

Annotated Bibliography

An **annotated bibliography** is a formatted list of researched sources that includes a brief evaluation of each source. These descriptive paragraphs, or annotations, are usually less than 150 words in length and are meant to demonstrate the accuracy, quality, and relevance of the works cited in relation to the topic being researched.

Unlike abstracts, which are purely descriptive summaries, annotations not only summarize the information in a work cited, but they also analyze the content's perspective, credibility, and relevance. Composing an annotated bibliography therefore encourages the researcher to critically examine each of his/her sources for central themes, intended audience, the authority and background of the author, and areas in which the text supports or illuminates the research topic. This process of critical thinking also helps the writer to clarify the focus of his/her research topic as he/she evaluates and refines his/her list of sources to support a strong thesis. After writing the research paper, an annotated bibliography also provides readers with deeper insight into how and why the writer utilized his/her sources.

The citation style used in an annotated bibliography should be consistent with the style used in the rest of the research paper. Usually, this is either MLA or APA format but may vary according to instructors' preferences. Individual instructors should be consulted for their specific formatting requirements. For further assistance, Germanna students are also welcome to make an appointment with Tutoring Services for an individual tutoring session. On the reverse side of this page is a sample MLA annotated bibliography.

Brando 1

In MLA
Citation
Style

Martin Brando
Professor Smiles
English 111
1 September 2008

Annotated Bibliography

Title
Centered

Bibliography
in MLA
citation style

Griffith, John. *Joseph Conrad and the Anthropological Dilemma: 'Bewildered Traveler.'* New York: Oxford University Press, 1995. Print. This work was cited because it makes the point that the Europeans who called the Africans savage were often leading lives steeped in traditions and superstitions. The "progress" of the European nations had done nothing but give new names to previous beliefs, however irrational. This is something that contributes to the deconstructions of the terms "civilized" and "primitive."

Write a paragraph about why this source is an important resource for the paper. This paragraph should be in the same "hanging indent" format as the Works Cited page.

Make sure that the sources are in alphabetical order (in the same citation style as the Works Cited).

Hunter, Allen. *Joseph Conrad and the Ethics of Darwinism: The Challenge of Science.* Kent: Croom Helm Ltd., 1983. Print. This work is useful because it discusses how the motives of the Europeans who colonized Africa were far from pure, despite their glossy exterior. Underneath the claims of "bringing progress" were nothing but racism and a hunger for power.

Notice how the length of the paragraph varies for each source.

Krjaka, Wieslow. *Isolation and Ethos: A Study of Joseph Conrad.* Boulder: East European Monograph, 1992. Print. This work speaks of the colonizers of Africa without giving them the benefit of the doubt about having good intentions, but argues that they were greedy from the start. Looking at it like this, the Europeans may be viewed as at least as savage as the Africans, if not more.