

Many LIB 120 assignments require that you create an annotated bibliography, and these will become a major portion of your Semester Project. Consider this your “survival guide” for understanding and creating your entries!

### What’s an annotated bibliography???

An annotated bibliography is an organized list of sources such as books, periodical articles, Web pages and so on, *with an accompanying description and evaluation of the sources’ contents.*

**Citations** give the precise information needed to locate the material. For example, the citation for a book would include the author(s), title, place of publication, the publisher, and the year published. The citation must be in an accepted bibliographic format.

**Annotations** are a paragraph or two in your own words that describe the contents of an item, evaluate the relevance and usability of an item for your research, and discuss the credentials of the author(s).

### How do I create an annotation?

After examining the book’s table of contents, index, preface or introduction, and arrangement, plus scanning a few pages, you should be able to produce an annotation with no problems. If you’re looking at an article or web page, look at how it’s arranged, describe what the source is about, and ask yourself the following questions:

#### Who:

“Who wrote the book/article/web page?”

“What are his/her/their credentials? Looking at the credentials of the author, do I trust him/her to tell me the truth?”

“Who was this written for? Who would read it?”

#### What:

“What’s in the book/article/web page?”

“What subject or topic does it cover?”

“Is it scholarly, popular, or special interest? Is it grey literature?”

#### When:

“When was the book/article/web page written?”

“When was it last updated?”

“Is this information up-to-date enough for my topic?”

#### Where:

“Where did I find the reference to this information? From the Library Catalog? From a database? From a web site?”

“Where did the author(s) get their information?”

“If the book/article presents factual information, *where* did that information come from?”

“Does the author cite his/her sources?”

### Why:

“Why was it written? Was it written to inform and educate? Or persuade..? For some other reason?”

### How:

“How does this relate to what I know already? As far I can tell, is the information accurate? Does it make sense in light of other information I know about this topic?”

“How did the authors find their information? Are they reporting on a study they did, or are they describing something someone else found?”

“How is the material organized? Is it in chapters or sections? How many?”

“Does it have a table of contents? An index?”

“Does it have a bibliography at the end, or is the citation information at the end of each section or chapter?”

### Evaluation:

“Does the book/article/web site actually help me get the information I need?”

“What *doesn't* this book/article/web page do that I need it to?”

“Can I read this book? Or is it way over my head? Will it make sense to me and therefore help me become more knowledgeable about the topic?”

“Is it relevant? Is this really a good source for my project? Why or why not?”

## What are annotated bibliographies actually *used* for?

To review in-depth the literature on a particular subject.

To provide examples of the types of information sources available on a certain topic.

To describe additional books on a topic that may be of interest to your reader.

To explore a subject for future research.

To remind yourself of the items you have found and used, so you remember which was which.

## So what do we actually have to do?

Each assignment will have more specific instructions, but here's a really broad overview:

1. **Search:** Search the catalog for books on your topic, or, later, search the databases or the web for material on your topic.
2. **Locate:** Make sure the items you found are really good and *appropriate for your topic*. If they're not, go back until you have identified **good**, **relevant** items.
3. **Get Supporting Materials:** Print out the **full records** from the catalog or from the database (you know, the screen with the full information about the item). Photocopy the title page or first page of each (if it's an article or web site).
4. **Cite:** Once you have decided on the items you will use, create the citation for each item, providing all relevant information. The citation should follow MLA format.
5. **Annotate:** Beneath each citation, type your annotation, including one or two sentences describing the content of the material, the evaluation of the item's relevance, and the author's credentials.