

Annotated Bibliography

What is an annotated bibliography?

An “annotated bibliography” is an alphabetical list of sources on a particular topic that provides information about (i.e., annotates) each source. For each source, include a full **reference entry** in the referencing style required (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.), followed by the **annotation**. Each annotation is written in one or more paragraphs depending on the assignment requirements. The purpose of the annotation could be to summarize and/or evaluate each source in terms of its content, method, conclusions, or relevance for a particular type of inquiry.

What's an “annotation”?

An annotation may vary depending on your assignment instructions, but typically, an annotation for each source included in the annotated bibliography contains 3 parts:

1. A **summary** of the source
2. An **evaluation** of the source
3. A description of how the source is **relevant** to your research question, topic, or inquiry

Note. Not all assignments will require all 3 parts! Follow the instructions provided by your instructor.

How to write the 3 parts:

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Summary | <p>Briefly describe the author's main ideas, evidence, and findings or conclusions. Be concise but also provide enough information for someone who has never read the source to understand what's going on.</p> <p>⚠ Caution! Do not simply paraphrase the abstract or summary of a source because you could miss important details. Read the source in depth and translate it into your own words.</p> |
| Evaluation | <p>Evaluate the quality of the source by assessing its credibility and weighing its strengths, limitations, and bias. Who wrote it and for what purpose? What type of source is it? What expertise does the author(s) have?</p> |
| Relevance | <p>Think about how the source applies to your research question or topic. What value does it bring to your work? How does it fit in with the topic? Does the source have practical application in any way? If it does, how?</p> |

How long should my annotation be?

The length of an annotation depends on the assignment. An annotation can be between 100 to 250 words in length, and can be organized into one or more paragraphs, but expectations vary. Pay attention to the assignment requirements or ask your instructor.

How many sources do I need?

The number of sources in an annotated bibliography can also vary. If you're unsure, consult your assignment guidelines and rubric or ask your instructor.

How should I format the document?

While the format will ultimately depend on the assignment guidelines and the referencing style you are using, APA Style is the most commonly used, so some brief APA guidelines are outlined below.

- Include a title, in bold and centered, for the annotated bibliography at the top of the first page. The title should include a few key words about your topic, a colon, then the words Annotated Bibliography (i.e., **Your Topic: Annotated Bibliography**).
- Alphabetically organize the reference entries, starting with the first letter of the entry (i.e., usually the author's last name).
- Start your reference entry at the left margin, and format it using a 0.5 inch hanging indent.
- Indent the whole annotation below the reference entry so that the annotation aligns with the hanging indent. Don't indent the first line of the first paragraph (i.e., summary). Start each subsequent paragraph (i.e., evaluation, relevance) on a new line, and indent the first line of each new paragraph by 0.5 inch (use the "Tab" key).
- Double space the entire document. Do not add any extra spaces between entries or paragraphs.

Note: You can adapt the format based on other referencing style guidelines or any specific requirements or samples provided by your instructor.

**Find a sample annotated bibliography (with one source)
formatted in APA Style on the next page.**

Sociological Perspectives on Boxing: Annotated Bibliography

Beauchez, J. (2016). In the shadow of the other: Boxing, everyday struggles and the feeling of strangeness. *Sociology*, 50(6), 1170–1184. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038515587638>

The author details how the immigrant boxers at the Grant d'Or gym deal with the difficulty or strangeness of being outsiders to both their home countries and France.

Beauchez (2016) suggests that through this experience of exile, the boxers are “continually reduced to a disqualified otherness” (p. 1171) that he also refers to as a “hybrid identity” (p. 1179). Because the boxers exist in an in-between state, no longer belonging to their home countries or fully being considered French, they are engaging in fights not just with their physical opponent but with the otherness thrust upon them by society as well. The study’s primary goal was to understand how boxers interpret the struggles they face. In engaging an opponent in the ring, the boxers are able to deliver a public demonstration of their dominance, which represents a means of obtaining recognition of one’s worth from opponents as well as from the French spectators.

While the study is compelling and well-researched, because Beauchez embeds himself within the gym, forming personal relationships with the boxers while training and socializing with them, there is the potential for personal bias or personal and emotional connections to influence conclusions. That being said, Beauchez is a respected member of his field within France, and the article is published in *Sociology*, which is a major peer-reviewed sociological journal. Ultimately, this microsociological and ethnographic study is particularly useful in understanding the social aspects of boxing as well as the role boxing can play in identity formation and resistance against feelings of inequity.

Note. Colour coding illustrates the parts (i.e., reference entry, summary, evaluation, relevance).