

Creating an Annotated Bibliography

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, with the length of the annotation depending on assignment instructions and source contents.

The Three Types of Annotated Bibliographies

Descriptive

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

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.

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.

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.

Combination

A combination annotated bibliography is the most common annotated bibliography. As with the descriptive annotation, it describes the source, but it also critiques the contents of the source similarly to an analytical annotation.

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.

Source for examples: Harubang Antiques. “A Very Rare and Fine Set of Amulet, Key-Holder.”
<http://www.trocadero.com/harubang/items/684153/item684153.html>.

Preparing to Write the Annotation

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

For more detailed information on how to format the annotated bibliography, consult the appropriate style guide (e.g. APA, MLA, Chicago). Your best resource for more information about these formats in the reference librarian in the college library.

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.