

Unit 2 - Reflective Annotated Bibliography

In order to explain Unit 2, I have to talk about Units 2 + 3 together first, because you'll use the research you do now in Unit 2 for your project in Unit 3, so you're going to have to use some foresight in the research decisions you make!

In Unit 3 (the NEXT unit) you'll be making a new document in a new genre, one you haven't written in before, about the question you've decided to research in Unit 2. For example, in Unit 3, you might write a science article for the readers of *Scientific American*, or a political article for the readers of *Teen Vogue* (It's actually very political these days!). You might create a how-to manual, a manifesto, a short story, a TED Talk or a comic book. Whatever you write in Unit 3 will be based on the research you do in Unit 2. You don't need to know exactly what you're going to be doing in Unit 3 yet, but it will be useful to have this in the back of your mind.

In Unit 2, (THIS unit) you will be writing something called an "annotated bibliography." This is something people write when researching: a list of sources (articles, interviews, etc...) about a specific topic; generally, for each source, there is a summary of that source as well as other important notes. Annotated bibliographies are very helpful tools for research because they help us keep track of multiple sources and ideas so we can use them later in larger projects. They also help us get a broad understanding of the topic or question we are researching. People use them in all kinds of academic research-- but people also use documents like this in almost every field to make sense of their research for their future selves, their professors, their bosses and the committees and groups they work with.

You will be writing a "*reflective* annotated bibliography." That means, for each of your three sources, you will write entries that are a little bit longer than a person would in a usual annotated bibliography. That's why this is the whole assignment instead of just one step in a research paper. Doing it this way will help you learn more about your topic and sources and more about doing research in general.

In each entry, you'll write about, not just what the writer said, but how they said it, why they said it and what you think about it. I know this sounds a bit confusing right now, but don't worry. I'll explain it as we go!

What you need to do now:

We need to start by finding a question or topic that really makes you curious-- something you really want to learn more about. We've done some work looking for these questions in the Guardian article "[Schools are Killing Curiosity](#)" and in Baldwin's "[A Talk to Teachers](#)." We will work together to narrow this down into a question you can research.

This is not a traditional research essay. It does not begin with a thesis. Real research, as we'll discuss, is all about asking questions that you don't already have the answers to. Doing research to support a position you already have is a persuasive essay, but not the kind of research we do in real life (most of the time). Most of the time, we do research to find out something we don't already know! So you'll start with questions and then follow whatever interesting side roads you discover, informing the class (and yourself) about what you found.

An overview of the process and finished product:

We will spend the next few weeks researching and writing. An annotated bibliography is something you write as you research (though of course you will spruce it up for final submission).

Your reflective annotated bibliography will have (don't worry, we'll go over all of these ingredients in detail as we do them):

- An introduction in which you introduce your question, why this question intrigues you and what you expect to find in your research. (At least 300 words)
- **THREE** sources (at least 400 words each), each with a corresponding bibliography entry which includes
 - A bibliographic entry in MLA format (see the "RAB Road Map" below for more info)
 - A summary, in your own words, of the source's content– not just what the text means, but what it means to *you!*
 - Critical thinking section: an evaluation of the author's credentials, writing style, and purpose, and why you think the author is credible or not)
 - You will also probably want to include a couple of key quotes here that you might want to use later-- these don't count toward your word count!
- Each of these three sources will need to be a different genre. ("Genre" is the French word for "type") What this means is, you need to look at different types of sources. You can't have four magazine articles or four YouTube videos. We'll discuss this in class.
- A conclusion, in which you summarize what you found, and explain what surprised you and how your thinking on your question deepened or changed. You will also explain why you think what you learned is important, and who you think should hear about it (At least 400 words)
- Just FYI: this whole thing adds up to at least 1900 words. Usually people write more.

What you'll be graded on:

1. Content: Is it readable and informative? Does it teach us about the topic? Do we learn how YOU feel about the topic? Is it at least 1900 words long?

2. Research: Did you dig deep-- meaning, did you look for sources that don't just agree with what you thought you would find? Were you open to being surprised and contradicted? Did you look further than the first three hits on Google?

3. Genre: Remember that your three sources must each be a different genre!

4. Presentation: Basically, can someone who is not you make sense of this, both visually and intellectually? Are there subheads and other things that would help a reader make sense of your document? Is it organized? Standard Written English and academic tone don't matter so much, just as long as it's done with care and shows that you've proofread it.

6. Citation: If you quote something in your Intro or Conclusion that's from one or more of your sources, be sure to cite it. We will go over citation rules in class.