



Annotated Bibliography Tips

What is a Bibliography?

A bibliography is a list of references -- books, articles, websites, etc. -- that you have cited in your work.

What is an Annotation?

An annotation is a type of note. Annotations can be written for many purposes, but are most commonly used to describe, explain, critique, comment on, or interpret particular aspects of a work.

What is an Annotated Bibliography?

An annotated bibliography is a bibliography where each of your references is given an annotation. The following types of annotations are most commonly used in annotated bibliographies:

- *Descriptive Annotations* - Describes the content and/or basic features of a work.
- *Summative Annotations* - Summarizes the main arguments and/or most important aspects of a work.
- *Evaluative/Critical Annotations* - Evaluates the quality/importance/value of a work.
- *Reflective Annotations* - Reflects on where and how you can use a given work in your research or writing.
- *Combined Annotations* - A mix of *descriptive*, *summative*, *evaluative/critical*, and *reflective* annotations.

Why Write an Annotated Bibliography?

You are probably writing an annotated bibliography to demonstrate that:

- You are on the right track with your research.
- You are selecting material that is appropriate to your topic and is acceptable to your professor.
- You are thinking about how your research will contribute to your paper, presentation, speech, etc.
- You will not be overwhelmed as the deadline for your assignment approaches.

Where Can I Get Help With my Annotated Bibliography?

The librarians at Schewe:

- Luke Beatty (luke.beatty@ic.edu)
- Garrett Traylor (garrett.traylor@ic.edu)
- Erika Wade Smith (erika.wadesmith@ic.edu)



Descriptive Annotations

Descriptive Annotations

A *descriptive* annotation describes the content and/or basic features of a work. The descriptive annotation can include information about: the type of work under report (book, article, DVD, website, etc.); the type of research being done in the work (study, literature review, experiment, etc.); authors or contributors; names of chapters or sections; tables & figures; length; or anything else you feel is important to describe the work.

Example APA Descriptive Annotation

Hirasawa, C. (2008). The inflatable, collapsible kingdom of retribution: A primer on Japanese Hell imagery and imagination. *Monumenta Nipponica*, 63(1), 1-50.

This fifty-page journal article, by Caroline Hirasawa, discusses the history of Hell imagery in Japanese culture. The article includes sections on: the geography of Hell; visual interpretations of Hell; Judgment Day; avoidance of punishment whilst in Hell; sundering Hell; and depictions of Hell which utilize humor. The article is peppered with images -- come color, some black-and-white -- which reproduce famous paintings and drawings in the Japanese Hell canon. The article also contains frequent English-to-Japanese translations, which are also reproduced in the References list. Finally, the article also includes a series of detailed footnotes, primarily used to unpack obscure concepts or direct the reader towards additional reading.

Example MLA Descriptive Annotation

Dodsworth, Eva. *Getting Started with Geographic Information Systems: A Library and Information Technology Association Guide*. Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2012.

This book, by Eva Dodsworth, is an introductory resource for Library & Information Science (LIS) professionals who are looking to familiarize themselves with Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The book has six chapters: the first chapter deals with GIS background information; the second chapter discusses GIS awareness and Web 2.0 tools; the third chapter offers tutorials of popular web mapping software; the fourth chapter introduces GIS desktop and data software; the fifth chapter explores open-access GIS projects; and the last chapter focuses on integrating GIS into existing library structures. The book also includes a series of figures, an extensive index, and a CD-ROM containing a number of KML files for the reader to experiment with.

Example Chicago Descriptive Annotation

Kasworm, Carol, and Lis Hemmingsen. "Preparing professionals for lifelong learning: Comparative examination of master's education programs". *Higher Education* 54, no. 3 (2007): 449-468.

This twenty-page article, by Carol Kasworm and Lis Hemmingsen, compares two graduate schools -- one Danish, the other American -- which offer Master's degrees in Adult Education. The article begins with an introductory literature review, continues by discussing the Danish and American higher educational contexts, settles into a comparison between the two schools, and concludes with a discussion of its findings. Kasworm and Hemmingsen compare the two schools across a number of criteria, including: engagement with theory; innovative instructional practices; policies regarding professional preparation; assessment measures; admissions policies; course offerings, and mandated program hours.



Summative Annotations

Summative Annotations

A *summative* annotation highlights the main arguments and/or most important aspects of a work. This type of annotation relies on your judgment as to what the “most important” aspects of a work are. While a *descriptive* annotation simply lists a work’s content or basic features, a *summative* annotation actually unpacks that content and summarizes it in a judicious and parsimonious fashion.

