

Annotated Bibliographies

An annotated bibliography includes a citation and a written statement or abstract about each work to help potential readers decide if an item is relevant to their interests. There are various guidelines on how to write annotations or abstracts, however some style manuals provide little guidance.

Definitions of Annotated Bibliographies or Abstracts:

MLA:

According to MLA (6th edition): "An annotated bibliography, also called *Annotated List of Works Cited*, contains descriptive or evaluative comments on the sources" (p.145). For more information, users are referred to James L. Harner, *On compiling an Annotated Bibliography*, 2nd ed. [New York: MLA, 2000].

Turabian:

According to Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (7th edition) section 16.2.1: "Some writers annotate each bibliography entry with a brief description of the work's contents or relevance to their research..." The book offers two ways of using annotations. "If your annotations are brief phrases, add them in brackets after the publication data..." See p. 148 for example. Or, "You may also add full-sentence annotations on a new line with paragraph indentation":

Toulmin, Stephen. *The Uses of Argument*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958.

This is the seminal text in describing the structure of an argument in nonsymbolic language.

APA (re: abstracts – no mention of annotated bibliographies):

According to the APA manual (5th edition), an abstract is defined as "a brief, comprehensive summary of the contents of the article." (p.8) The APA guidelines for authors writing their own abstracts may be helpful for students as well:

An abstract for a review or theoretical article should describe in 75 to 100 words: the topic, in one sentence; the purpose, thesis, or organizing construct and the scope (comprehensive or selective) of the article; the sources used (e.g. personal observation, published literature); and the conclusions. (p.10)

Cremmins (Art of Abstracting)

Abstracts should contain the following information about a work, if applicable: (p.7):

purpose
methodology
results
conclusions

Example of a citation with annotation:

Example quoted from p. 176, *The Art of Abstracting*:

McGirr, C.J. "Guidelines for Abstracting." *Technical Communication*, 5(2):2-5, 1978

Advice on the preparation, review, content, and length of abstracts is presented. Abstracts should use definite statements, not generalities; short clear statements for each thought; and language familiar to the reader.

Example of a citation with abstract (MLA style citation):

Amer, Ramses. "Towards a declaration on "navigational rights" in the sea-lanes of the Asia-Pacific." *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 20.n1 (April 1998): 88(15). *Academic OneFile*. Gale. Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT. 6 Nov. 2009
<<http://find.galegroup.com/itx/start.do?prodId=AONE>>.

This article examines the possible contribution of a declaration on "navigational rights" in the sea-lanes of the Asia-Pacific as a confidence-building measure. It defines "navigational rights" with the help of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The degree of acceptance of the provisions of UNCLOS is outlined with a focus on the countries of the Asia-Pacific. The advantages and problems associated with a possible declaration on "navigational rights" as a confidence-building measure are discussed and assessed. It is argued that countries in the region can agree upon navigational rights without prejudicing their territorial claims, using UNCLOS as the key guiding principle.

– above abstract from *Academic OneFile* database.

For more information see:

American Psychological Association. Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. 5th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2001. Main & Armstrong Library Reference BF76.7 .P83 2001

Cremmins, Edward T. The Art of Abstracting. 2nd ed. Arlington, Va: Information Resources Press, 1996. Main Library stacks PE1477 .C7 1996

Gibaldi, Joseph, and Modern Language Association of America. MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 6th ed. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2003. Main Library Ready Reference, Armstrong Ref, Music Ref LB2369 G53 2003

Harner, James L. On Compiling an Annotated Bibliography. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1985, 2000. Main Library stacks Z1001 .H33 1985.

Turabian, Kate L., John Grossman, and Alice Bennett. A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations. 7th / rev. by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams et al. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007. Main Library Ready Reference and Armstrong Reference LB2369 T8 2007.