Writing Lab Resources: Annotated Bibliographies

Annotated bibliographies are a way of compiling research for a paper or project that allows a writer to assess and present the usefulness of the resources. Annotated bibliographies often address the following issues:

1) the authority or background of the author
   - credentials (education, employment, expertise)
   - use of the author by others (your instructor, other sources)
   - affiliation with important organizations focused on the issue

2) the credibility of the publication
   - recency of publication
   - type of publication (popular vs. scholarly)

3) the intended audience
   - does the source meet the needs of the audience you are writing for?
   - is this an introductory or technical? what is appropriate for your assignment

4) approach in the work, comparisons with others
   - What new information is presented by this work?
   - How does this work add to a broader discussion of the topic?
   - How is the writing style?
   - Does the work present something new or does it support what others have said?

5) how the work contributes to your work

Annotated bibliographies start with the citation in the preferred format (APA, MLA, Chicago) with the annotation in paragraph form below. Instructors often provide specific guidance on how to format an annotated bibliography, but an example of an MLA annotation is:


Jonathan Israel presents a compilation of the intellectual movements that traversed the French Revolution. The specific focus on the transition between the ideas provides a new framework for discussing the Revolution. This book will serve as a main resource for the development of the structure of the paper’s thesis because...

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