Annotated Bibliography

Before you can begin taking notes and working on a research paper, you must first do some reading to determine if you will indeed have enough material with which to work. At this time, you may refine or even change the focus of your topic, depending on the types of materials that you find. While a Works Cited page for an MLA research paper indicates the sources that you specifically cite within your paper, this page does not include information that you may have read but not cited. Sometimes instructors want you to include a Bibliography or Works Referenced page with your research paper to cover the additional material that may have influenced your writing and thought process; however, you will need to include only a Works Cited page for this project.

Similarly, an annotated bibliography is usually assigned as a preliminary assignment to a major research paper, or it may even replace a paper altogether. The purpose of an annotated bibliography is to determine the extent and quality of useable material for an academic research project. Different instructors may vary the assignment requirements, such as limiting the number sources, limiting the period of research, or assigning specific journals. For our purposes, the annotated bibliography will be a way for you to begin your research and your reading, to explore the resources available to you, compile information and safeguard against not having enough research, to work on the often tricky MLA bibliographic information, and to report back to your teacher. The sources that you use on your research paper will come from your annotated bibliography. In fact, your Works Cited page will look much like an abbreviation of your bibliography.

For our purposes, you should begin the bibliography with a paragraph that explains the topic of your research. The rest of the bibliography is formatted like an expanded Works Cited page. You will turn in a list of the sources that you investigate. You may consult information booklets, periodicals, books, documentaries, instructional CD-ROM’s, experts in the field, or Internet sources. For each of the sources, you will complete the proper MLA citation for each work and then briefly summarize the work (a short paragraph, about 4-5 sentences). You should only be using reliable sources for your bibliography. As a rule of thumb, be mindful of your instructor’s individual requirements for the assignment.

**Final Format**

* The Annotated Bibliography should be typed. If you do not have access to a computer at home, you will need to access one at another location.
* Even though MLA traditionally double-spaces everything, single-space your focus paragraph and summaries but double-space between entries. (The single spacing on this type of assignment saves trees.)
* Title this assignment “Annotated Bibliography.”
* **Begin with your focus paragraph a double space below your title. In this paragraph, you will discuss the topic of your research and why you would like to research it. You may use first person in this paragraph**.
* Following your focus paragraph, you will alphabetize your sources, keying in the information per MLA standards.
  + Do *not* include a, an, or the in the alphabetizing of a title.
  + Use hanging indent if your source information will occupy more than one line:

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| --- | --- |
| Word 2003 | Word 2007 |
| “Format”  “Paragraph”  “Special” (down arrow)  “Hanging” | “Page Layout”  “Spacing” (“Before” and “After” set at 0 pt.)  “Paragraph” (down arrow)  “Special”  “Hanging” |

* You will write a short paragraph (four to five sentences) that summarizes the information found in each source. Then you will write another brief assessment of the usefulness of this source. These paragraphs will be double spaced below the source information.

**Caution**

* Periods and commas go *inside* quotation marks.
* When citing websites, DO NOT INCLUDE the hyperlinks.
* Check to make sure that your Annotated Bibliography adheres to MLA format.
* Proofread your paper before you submit it!