

Annotated Bibliography

Annotation is the emphasizing of important points in a document. A professor may request an annotated bibliography during your research process in order to provide guidance in your research, to ensure that you understand your research materials, and to provide you with a basis to get started on your research project. If your professor requests a particular format for an annotated bibliography, follow it; otherwise, the standard format of an annotated bibliography is:

- 1) a citation for the source that you reviewed in your research
- 2) three or four sentences summarizing the work

-Sample Annotated Bibliography by Jamie Kolodziej in MLA Format-

(You can find the guidelines for annotation in the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Sixth Edition, in sections 5.3, 5.5, and 5.6.1. Annotated bibliographies need to be in a double-spaced format, but are shown here single-spaced for concision.)

Annotated Bibliography

Clanton, Bonnie. A Comparative Study of Three American Witchcraft Plays. San Marcos: Texas State University, 1976.

Clanton describes how innocent people suffer in the community because of the greed, selfishness, and power of a certain few. She also analyzes the historical accuracy of The Crucible to the Salem witch trials, noting the difficulty of criticizing the play since it was created in modern times.

Fhaner, Beth A. "The Crucible." Magill's Cinema Annual. 16(1997): 116-18.

Fhaner makes two main points regarding Arthur Miller's The Crucible: 2) it is Miller's most-produced and arguably most powerful play; 1) the play was intended to comment on the outrageous and shameful way many people responded to the pressures of McCarthyism, turning over their friends, colleagues, and neighbors to authorities and telling outright lies.

Martine, James J. The Crucible: Politics, Property, and Pretense. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993.

Martine discusses Arthur Miller's life and works, providing a brief critique of both the literature and drama of The Crucible as reflective of both seventeenth-century America and the United States of the 1950's.

Miller, Eric. "Putting the Pieces Together. . . The Puzzle of Salem." 16 April 1999

<http://www.mindspring.com/~dreric?essays?salem.html>.

According to Miller, the Salem community was divided socially and economically, though politically it was one unit. He explains the Puritans' behaviors and shows why the innocent were accused. Overall, he puts the pieces of the Salem witch trials together in order to explain their historical meaning to the audience.

Simmons, Jerold. "Arthur Miller and The Crucible." *Journal of American History* 85(1998): 1193.

Simmons discusses the strange parallel between the plight faced by Arthur Miller in the hearings before the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1956 and the similar ordeal of John Proctor during the witch trials of 1692. Simmons also criticizes the fact that Miller could have avoided both naming names and the legal consequences of taking the Fifth Amendment.

How to Make Your Annotated Bibliography

Locate sources to be used in your research and prepare an annotated bibliography for these sources according to the instructions below. For each entry:

1. Prepare a Works Cited entry following an established format (MLA, APA, Turabian)
2. Compose a short summary of the source
3. Discuss how helpful this source will be to your research and why.

Once you have finished all of your entries, be sure to arrange them on the page in alphabetical order.

How to Write Summaries

Read your source carefully. Determine its structure. Identify the author's purpose in writing. This will help you to find the most important information in the source and help you to know what to summarize.

Re-read, Label and Underline. This time divide the passage into sections or stages of thought. The author's use of paragraphs will often be a useful guide. Label, or leave notes, on each section or stage of thought. Underline key terms and ideas.

Write One-Sentence Summaries on a separate sheet of paper for each stage of thought.

Write a Thesis - A One-Sentence Summary of the Entire Passage. The thesis should express the central idea of the passage. You can find the thesis either by looking through your underlined work and determining the overall idea or by looking at the author's original thesis. You can use part of the author's thesis in your summary but be sure to credit the author by putting his or her words in quotations.

Write the First Draft of your Summary by combining the thesis with your list of one-sentence summaries coupled with significant details from your source. Eliminate repetition. Disregard minor details or generalize them. For example, Carter, Reagan, and Bush might be generalized as "recent presidents."

Check Your Summary Against the Original Passage and make whatever adjustments are necessary for accuracy. Make sure the summary conveys the overall sense of the information you got from the source.

Revise Your Summary. Insert transitional words and phrases so that the sentences flow together. Check for style and avoid series of short, choppy sentences; combine sentences if they logically work

For more assistance with annotated bibliographies, or with any stage of the writing process, visit The Writing Center or call us to make an appointment.

