

What is an Annotated Bibliography?

So you've been assigned an annotated bibliography . . . what does that mean?

An **annotated bibliography** is a descriptive list of resources (books, articles, films, sound recordings, Web sites, etc.) focusing on a common theme. Each entry in an annotated bibliography has a full citation and an annotation ranging from a few sentences to several paragraphs.

The **citation** provides information about the author, title, date, source, and publisher of the item. Citations should be formatted according to one of the style manuals: MLA, APA, CBE or Chicago/Turabian. See our guide on [Citation Styles](#) for more information.

The **annotation** is a concise and informative description that summarizes and evaluates the contents of a resource. It differs from an abstract, which just summarizes the original content. An annotation usually strikes a balance between summary and evaluation by addressing some of the following:

- Describe briefly the **content** of a resource
- Evaluate the **usefulness** of the item for the particular topic being studied
- Explain the **methodology** that was used
- Draw attention to any **themes** addressed
- Highlight **strengths** and/or **weaknesses**
- Discuss the **reliability** of the author or source
- Critically **evaluate** the content for accuracy, bias and authority

Examples:

In MLA Format (but make sure to double-space):

Miller, Jonathan and Borin Van Loon. *Darwin for Beginners*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1982. In this fresh approach to the history of Charles Darwin, the authors present biographical, social and historical facts about Darwin's life and theory in the fashion of a graphic novel. Clearly written as an introduction to the topic, this book does not give the depth or detail of more lengthy books on the subject. However, with its creative presentation, this book is good for audiences just beginning to learn about Charles Darwin.

In APA Format (but make sure to double-space):

Preston, W. (1981). *Vanishing landscapes: land and life in the Tulare Lake Basin*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

The author explores the impact of human dominated landscapes and cultural creations upon the regional identity of the Tulare lake Valley Basin (just to the north of the Los Angeles Basin). It is a microcosm of the much larger transformation that occurred southward and an opportunity to understand the processes that affected Los Angeles.

From environmental alterations to the arrival of the railroad to the rise of agribusiness's world farm and the waning regional identity of the area's inhabitants, the book offers insight into the changing landscape of Southern California between 1770 and 1980.