

Annotated Bibliographies

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What is an Annotated Bibliography?

As an assignment, or as part of an assignment, an annotated bibliography provides an organised list of sources, each of which is followed by an 'annotation' – a brief note about the source.

Consists of:

- An alphabetical list of the sources used in the research (eg. books, journals articles), *with*
- a brief summary of the contents of the source, *and*
- an indication of the value or relevance of the source for the assignment topic.

Sample entry 1:

Taumoefolau, M., Starks, D., Bell, A., & Davis, K. (2004). The role of second language acquisition theory and practice in Pasifika language maintenance in New Zealand. In: *Language Acquisition Research: Papers presented at a Ministry of Education Forum held in 2003*. Wellington, New Zealand: Wahanga Mahi Rangahau Research Division, Ministry of Education.

The authors discuss a survey of community language use in Pasifika communities in Manukau City. They conclude that there is evidence of language attrition – a reduction both in the use and the range of community languages. The authors then summarise relevant theories of second language acquisition, focusing on the crucial importance of comprehensible input. They then discuss how children in Pasifika communities in New Zealand might obtain more comprehensible input in the home and school. I intend to use the concept of comprehensible input to evaluate materials available for parents who want to read stories in Tongan to their pre-school children.

How will you use the source in your research?

What is the purpose of an Annotated Bibliography?

Allows the reader to assess whether the sources being used are relevant to the research being undertaken

How is it different from an Abstract?

Abstracts provide descriptive summaries, usually written by the author of the text

Annotations are written by someone using the text and can be both descriptive and critical

How do I structure entries in an annotated bibliography?

1. Full bibliographical details such as:

- Writers' initials and surnames
- Date of publication
- Title of book
- Publisher
- Place of publication
- Title of article (for journal articles)
- Title of journal
- Volume number of journal, etc.
- Web address

APA Referencing
Format

2. Annotations (generally about 150 words)

May consist of a number of components, *depending on your assignment*

Possible annotations

- Briefly discuss the background of the writer
 - what else has the writer published in the field?
 - how does this text fit into the body of the writer's work?
- Briefly describe the content and focus of the text
- Identify the thesis/research question/hypothesis of an academic text
- Describe the conclusions the writers make
- Explain why the item is useful for your research
- Explain which specific chapters/articles/sections are useful and why they are useful
- Describe the methods (research) used
- Evaluate the methods used
- Describe the intended audience of the item
- Evaluate the appropriateness of the item for that audience
- Compare with another study featured

Sample entry 2:

Goldschneider, F. K., Waite, L. J., & Witsberger, C. (1986).
Nonfamily living and the erosion of traditional family orientations among young adults. *American Sociological Review*, 51, 541-554.

The authors, researchers at the Rand Corporation and Brown University, use data from the National Longitudinal Surveys of Young Women and Young Men to test their hypothesis that non-family living by young adults alters their attitudes, values, plans, and expectations, moving them away from their belief in traditional sex roles. They found their hypothesis strongly supported in young females, while the effects were fewer in studies of young males. Increasing the time away from parents before marrying increased individualism, self-sufficiency, and changes in attitudes about families. In contrast, an earlier study by Williams cited below shows no significant gender differences in sex role attitudes as a result of non-family living.

(Source: Adapted from Engle, Blumenthal & Cosgrave, 2005)

A closer look at sample entry 2:

The authors, researchers at the Rand Corporation and Brown University, use data from the National Longitudinal Surveys of Young Women and Young Men to test their hypothesis that non-family living by young adults alters their attitudes, values, plans, and expectations, moving them away from their belief in traditional sex roles. They found their hypothesis strongly supported in young females, while the effects were fewer in studies of young males. Increasing the time away from parents before marrying increased individualism, self-sufficiency, and changes in attitudes about families. In contrast, an earlier study by Williams cited below shows no significant gender differences in sex role attitudes as a result of non-family living.

Info on the writers

Purpose of research

Method

Findings of research

Comparison with other research featured in the Annotated Bibliography

(Source: Adapted from Engle, Blumenthal & Cosgrave, 2005)

Language for talking about sources

account for	clarify	describe	indicate	question
analyse	compare	depict	investigate	recognise
argue	conclude	determine	judge	reflect
assess	criticise	distinguish	justify	refer to
assert	defend	evaluate	narrate	report
assume	define	emphasise	persuade	review
claims	demonstrate	examine	propose	suggest

Examples of use:

The evidence presented by the researchers in Chapter 2 provides...
 The evidence indicates that ...
 In this chapter the author identifies and analyses two reasons for the...
 The chapter questions the view that...
 In this article the author uses a case study to illustrate...
 The authors report that...
 In Chapters 4 and 5 the writers review the process of ...

Source: Knott, 2005

References

- Engle, M., Blumenthal, A., & Cosgrave, T. (2005). *How to prepare an annotated bibliography*. Retrieved from Cornell University, Reference Department; Instruction, Research and Information Services Web site: <http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/skill28.html>
- Knott, D. (2005). *Writing an annotated bibliography*. Retrieved from University of Toronto, Writing Support site: <http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/annotatebib.html>
- Memorial University Libraries. (2007) *How to write annotated bibliographies*. Retrieved from http://www.library.mun.ca/guides/howto/annotated_bibl.php