

Annotated Bibliography

As we start to do our research it is important to keep track of what we are reading and how it fits with in our work. To do this we must take great notes and write summaries about what each book is about, if we don't we might just forget what we read. This is why we will be keeping an annotated bibliography of our sources. What follows is an explanation of how this will work.

What is an annotated bibliography?

An annotated bibliography is a list of citations to books, articles and documents. Each citation is followed by a brief (usually about 200 words) descriptive and evaluative paragraph, the annotation. The purpose of the annotation is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy and quality of the sources cited.

Annotations vs. Abstracts

Abstracts are just summaries describing what the readings are about. You can often find these at the beginning of scholarly journals articles or periodical indexes. Annotations describe the reading as well give a critical analysis of the reading. Annotations may describe the author's point of view, authority, or clarity and effectiveness.

The Process

Creating an annotated bibliography calls for the application of a variety of intellectual skills: concise exposition (don't use too many words), succinct analysis (get to the point fast) and informed library research (know how to look for readings).

1. First locate and record citations to book, periodicals, scholarly journals, and documents that may contain useful information and ideas about your topic. Review the actual readings. Then choose the readings that give you a variety of views on your topic.
2. Cite the book, article, or document using MLA style citation.
3. Write a short annotation that summarizes the central theme and scope of the book or article. Include one or more sentences that:
 - a. Evaluate the authority or background of the author
 - b. Comment on the intended audience
 - c. Compare or contrast this work with another you have cited or
 - d. Explain how this work illuminated your bibliographic topic

Things that each entry must have:

1. Summary of what the source says
2. Evaluation of the authority or background of author (what qualifies the author to write about this topic? What do they do, or what they have studied?)
3. Who is the intended audience (Who was meant to see this information?)
4. Compare and contrast this source to other you have read. (How does this agree and disagree with the other things you have read?)
5. How has this source helped you understand your topic

✓ **Be sure to alphabetize your bibliography and share the file with me via Google drive.**

SAMPLE ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY ENTRY

The following example uses MLA format for book citation:

Lamott, Anne. *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*. Anchor Books, 1995.

Lamott's book offers honest advice on the nature of a writing life, complete with its insecurities and failures. Taking a humorous approach to the realities of being a writer, the chapters in Lamott's book are wry and anecdotal and offer advice on everything from plot development to jealousy, from perfectionism to struggling with one's own internal critic. In the process, Lamott includes writing exercises designed to be both productive and fun.

Lamott offers sane advice for those struggling with the anxieties of writing, but her main project seems to be offering the reader a reality check regarding writing, publishing, and struggling with one's own imperfect humanity in the process. Rather than a practical handbook to producing and/or publishing, this text is indispensable because of its honest perspective, its down-to-earth humor, and its encouraging approach.

Chapters in this text could easily be included in the curriculum for a writing class. Several of the chapters in Part 1 address the writing process and would serve to generate discussion on students' own drafting and revising processes. Some of the writing exercises would also be appropriate for generating classroom-writing exercises. Students should find Lamott's style both engaging and enjoyable.

Distinguishing Scholarly Journals From Other Periodicals

Journals and magazines are important sources for up-to-date information in all disciplines. It is often difficult to distinguish between the various levels of scholarship found in the documents you will come across. In this guide there are four categories of periodical literature, you can use all four for your project, but the more you obtain information from scholarly or substantive news sources, the stronger your project and the better chance of a strong grade.

Definitions:

Scholarly:

- 1) Concerned with academic study, especially research,
- 2) Exhibiting the methods and attitudes of a scholar, and
- 3) Having the manner and appearance of a scholar.

Substantive: is defined as having a solid base, being substantial.

Popular: means fit for, or reflecting the taste and intelligence of, the people at large.

Sensational: is defined as arousing or intending to arouse strong curiosity, interest or reaction.

Keeping these definitions in mind, and realizing that none of the lines drawn between types of journals can ever be totally clear cut, the general criteria are as follows.

SCHOLARLY:

Scholarly journals generally have a sober, serious look. They often contain many graphs and charts but few glossy pages or exciting pictures. Scholarly journals always cite their sources in the form of footnotes or bibliographies. Articles are written by a scholar in the field or by someone who has done research in the field. The language of scholarly journals is that of the discipline covered. It assumes some scholarly background on the part of the reader.

- The main purpose of a scholarly journal is to report on original research or experimentation in order to make such information available to the rest of the scholarly world. Many scholarly journals, though by no means all, are published by a specific professional organization.

EXAMPLES OF SCHOLARLY JOURNALS: American Economic Review, Archives of Sexual Behavior, JAMA: The Journal of the American Medical Association, Journal of Marriage and the Family (published by the National Council on Family Relations), Sex Roles: A Journal of Research

SUBSTANTIVE NEWS OR GENERAL INTEREST

These periodicals may be quite attractive in appearance, although some are in newspaper format. Articles are often heavily illustrated, generally with photographs. News and general interest periodicals sometimes cite sources, though more often do not. Articles may be written by a member of the editorial staff, a scholar or a free lance writer. The language of these publications is geared to any educated audience. There is no specialty assumed, only interest and a certain level of intelligence. They are generally published by commercial enterprises or individuals, although some emanate from specific professional organizations.

- The main purpose of periodicals in this category is to provide information, in a general manner, to a broad audience of concerned citizens. **EXAMPLES OF**

SUBSTANTIVE NEWS OR GENERAL INTEREST PERIODICALS: Christian Science Monitor, Economist, National Geographic, New York Times, Scientific American

POPULAR

Popular periodicals come in many formats, although often somewhat slick and attractive in appearance. Lots of graphics (photographs, drawings, etc.). These publications rarely, if ever, cite sources. Information published in such journals is often second or third hand and the original source is sometimes obscure. Articles are usually very short, written in simple language and are designed to meet a minimal education level. There is generally little depth to the content of these articles.

- The main purpose of popular periodicals is to entertain the reader, to sell products (their own or their advertisers), and/or to promote a viewpoint.

EXAMPLES OF POPULAR PERIODICALS: Ebony, Parents, People Weekly, Readers Digest, Time

SENSATIONAL

Sensational periodicals come in a variety of styles, but often use a newspaper format. Their language is elementary and occasionally inflammatory or sensational. They assume a certain gullibility in their audience.

- The main purpose of sensational magazines seems to be to arouse curiosity and to cater to popular superstitions. They often do so with flashy headlines designed to astonish (e.g. Half-man Half-woman Makes Self Pregnant).

EXAMPLES OF SENSATIONAL PERIODICALS: Globe, National Examiner, Star, Weekly World News