Organization, Option 3: Annotated Bibliographies

Purpose: Now that you've determined the amount of research your manuscript will require, it is time to start collecting the research that will become the bulk of your literature review. Not all of the research that you find during this initial search period will be useful, but it is often worth categorizing in the event that you end up discovering a use for it later in your writing process.

Description: The process for finding research for your writing should be similar or outright the same as finding research for other academic writing projects. Where do you normally look for sources? The major difference is the amount of research that you will be collecting. Consider your writing process for a standard academic project. Do you normally conduct your research all at once? Do you begin writing immediately after reading your articles? In your field, are your sources most primary or secondary? For this big endeavor, we recommend spreading your research out over the course of several weeks *before* attempting to write about it in one gigantic literature review block.

However, in this stage, you will be writing *about* the resource texts you collect. Much of the annotated writing that you collect at this stage will be reusable when you go to finalize your Literature review. As you collect your research, create annotated bibliographies or dedicated research notes based on what you believe is most relevant about your research. Use the form on the next page to help you with this process.

- It is recommended that you keep a file filled with a copy of the form with a notation on each of the sources that you collect. For digital sources, you might also be able to print a physical copy and staple your notations to the front of them. A digital collection of these forms may also prove useful for your organization.

The form asks you to choose between the categories of "**Keep,"** "**Maybe**," and "**No, But…"** For texts that you keep, note how and why and where you intend to use the source.

- For sources you choose "Keep", note the features about the source that you find relevant as well as *questions* that you have about the source and its uses for you.
- For source where you select "Maybe", note the features that it has that might make the source more worthy of inclusion as well as any links it may have to your literature. What would improve it?
- If you choose "No, But…" there should be something about the source that draws you in; these kinds of sources can often act as a springboard for future sources or authors in the same vein as the source you are rejecting.
- If No, is it related to your topic? Does it give you a direction of other research you may want to look into based on some aspect of the article?

The best way to keep your research organized is to decide early how you want to present this research in your manuscript. If you're going to be discussing the bulk of your research in the Literature Review, will it be presented chronologically? Will some topics be presented before others? How many topics can you divide your research into?

Source # _____ of _____

Source Name_____

Author(s)_____

Year_____ Edition_____ Publisher_____

Other Reference Info _____

Highlight one: Keep Maybe No, But…

Why?_____

_____

What is this source about?

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Why is this source important to your overall research?

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Where and how will you use this source in your manuscript?

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Additional notes:

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