**Creating an annotated bibliography**

An annotated bibliography provides a concise summary of each source and some assessment of its value and relevance. It is excellent preparation for carrying out independent research. This section explains its function, how to compile one and provides some examples.

**Annotated bibliography—its function**

The process is not just a matter of listing possible sources. It also requires students to think critically. They must consider the sources in terms of:

* what has already been written about their chosen topic and
* how their own research will fit into this.

As they examine each source, students will need to identify the issues and different perspectives of others. This will help them to develop their reasoned argument.

A good annotated bibliography will:

* allow students to keep track of their reading
* encourage students to think critically about the sources they are using in relation to their own research area
* allow students, quite early on in the process, to become aware of possible concerns about using certain sources
* help students determine whether a source is of use to them in their research
* help students to justify their use of particular sources, both to their supervisor and to the examiner
* help students with the planning of their research, and ultimately save them time
* enable students to develop their critical-thinking skills in selecting and evaluating source material.

**TIP**

* The annotated bibliography is a planning tool to help students manage their research and time. It must not be included in the EE as an appendix.
* The insights students gain from compiling the bibliography will inform and shape the discussion of source material within the essay.
* The skills students acquire will help them to demonstrate criterion C (critical thinking).

**How to compile an annotated bibliography**

There are many ways to format an annotated bibliography, and librarians may be a good source of advice on this. Generally, an annotated bibliography consists of:

* the bibliographic information
* the annotations (a concise summary of the source).

The annotations will vary in length depending on whether the student is writing a summary of the source or analysing it.

A summary should include:

1. a concise summary of the content and theme(s) of the source
2. a comment on the authority of the author
3. a comment on the purpose of the source
4. a comment on how this source might be useful.

Examples

**History**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bibliographic information | Gutman, R. 1993. *A Witness to Genocide*. New York, NY, USA. Macmillan. |
| Content/theme(s) | Genocide and how it can be avoided, especially in the case of the Bosnian civil war. |
| Author’s authority | Journalist and author. Awarded the Pulitzer Prize for international reporting, the George Polk Award for foreign reporting, the Selden Ring Award for investigative reporting, and a special Human Rights in Media Award from the International League for Human Rights. |
| Purpose | Collection of stories, accounts, articles of the Bosnian war. |
| Usefulness | The source was useful in so far as it provided accounts of the Bosnian war and its aftermath. It is clearly an investigation into the causes of the civil war and genocide. It helped frame the conflict for me so that I could locate further articles and journal sources. The source was very informative as I try to understand the causes and consequences of genocide and why it occurs. |

<https://tibkomp.wordpress.com/extended-essay-info-for-all/>

Mr Whiteside’s blog