Annotated Bibliographies

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An **annotated bibliography** consists of two components: 1) a **bibliography** listing the works cited in the associated essay or piece of writing (formatted according to MLA Style), and 2) **annotations** indicating how the cited work contributes to the thesis or central idea of the associated essay or piece of writing. Annotated bibliographies should adhere to the following formatting guidelines:

Maintain *formatting consistent with the associated essay or piece of writing: Times New Roman font, size 12; one-inch margins; Canadian spelling; double spacing; page numbers on the top, right-hand corner with your surname.*

Centre *the title "Annotated Bibliography" at the top of the page. Do not use "Citations," "References," or any other title. Do not use italics, bold type, or quotation marks with the title.*

Format *each entry according to MLA Style, including a half-inch hanging indent from the left margin.*

Alphabetize *entries by the first word in the entry (usually the author's surname).*

Compose *a paragraph after each entry, indented one inch from the left margin, indicating how the source will advance the thesis or central idea of the associated essay or piece of writing. Length will vary by assignment, but try to balance concision with specificity. Avoid repetition of information from the entry.*

Refer *to OWL for more formatting information:*

owl.purdue.edu

"General Writing" > "Common Writing Assignments" > "Annotated Bibliographies"

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"Annotated Bibliographies." *Purdue Online Writing Lab*, owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/common_writing_assignments/annotated_bibliographies/index.html. Accessed 13 Oct. 2026.

Purdue OWL provides comprehensive information on compiling and formatting annotated bibliographies, including a list of commonly used types of sources and some tips on formulating effective annotations. Particularly useful is its recommendation to break down annotations into the three sections of "Summarize," "Assess," and "Reflect."

Cuddon, J.A. *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. 5th ed., Penguin, 2014.

Cuddon's definition of "bibliography" (76) provides a useful contextualizing discussion of the history of the term, and provides a distinction between the associated practices of "analytical," "critical," "descriptive," and "textual" bibliography. This information is helpful in deciding what types of sources to include in an annotated bibliography.

Headrick, Paul. *A Method for Writing Essays about Literature*. 3rd ed., Nelson, 2017.

While Headrick does not include a section devoted specifically to annotated bibliographies, his "Appendix 1" titled "MLA Format" (81-91) provides a succinct and user-friendly summary of MLA Style, including information about formatting the page of Works Cited. He includes sample entries for a variety of commonly used types of sources, including online sources (82-87).