

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: "An annotated bibliography, also called Annotated List of Works Cited, contains descriptive or evaluative comments on the sources" (p.145). No example is given.

Turabian:

According to the 6th edition of Turabian, section 9.36: "A bibliography may be annotated either in whole or in part. The annotation need not be a grammatically complete sentence, but it should begin with a capital and end with a period. The annotation begins on the line following the entry proper and should be indented at least five spaces."

Turabian gives this example (p.174):

Thompson, Oscar, ed. *International Cyclopaedia of Music and Musicians*. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1936.

An admirable work that brings Grove up to date and deals adequately with contemporary music and American composers.

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

According to the APA manual, 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:

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). *Expanded Academic ASAP*. Thomson Gale. Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT. 25 Sep. 2006
<http://find.galegroup.com/itx/infomark.do?&contentSet=IAC-Documents&type=retrieve&tabID=T002&prodId=EAIM&docId=A20794528&source=gale&srcprod=EAIM&userGroupName=vol_m58c&version=1.0>.

"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." – abstract from *Expanded Academic ASAP* 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. Main Library stacks Z1001 .H33 1985.

Turabian, Kate L., John Grossman, and Alice Bennett. A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations. 6th / rev. by John Grossman and Alice Bennett ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996. Main Library Ready Reference and Armstrong Reference LB2369 T8 1996.