T|L|C

Teaching and Learning Center
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON TACOMA

<u>The Basics of an Annotated Bibliography[1]</u>

<u>WHAT:</u>   An annotation is a "note" that explains or comments on a source.[2] An annotated bibliography is a compilation of annotations alongside the bibliographic information for each source. It differs from a Bibliography, References, or Works Cited list that provides only bibliographic information without any commentary.

<u>WHY:</u>   Writing an annotated bibliography will help you critically evaluate books, journal articles, and other sources to determine which are useful for your research. You can use an annotated bibliography as an organizational tool for large amounts of information, making specific pieces of information easily accessible and comparable. They also provide your readers with concise, accurate background information about your topic and sources.

<u>WHERE:</u>   An annotated bibliography is usually a separate document and can be placed in an appendix at the end of your paper. However, this bibliography **does not** replace the Bibliography, References, or Works Cited list.

<u>WHEN:</u>   You should begin your annotated bibliography when you begin your research. After you determine a source is appropriate for your work, immediately write a brief summary or annotation on the source. As you continue your research, you can update your annotated bibliography to include additional sources that you have cited in your text.

<u>HOW:</u>

General Tips:
- Keep each annotation to one short paragraph.
- To reduce word count, use precise terms instead of general phrases.
- Avoid using quotes or specific statistics from the source.
- *For more guidance, always ask your professor, refer to your assignment sheet, and be mindful of the document's specific audience and purpose.*

Specific Formatting:
- Format each bibliographic entry using the citation style for your discipline.[3]
- List bibliography entries in alphabetical order by authors' last names.
- Determine how to structure your annotation based on the type of source and your academic discipline. See the other side of this sheet for more information and some examples.

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[1] Information compiled from previous TLC handouts
[2] Definition adapted from the Merriam-Webster Dictionary
[3] Check out the TLC's website and print "writing resources" for citation guides

Annotated Bibliography Examples

The examples below provide two detailed explanations of what is necessary to include in an annotated bibliography. Remember that each sentence in an annotation serves a purpose. Use these examples to help determine what that purpose is and apply it to your own annotated bibliography.

➢ Follow this format for essays in the **humanities**, **sciences/social sciences**, or **policy statements**:

1. State the author, genre, and main argument of your source. (1-2 sentences)
2. Describe the problem or need that the author is addressing. (1 sentence)
3. Briefly evaluate the source's evidence and rhetoric. (2-3 sentences)
4. Explain the source's relevance to your research. (1-2 sentences)

Davidson, Hilda Ellis. *Roles of the Northern Goddess*. London: Routledge, 1998.

1. Hilda Davidson's book provides a thorough examination of the major roles filled by the numerous pagan goddesses of Northern Europe in everyday life.
2. Through the understanding of these goddesses the author explains religion in early European society.
3. Davidson explains their roles in hunting, agriculture, domestic arts like weaving, the household, and death. The author discusses relevant archaeological evidence, patterns of symbol and ritual, and previous research.
4. This book provides in-depth information on the early religious practices of Northern Europeans.

➢ Follow this format for reports or articles about **empirical research:**

1. State the author and author's credentials, type of research (e.g., qualitative or quantitative) and topic. (1 sentence)
2. Describe the problem or gap that the author is addressing. (1 sentence)
3. Briefly explain the research design (e.g., variables, data collection methods). (1-2 sentences)
4. State the author's results and their significance. (1-2 sentences)
5. Evaluate the work's credibility (e.g., biases, validity of methods). (1-2 sentences)
6. Explain the source's relevance to your research. (1-2 sentences)

Connolly, T. M., Boyle, E. A., MacArthur, E., Hainey, T., & Boyle, J. M. (2012). A systematic literature review of empirical evidence on computer games and serious games. *Computers & Education,* 59(2), 661–686.

1. Connolly et al. explore the empirical literature on computer games and the potential positive impacts of gaming on users aged 14 years or above, especially with respect to learning, skill enhancement, and engagement.
2. The authors refute the perception of video games as harmful to youth.
3. They analyze 129 studies using a multidimensional approach to categorizing games that examines games' main purpose, genres, subject disciplines, and learning and behavioral outcomes. Research finds that playing computer games is linked to a range of perceptual, cognitive, behavioral, affective, and motivational impacts and outcomes, with the most frequently occurring outcomes including knowledge acquisition/content understanding and affective and motivational impact.
4. Connolly et al. discuss the diversity of research on positive impacts and outcomes of playing digital games and calls for more randomized control trials and qualitative studies of gaming.
5. The authors perform a thorough analysis of the research but the qualitative nature of the research allows for the possibility of bias in its interpretation.
6. However, the data collected offers an alternative interpretation of the gaming debate.