Annotated bibliography summary

Introduction

Purpose

You may need to write an annotated bibliography for the following reasons:

- To think through issues in a subject
- To review the literature of a subject
- To learn to evaluate research
- To decide which research is relevant to your needs and make a list of summaries for later assessments

Steps to writing an annotated bibliography

1. Read the instructions carefully and analyse the topic.
2. Conduct research, select your sources and record the bibliographic details.
3. Critically read the sources and note key points, strengths and weaknesses.
4. Put away the originals and use your notes to write an annotation for each source.
5. Reread the original to make sure your annotation is accurate.
6. Arrange the annotations in alphabetical order by author.

Structure and content

Structure

1. **Most:** a list of sources and annotations organised in alphabetical order according to author's surname.
2. **Some:** a brief introduction that announces the topic and aim; a list of sources and annotations in alphabetical order; a conclusion that synthesises the main points from the annotations.

Content

Citation	full bibliographic details of the text - check which style your lecturer requires
Summary	an introduction to the text (topic, genre, aim and/or scope) relevant details about the author and the intended audience the main arguments and key ideas the research methods, findings or main conclusions
Comment	an evaluation of the text's strengths and/or limitations a comparison with research in the field the contribution of the text to the field or discipline the relationship between this text and themes in your unit the relevance or usefulness of the text for your purpose

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Evaluating sources

Selecting sources and evaluating sources

- Use the CRAAP test to choose your sources. Does the source have currency, relevance, authority, accuracy, and purpose?
- Read the source and focus on overall credibility; quality of the argument and evidence; and tone and style of writing.

Evaluating research

Introduction and literature review	Results
Is the hypothesis or aim of the research clear? Do the researchers clearly show that their study is meeting a need or filling a gap in our knowledge? Do the researchers show how their study builds on previous research?	Are data analysis tools identified? Are the steps in the data analysis explained and justified? Are the results relevant to the aim? Are the results explained? Do tables and graphs support the explanation?
Method Is any theoretical framework explained and justified? Is the study design made clear? Is a rationale given for the chosen method? How detailed is the methods section? Do the researchers explain how they control variables?	**Discussion and conclusions** Are conclusions supported by the results? Do the researchers discuss the extent of their success? Do the researchers discuss the limitations? Does the discussion section contribute to scholarly debate on the topic?

Useful language

Signpost language

Use signpost language to help your reader follow your ideas. For example:

- *This exploratory study aims to...*
- *The authors explain that... The authors go on to analyse...*
- *One strength/weakness is... Another is...*

Tense

- Use *present tense* to introduce the source, summarise the main arguments, and evaluate it.
- Use *past tense* to summarise research methods.
- Use *future time* to describe how you will use the source.

Reporting verbs

Use reporting verbs accurately. For example:

- The authors **aim** + to + verb   *The authors aim to identify a method to improve X.*
- Ng (2022) **claims** + that + clause   *Ng (2022) claims that his method improves X.*
- They **analyse** + noun phrase   *They analyse a new method.*