An annotated bibliography is a list of citations on a certain topic that provide a description of each of the various books, articles, and other sources on the list. The annotated bibliography looks like a Works Cited page but includes a summary and/or critical evaluation (i.e., annotation) after each source that is cited. It can be part of a larger research project, or can be a stand-alone report in itself.

There are two types of annotations:

- A summary annotation describes the source by answering the following questions: who wrote the document, what does the document discuss, when and where was the document written, why was the document produced, and how was it provided to the public. The focus is on description.
- An evaluative annotation includes a summary as listed above but also critically assesses the work for accuracy, relevance, and quality. Evaluative annotations can help you learn about your topic, develop a thesis statement, decide if a specific source will be useful for your assignment, and determine if there is enough valid information available to complete your project. The focus is on description and evaluation.

Process for Writing an Evaluative Annotation:

1. Cite the source using MLA style.
2. Describe the main ideas, arguments, themes, theses, or methodology, and identify the intended audience.
3. Explain the author’s expertise, point of view, and any bias he/she may have.
4. Compare to other sources on the same topic that you have also cited to show similarities and differences.
5. Explain why each source is useful for your research topic and how it relates to your topic.
6. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each source.
7. Identify the observations or conclusions of the author.

Remember: Annotations are original descriptions that you create after reading the document. When researching, you may find journal articles that provide a short summary at the beginning of the text. This article abstract is similar to a summary annotation. You may consult the abstract when creating your evaluative annotation, but never simply copy it as that would be considered plagiarism.

Basic Writing and Format Tips:

- Each annotation should be one paragraph, between three to six sentences long (about 150-200 words).
- Start with the same format as a regular Works Cited list.
- After each citation, the annotation is indented one-half inch from the left margin as a block.
- All lines should be double-spaced. Do not add an extra line between the citations.
- If your list of citations is especially long, you can organize it by topic.
- Try to be objective, and give explanations if you state any opinions.
- Use the third person (e.g., he, she, the author) instead of the first person (e.g., I, my, me).
Example – Summary Annotation


Herbert London, the Dean of Journalism at New York University and author of several books and articles, explains how television contradicts five commonly believed ideas. He uses specific examples of events seen on television, such as the assassination of John Kennedy, to illustrate his points. His examples have been selected to contradict such truisms as: "seeing is believing"; "a picture is worth a thousand words"; and "satisfaction is its own reward." London uses logical arguments to support his ideas which are his personal opinion. He does not refer to any previous works on the topic. London's style and vocabulary would make the article of interest to any reader.

The words in bold below show what has been added to the summary annotation to make it an evaluative annotation.

Example – Evaluative Annotation


Herbert London, the Dean of Journalism at New York University and author of several books and articles, explains how television contradicts five commonly believed ideas. He uses specific examples of events seen on television, such as the assassination of John Kennedy, to illustrate his points. His examples have been selected to contradict such truisms as: "seeing is believing"; "a picture is worth a thousand words"; and "satisfaction is its own reward." London uses logical arguments to support his ideas which are his personal opinion. He does not refer to any previous works on the topic; however, for a different point of view, one should refer to Joseph Patterson's, *Television is Truth* [Patterson, Joseph. “Television is Truth.” *Journal of Television* 45.3 (1995): 120-35. Print.] London's style and vocabulary would make the article of interest to any reader. The article clearly illustrates London's points, but does not explore their implications, leaving the reader with many unanswered questions.


21 June 2011.