

THE ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

“To annotate” means to make critical or explanatory notes or comments about a source. The notes, which are added to the standard bibliographic information, are called annotations. The two types of annotations are *descriptive* and *evaluative*.

Before annotating a source, the source material must be carefully read to identify the material’s thesis or primary argument, major issues or points developed, and the nature of the material’s supporting information (i.e. statistics, authorities, case studies, etc.). It is also often important to note the intended audience. Each resource included in an annotated bibliography should include correctly formatted bibliographic information, following the appropriate documentation style (APA, MLA). MLA style examples are included below.

DESCRIPTIVE

A *descriptive* annotation is a concise summary of the major points covered in the source. It requires the writer to read the materials carefully. The writer then gives a basic description, without being too detailed.

Examples:

Christensen, Francis. *Notes Toward a New Rhetoric*. New York: Harper & Row, 1967. Print.

The author’s purpose is to present six essays on the structure of the sentence and paragraph. The major areas are: generative rhetoric of the sentence and of the paragraph, sentence openers, and restrictive and non-restrictive modifiers.

Eggenschwiler, David L. “Arnold’s Passive Questers.” *Victorian Poetry*, 7 (Summer 1967). 117-28. Print.

Eggenschwiler interprets the scholar gypsy’s infinite quest as an element of the logic of the poem. He suggests that the shepherd and the speaker (both representing a modern man) will fail because they “seek peacefulness” instead of “peacefully seeking knowledge” as does the scholar.

EVALUATIVE

An *evaluative* annotation offers an opinion after a basic description of the work has been stated. It requires the writer to make some judgement on the source or the point of view presented in the source.

Examples:

Johnson, John. *Mark Twain's River of Freedom*. New York: Simon & Foster, 1976. Print.

The author's purpose is to show how Twain uses the Mississippi River in *Huckleberry Finn* as a metaphor for freedom. By contrasting Huck and Jim's peaceful experiences on the river with their harrowing experiences off the river, Johnson effectively establishes Twain's intent.

Achebe, Chinua. "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*." *Heart of Darkness*. Ed. Robert Kimbrough. New York: Norton, 1988. 251-62. Print.

This is a provocative essay by the influential Nigerian author Achebe on the prevalent image of Africa in the Western imagination, focusing on racist dimensions of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Achebe presents an interpretation of cultural identity and identifies a pervasive need on the part of "the West" to denigrate and dehumanize Africa. This controversial essay has been tremendously influential in recent discussion of multicultural education but has received by no means universal assent.

Goldberg, Vicki. "Art View: 1890's or 1990's, the Visions are of an Apocalypse Soon." *New York Times* 14 May 1995: C33+. *Academic Search Complete*. Web. 2 June 2011.

Goldberg provides a brief overview of the apocalyptic vision in art of the 19th and 20th century. Her focus is intentionally broad, emphasizing trends more often than specific artists. Though not for academicians, this survey offers an engaging and surprisingly complete view of apocalyptic art.