



Compiling an Annotated Bibliography

Step 1: Learn about Annotated Bibliographies

To learn how to write an annotated bibliography, you should consult the following web pages.

- Engle, Michael; Amy Blumenthal, and Tony Cosgrave. "How to Prepare an Annotated Bibliography." *Olin and Uris Libraries*. 25 September 2012. Cornell University Library. <<http://olinuris.library.cornell.edu/ref/research/skill28.htm>>.

Step 2: Locate Credible Sources Concerning Your Research

While doing your research, you will likely come across sources that are not credible. Because you will not consult these sources for your final paper, you would not list them in your annotated bibliography. At other times, you will consult a quality source that turns out not to be relevant for your research. Such a source ought not to be included in your annotated bibliography. Only include those sources that are credible and relevant.

To find credible sources, you should do the following:

- Search the on-line data bases available through the Schoolcraft College Library to find articles.
- Search the card catalogue for Schoolcraft College to find books.
- Do a Google search or use some other search engine to identify web sites.
- Try to locate non-text based material that is relevant (e.g. charts, graphs, photographs, movies, documentaries).
- Consult one of the reference libraries at Schoolcraft College or your local library.
- Interview a professor whom has expertise in the area in which you are researching. Ask him/her to direct you to resources.
- Interview someone not connected with the college who has expertise in the area in which you are researching. Ask him/her to direct you to resources.

In addition, you should read the bibliographies included with the materials that you find. These bibliographies will likely include references and other resources that you can consult for your own paper.

Step 3: Write a Proper MLA Citation for Each Reference

The first thing you should do once you find a reference that appears to be credible and relevant is to write down a citation in proper MLA format. Gibaldi (2009) is the best reference to use for this task because it is the complete *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. You may also want to consult:

- Berg, Steven L. "Writing a Proper Citation in MLA Format." *Resources for Writers*. 18 July 2013. <<http://writing.stevenlberg.info/tutorials/citations/index.html>>.

Step 4: Annotate Your Source

An annotation can be a brief summary (only one to three sentences) in which you state the main point of the source—as it relates to your paper. At other times, annotations are a paragraph or more. You should consult your professor for the requirements required for your class.

- Maybee, Clarence. "Writing an Annotation." *Colgate University Libraries*. 17 December 2012. Colgate University. 23 July 2013. <<http://exlibris.colgate.edu/help/annotations.htm>>

Step 5: Compile Your Bibliography

Type your annotated bibliography. Citations should be listed in alphabetical order followed by the annotation. They should also follow MLA format (Gibaldi 2009).

Step 6: Consult a Reference Librarian

Once you have completed your annotated bibliography, you might want to discuss it with a reference librarian to get advice on sources you might have missed.

Avoiding Plagiarism

Stephen Wilhoit (1994) instructs faculty members that "we need to remember that for most students the conventions of academic acknowledgement and documentation prove difficult to understand and master." Incorrect or inaccurate citations in a final paper could have serious consequences ranging from a failing grade on the paper to a failing grade for the course. Because your annotated bibliography requires you to cite references using proper MLA format, any conventions that prove "difficult to understand and master" can be corrected at this point. Furthermore, the annotations for this bibliography might eventually find themselves as passages in your final paper where you need to briefly summarize an author's main points before expanding on it using your own ideas.

References and Resources

Berg, Steven L. "Writing a Proper Citation in MLA Format." *Resources for Writers*. 18 July 2013. <<http://writing.stevenberg.info/tutorials/citations/index.html>>. 23 July 2013.

Engle, Michael; Amy Blumenthal, and Tony Cosgrave. "How to Prepare an Annotated Bibliography." *Olin and Uris Libraries*. 25 September 2012. Cornell University Library. <<http://olinuris.library.cornell.edu/ref/research/skill28.htm>>. 23 July 2013.

Fister, Barbara. "Fear of Reference." *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 48.40 (2002): B20.

Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 7th ed. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2009.

Maybee, Clarence. "Writing an Annotation." *Colgate University Libraries*. 17 December 2012. Colgate University. 23 July 2013. <<http://exlibris.colgate.edu/help/annotations.htm>> 23 July 2013.

Wilhoit, Stephen. "Helping Students Avoid Plagiarism." *College Teaching* 42.4 (1994): 161+.



Last updated: 23 July 2013

Handout developed by Dr. Steven L. Berg, Associate Professor of English and History at Schoolcraft College. <http://www.stevenberg.info>. E-mail: sberg@schoolcraft.edu. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-Share Alike 3.0 Unported License http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/deed.en_US. Photo Credit: Lin Kristensen <http://www.flickr.com/people/linnybinnypix/>.