Example APA Summative Annotation

Hirasawa, C. (2008). The inflatable, collapsible kingdom of retribution: A primer on Japanese Hell imagery and imagination. *Monumenta Nipponica*, 63(1), 1-50.

Though Hirasawa’s article touches on a number of aspects of Japanese Hell imagery, the article’s main objective is to demonstrate that Hell imagery was profoundly reconfigured by Japanese commoners. Historically, Japanese religious figures presided over depictions and writings of Hell; however, when commoners began to co-opt these canonical writings, competing visions of Hell found their way into the Japanese public domain. Moreover, the influence of Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity also contributed to a ‘loosening’ of the Japanese Hell canon, eventually paving the way for irreverent, and in some minds, heretical depictions of Hell. Even today, Japanese Hell imagery continues to evolve, though this article only covers developments up to the 20th century.

Example MLA Summative Annotation

Dodsworth, Eva. *Getting Started with Geographic Information Systems: A Library and Information Technology Association Guide*. Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2012.

This book is a practical, hands-on guide for Library & Information Science (LIS) professionals seeking an introduction to Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The book is light on theory, and is more concerned with introducing a select few products to the LIS practitioner. *Google Earth Pro*, *ArcGIS*, and *SimplyMap* are given extensive coverage, and there are a number of exercises and examples for the reader to follow (should they choose to work with the aforementioned products). The book also devotes considerable time to comparing web-based GIS applications to their desktop counterparts. Dodsworth concludes that while web-based products are useful, they would best be used alongside, rather than in substitution for, desktop GIS solutions.

Example Chicago Summative Annotation

Kasworm, Carol, and Lis Hemmingsen. "Preparing professionals for lifelong learning: Comparative examination of master's education programs". *Higher Education* 54, no. 3 (2007): 449-468.

This article is a comparative case study between two graduate programs -- one Danish, the other American -- which offer Master’s degrees in Adult Education. The findings suggest that while each program is doing a good job in preparing lifelong learning adult educators, much of the difference in the two programs is attributable to cultural and sociological differences between Danish and American students. Other findings of significant difference include: the number of women enrolled in the programs (there are a higher percentage of women in the Danish program); investment in distance technologies (the American program is more heavily invested); and the commercialization of the programs (the American students bear a higher cost of self-funding).



Evaluative/Critical Annotations

Evaluative/Critical Annotations

An *evaluative/critical* annotation briefly evaluates or critiques a work. An *evaluative/critical* annotation often includes judgments about: how convincing or effective a work is; how a work fits with its larger discipline; how valuable or important a work is; what a work might have missed or omitted; and your interpretive take. These annotations can appreciate, refute, or express indifference to a work depending on your evaluation.

Example APA Evaluative/Critical Annotation

Hirasawa, C. (2008). The inflatable, collapsible kingdom of retribution: A primer on Japanese Hell imagery and imagination. *Monumenta Nipponica*, 63(1), 1-50.

This article discusses the history of Hell imagery in Japanese culture, and concludes that both religious elites and commoners significantly contributed to the development of the Japanese Hell canon. Though Hirasawa's analysis is thorough, more time could have spent detailing how the clergy "lost control" of their canon. The reproductions in the article are helpful in contextualizing particular Hell images, and without these reproductions, the article would be less impactful. It should also be noted that while Hirasawa gives a fulsome analysis of painting and sculpture, her analysis of literature is less deep.

Example MLA Evaluative/Critical Annotation

Dodsworth, Eva. *Getting Started with Geographic Information Systems: A Library and Information Technology Association Guide*. Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2012.

With regard to recent Library & Information Science (LIS) books on Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Dodsworth's *Getting Started...* is the only work of note. There are a number of LIS-themed journal articles dealing with GIS -- for example, Weessies and Dotson's *Mapping for the Masses...*, or Enis' *Mapping out a Plan...* -- but Dodsworth provides the only book-length treatment of GIS material. A deeper theory component would help ground the work, but that angle doesn't seem to be of much interest to Dodsworth. In virtue of it being the only game in town, this is an important work in the field for LIS and information professionals.

Example Chicago Evaluative/Critical Annotation

Kasworm, Carol, and Lis Hemmingsen. "Preparing professionals for lifelong learning: Comparative examination of master's education programs". *Higher Education* 54, no. 3 (2007): 449-468.

