  
INFORMATION LITERACY PROGRAM  
 of Robert W. Sterling Sr. Memorial Library

**What is an annotated bibliography?**

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**What is an annotated bibliography?**

An annotated bibliography entry consists of two components: **the Citation and the Annotation.**

An annotated bibliography is a list of citations to books, articles, and documents. Each **citation** is followed by a brief (usually about 100-300 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.

**An annotation may include the following information:**

* A brief summary of the source
* The source’s strengths and weaknesses
* Its conclusions
* Why the source is relevant in your field of study
* Its relationships to other studies in the field
* An evaluation of the research methodology (if applicable)
* Information about the author’s background
* Your personal conclusions about the source

**Depending on your project or the assignment, your annotations may do one or more of the following:**

**Summarize**: Some annotations merely summarize the source. What are the main arguments? What is the point of this book or article? What topics are covered? If someone asked what this article/book is about, what would you say? The length of your annotations will determine how detailed your summary is.

For more help, see our handout on **paraphrasing** sources.

**Assess**: After summarizing a source, it may be helpful to evaluate it. Is it a useful source? How does it compare with other sources in your bibliography? Is the information reliable? Is this source biased or objective? What is the goal of this source?

**Reflect:** Once you've summarized and assessed a source, you need to ask how it fits into your research. Was this source helpful to you? How does it help you shape your argument? How can you use this source in your research project? Has it changed how you think about your topic?

**How do I format citations?**

Check with your instructor to find out which style is preferred for your class. Online citation guides for both the Modern Language Association (MLA) and the American Psychological Association (APA) styles are linked from the NVIT Library's Homepage.

* Hanging Indents are required for citations in the bibliography, as shown on the back of this sheet.

**Sample Annotated Bibliography Entries:**

The following example uses APA style (Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 7th edition, 2019) for the journal citation:

Waite, L., Goldschneider, F., & Witsberger, C. (1986). Nonfamily living and the erosion of traditional family orientations among young adults. American Sociological Review, 51, 541-554.

The authors, researchers at the Rand Corporation and Brown University, use data from the National Longitudinal Surveys of Young Women and Young Men to test their hypothesis that nonfamily living by young adults alters their attitudes, values, plans, and expectations, moving them away from their belief in traditional sex roles. They find their hypothesis strongly supported in young females, while the effects were fewer in studies of young males. Increasing the time away from parents before marrying increased individualism, self-sufficiency, and changes in attitudes about families. In contrast, an earlier study by Williams cited below shows no significant gender differences in sex role attitudes as a result of nonfamily living.

This example uses MLA style (MLA Handbook, 8th edition, 2016) for the journal citation:

Waite, Linda J., et al. "Nonfamily Living and the Erosion of Traditional Family Orientations Among Young Adults." American Sociological Review, vol. 51, no. 4, 1986, pp. 541-554.

The authors, researchers at the Rand Corporation and Brown University, use data from the National Longitudinal Surveys of Young Women and Young Men to test their hypothesis that nonfamily living by young adults alters their attitudes, values, plans, and expectations, moving them away from their belief in traditional sex roles. They find their hypothesis strongly supported in young females, while the effects were fewer in studies of young males. Increasing the time away from parents before marrying increased individualism, self-sufficiency, and changes in attitudes about families. In contrast, an earlier study by Williams cited below shows no significant gender differences in sex role attitudes as a result of nonfamily living.