Annotated Bibliography

What is an Annotated Bibliography?

An annotated bibliography is a list of citations of outside sources. Each source is briefly described and evaluated. Usually, the description summarizes the source, and the evaluation tells the reader about its relevancy to a research paper’s topic, its accuracy, and its quality.

How do I write an Annotated Bibliography?

Writing an Annotated Bibliography begins with your research and reading processes.

- **Research**
  - Use the library’s catalogs, databases, and other resources to find books, articles, and websites that are relevant to your research topic and/or question.
  - Ask a librarian for help if you need it.

- **Reading**
  - Take careful notes over each source as you read it. Highlight important concepts, terms, and ideas. Write notes and questions in the margin and/or in separate notebook paper.
  - After you read a source, write a brief summary of it. What is its main point? How does it support that main point?
  - Also after you read a source, write a description of the source’s relevance to your topic and its quality. Will the source help you write your paper? Why or why not? Is the source credible and believable? Why or why not?

- **Writing**
  - After you have found all the sources you need to write your paper AND taken good notes over each of them, then you can begin to write the Annotated Bibliography.
  - Unless told otherwise by your instructor, each entry in the Annotated Bibliography must have
    - A works cited entry
      - Check the citation style your class uses (MLA, APA, CMS, or something else?)
    - A descriptive paragraph that
      - tells the reader the author and title of the source
      - briefly summarizes the source’s content
    - An evaluative paragraph that explains
      - why the source is relevant to your topic or research question
      - why the source is believable (credible)
      - how and why you will use the source in your paper.