There is a considerable literature base dealing with the training of childhood educators; the literature base is much thinner when discussing lifelong learning adult educators. This article is a case study, and though the findings are particular to the schools under comparison, the Danish and American schools nonetheless make for an odd pairing. The two schools -- and the contexts within which they operate -- are so foundationally different that I can't imagine what the authors were hoping to get out of this analysis. For those seeking to learn about the educational philosophies of Danish and American graduate programs, this article would be useful, but I imagine that audience is quite limited.



Reflective Annotations

Reflective Annotations

A *reflective* annotation discusses how, where, and in what context a source might be used in your work. While *critical/evaluative* annotations discuss the general value of a source, the *reflective* annotation discusses how a source will be useful to you. Reflective annotations will often discuss your interest in particular parts of a source, how you plan to use those parts, and how a given source meshes with your other sources.

Example APA Reflective Annotation

Hirasawa, C. (2008). The inflatable, collapsible kingdom of retribution: A primer on Japanese Hell imagery and imagination. *Monumenta Nipponica*, 63(1), 1-50.

Given that this article spends a considerable amount of time discussing supernatural imagery of the Japanese Medieval period -- the focus of my paper -- it will be a cornerstone of my research. Though conceptions of "Hell" in Japanese religions of the Medieval period are extremely varied, this article will be helpful to me in that it discusses demons, spirits, and the actual geographies of Hell. Also, I like that this article will be the only resource I need to consult dealing specifically with Hell in the Japanese context. Of course Hell is only one piece of the supernatural tableaux in Medieval Japan, though, so I will need to find additional resources covering other aspects of the supernatural.

Example MLA Reflective Annotation

Dodsworth, Eva. *Getting Started with Geographic Information Systems: A Library and Information Technology Association Guide*. Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2012.

As my research project is about how college students outside of the geography/geology fields are using GIS technologies, this book can make a small contribution to my research. In thinking about it, I realized a lot of students looking to use GIS in history, modern languages, English, etc. would get help from librarians with the technology and associated software, so this book would be helpful in getting a glimpse of how librarians learn and use GIS. This will be my only "librarian" source, and it should cover everything I need to say about the library's use of GIS technology in higher education.

Example Chicago Reflective Annotation

Kasworm, Carol, and Lis Hemmingsen. "Preparing professionals for lifelong learning: Comparative examination of master's education programs". *Higher Education* 54, no. 3 (2007): 449-468.

For my paper, this article will provide a relevant, if minor, addition to my research base. As I am researching the history and contemporary state of American education programs at the graduate level, the discussion of Denmark's education programs in this article will not add a lot of character or dimension to my final paper, but perhaps I could add a section to my paper comparing and contrasting American programs with non-American programs. I will have to research further to decide if this is a worthwhile effort.



Combined Annotations

Combined Annotations

A *combined* annotation includes some mix of *descriptive, summative, evaluative/critical, and reflective* annotation types. A *combined* annotation is often used when lengthier annotations are called for. A good strategy for writing combined annotations is to spend a couple sentences on each annotation type. The below examples are shorter than typical *combined* annotations would be, but they give you the basic idea.

Example APA Combined Annotation

Hirasawa, C. (2008). The inflatable, collapsible kingdom of retribution: A primer on Japanese Hell imagery and imagination. *Monumenta Nipponica*, 63(1), 1-50.

This fifty-page journal article, by Caroline Hirasawa, discusses the history of Hell imagery in Japanese culture. The article includes sections on: the geography of Hell; visual interpretations of Hell; Judgment Day; avoidance of punishment whilst in Hell; sundering Hell; and depictions of Hell which utilize humor. The article's main thrust is to demonstrate that Japanese Hell imagery was profoundly reconfigured by commoners and the influx of non-native religions into Japan. Though Hirasawa's analysis is thorough, more time could have spent detailing how the clergy "lost control" of their canon. Given that the article spends a considerable amount of time in the Japanese Medieval period -- the focus of my paper -- it will be a cornerstone of my research.

Example MLA Combined Annotation

Dodsworth, Eva. *Getting Started with Geographic Information Systems: A Library and Information Technology Association Guide*. Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2012.

This book, by Eva Dodsworth, is an introductory resource for Library & Information Science (LIS) professionals who are looking to familiarize themselves with Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The book has six chapters, variously taking the reader through relevant GIS applications for LIS professionals. In particular, *Google Earth Pro*, *ArcGIS*, and *SimplyMap* are given extensive coverage, and there are a number of exercises and examples for the reader to follow should they choose to work with these products. The book is written for practitioners, and while a deeper theory component would help ground the work, that angle doesn't seem to interest Dodsworth. In virtue of it being the only game in town, this is an important work for my research.

