

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES

Holman and Harmon define an annotated bibliography as one which, "in addition to the standard bibliographic data, includes comments on the works listed" (26). The purpose for such a bibliography is to concisely and accurately give readers an understanding of the content and usefulness of the listed texts. Depending on the compiler's purpose, an annotated bibliography may or may not include subjective words or opinions.

Work Cited: Holman, C. Hugh, and William Harmon. Fifth Edition. A Handbook to Literature. New York: Macmillan, 1986. Print.

LET'S LOOK AT EXAMPLES

Consulting a professional journal that includes an annotated bibliography is especially helpful. (Ask the librarian in Holt Library for help in finding one.) Pay attention to the compiler's comments. How does the compiler ... Describe a text? Comment on its purpose and suitability for an intended audience? Summarize its significant features? React to its argument or thesis? Directly quote its author?

Consider the following three examples. The first was taken from a paper for an English course, the second is from a paper on New Historicism, and the third is a fabricated example of what not to do. Note: these entries follow MLA format, and the annotation begins immediately after the publication information.

Example 1:

Bell, Elizabeth. "Somatexts at the Disney Shop." From *Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender, and Culture*. Indianapolis, IN: Indiana UP, 1995. Print. Elizabeth Bell, who teaches courses on women and communication across the gender gap at the University of South Florida, breaks female Disney characters into three distinct categories: the beautiful teen princess, the middle-aged but darkly alluring and evil "femme fatales," and the elderly servant/benefactress (115). Written for a college-level audience, this critical essay examines the models for these archetypes and motivations behind the categorizations. Notes, Ref., 16 pp.

Example 2:

Gallagher, Catherine and Greenblatt, Stephen. *Practicing New Historicism*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000. Print. Professors Gallagher and Greenblatt describe their motives and reasoning behind the form of New Historical literary criticism they practice. They do so without a single, overarching theory to guide all their endeavors, but explain that this is due to the fact that they started out by rebelling against the overarching theory of New Criticism.

Notice the differences between the two compilers' entries. The second entry relies primarily on facts that describe the text, whereas the first entry provides background information on the author, notes the target audience, and details the length of the original article as well as its extra features, e.g. notes and a reference list. Every compiler's approach may be different based on the assigned reasons for creating an annotated bibliography and the guidelines to which students should adhere.

Example 3:

Manguel, Alberto. *A History of Reading*. New York: Viking, 1996. Print. I used this book to learn about why people read. It will be extremely useful to me. I liked the author's style, and I learned a lot about the oldest recorded texts. My favorite chapter was "Forbidden Reading," which included a photograph of the Nazis burning books.

For obvious reasons, this entry is not useful. The compiler focuses on her opinions (note the frequent use of personal pronouns I and me) without offering any critical analysis of the text. Not all annotations have to be

long—in some cases, one or two sentences may be sufficient—but the entry should provide specific and relevant information about the source.

USE NOTE CARDS

At the top of each card, write a correct bibliographic entry for the source, following the assigned documentation style: APA, MLA, AMA, or Turabian.

ANALYZE THE CONTENT

Summarize and analyze the content of the sources, one by one, defining the purpose, main topics, scope, and significant features. List this information on the corresponding note card. Significant features might include the use of illustrations, footnotes, examples, and bibliographies, as well as the suitability of the material to the intended audience. To determine the purpose, main points and scope, scan the table of contents, the introduction and conclusion, headings, and bullet points, etc.

ALPHABETIZE THE CARDS

Arrange the note cards in alphabetical order by the author's last name. Organize the material for annotation into clear simple sentences or phrases. Make every word count. (Some instructors require complete sentences in annotations; others do not. Check with your instructor.) Begin with a capital letter and end with a period. Revise for clarity, accuracy, and conciseness. Remember, readers want to understand your annotations quickly and easily.

FORMAT THE ENTRY

Format your entry, using these examples as guides. Note the differences in each documentation style: MLA, APA, and Turabian.

Example 1: MLA Style

Ward, Annalee R. *Mouse Morality: The Rhetoric of Disney Animated Film*. Austin, TX: Texas UP, 2002. Print. *Add your information in your words here.*

Example 2: APA Style

Watts, S. (1997). *The magic kingdom: Walt Disney and the American way of life*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Add your information in your words here.

Example 3: Turabian Style

Cornell, T.J. *The Beginnings of Rome*. London: Routledge, 1995.

Add your information in your words here

PROOFREAD

As writers, we all make accidental mistakes as we compose our drafts. Don't forget to proofread after you've finished writing to catch any errors you may have made during the writing process. Your bibliography will look more professional, and you will appear stronger as a writer.

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