhere almost immediately. Yet, such abundance may lead to losing a sense of where ideas came from and how they relate to each other. Eco emphasizes how the systems set out in the book instill fundamental academic virtues which then aid in owning both the process and the product of research. He maintains that while it may seem trivial, understanding the bibliographic details of sources is, in fact, essential to using them effectively. *How to Write a Thesis* offers not only sound advice on how manage a project but also delightful turns of phrase and a profound understanding of scholarship. It is marvelously useful for researchers who wish to communicate their findings to others.

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