Example Chicago Combined Annotation

Kasworm, Carol, and Lis Hemmingsen. "Preparing professionals for lifelong learning: Comparative examination of master's education programs". *Higher Education* 54, no. 3 (2007): 449-468.

This twenty-page article, by Carol Kasworm and Lis Hemmingsen, presents a comparative case study between two graduate programs -- one Danish, the other American -- which offer Master's degrees in Adult Education. The schools are compared across a number of criteria, and the findings suggest that while each program is doing a good job in preparing lifelong learning adult educators, much of the difference in the two programs is attributable to cultural and sociological differences between Danish and American students. The two schools -- and the contexts within which they operate -- are so foundationally different, though, that I can't fathom what the authors were hoping to get out of this analysis. This article will be a relevant, if minor, addition to my research.

DESCRIPTIVE ANNOTATION CHECKLIST

- Who are the authors or creators and their credentials?
- What is the format (book, article, website, etc.)?
- Who published the work?
- Is it a popular, scholarly, commercial, professional, or governmental resource?
- Who is the primary audience of the work?
- What is the length or size of the work?
- What are the main parts, chapters, sections, sub-pages?
- Does it have a bibliography, glossary, table of contents, index, or appendix, tables, figures, charts, images, etc.?

Write your sentence(s) here: _____

SUMMATIVE ANNOTATION CHECKLIST

- What is the subject or theme of the work?
- What is the work's purpose--to argue/evaluate, explain/inform, or entertain?
- If the resource responds to a particular problem, what is it?
- What is the main thesis or theme, main point, major claim, research problem, question, or hypothesis?
- What is the important supporting material?
- For fiction/creative works, what is the setting, who are the main characters, what are main events in the plot, what are important symbols (if any), what is the climax?

Write your sentence(s) here: _____

EVALUATIVE ANNOTATION CHECKLIST

- How valuable is the content of the resource? If applicable, is it
 - factual, up to date, comprehensive
 - logical, valid and/or reliable
 - readable?
- How important are the conclusions?
- For creative works, is it pleasing and/or original)?
- How trustworthy is the author or publisher? Are the author or publisher known for being trustworthy?

(EVALUATIVE ANNOTATION CONTINUED) Write your sentence(s) here:

REFLECTIVE ANNOTATION CHECKLIST

- How and where can you use a source in your paper?
 - major claims, evidence, or counter-claims?
 - examples, explanations, facts, or definitions?
 - For creative works, important concepts or a description of the work itself?
- For a "bad" resource, do you want to use it anyway (e.g., as a counter-example)? If so, how and where?
- Does this work fill a gap in/connect to your other research?
- Has the author written or listed in a bibliography other potentially useful work?

Write your sentence(s) here:

COMBINED ANNOTATION CHECKLIST

- Have you described the resource adequately: author, title and format (eg., book, article, film, website)?
- Have you mentioned the main thesis and purpose or theme (which you should include no matter what)?
 - what supporting points do you need to include?
 - what details, facts, definitions, or quotes do you need?
- Did you evaluate the author or publisher credibility?
- Do you want to praise or condemn the content?
- How and where can you use the resource?
- Write your sentence(s) here:

Parts (17 pts.) For each source, you....

- ___ describe it: who wrote it, what kind of source is it (e.g. book or web page or journal article), what features does it have? (5 points)
- ___ summarize what it says (3-6 sentences +/- depending on source/your purpose) including the context of the original). (11 pts.)
- ___ evaluate it: explain well why you can trust the source or authors (a few sentences). (6pts.)
- ___ say how or where in your paper you might use it. (4 pts.)
- ___ mention whether you got source through our book, Schewe databases or Google Scholar (1 pt.)

Writing quality (10 pts.)

- ___ complete, grammatically correct and clear sentences (2 pts.)
- ___ everything makes good sense (3 pts.)
- ___ make it clear that each idea comes from the author(s) or an indirect source (2 pts.)
- ___ transitions are effective (2 pts.)
- ___ spelling is checked correctly, including authors' names (1 pt.)

Citations (3 pts.)

- ___ In-text citations are correct in the annotation (page numbers used, if any; author(s) names appear correctly once per paragraph, in a sentence or in a parenthetical citation) (1 pt.)
- ___ Entry for later use in Works Cited list is correct (1 pt.)
- ___ All titles are correctly capitalized and correctly quoted or italicized (1 pt.)

Total ___/40 pts.