Annotated Bibliographies

*There are different ways to structure an **annotated bibliography;** refer to your unit outline to identify any faculty guidelines.*

What is it?

An annotated bibliography is a detailed list, usually presented in alphabetical order, of sources you have collected on a research topic. Each item in the list consists of the full bibliographical details of the source plus a paragraph (100-200 words, depending on requirements) which summarises, evaluates and reflects on the reliability and relevance of the source. For this reason, lecturers may assign annotated bibliographies to help students prepare their research for an essay or report.

What are the aims of an annotated bibliography?

Depending on your lecturer's main aims, your annotated bibliographies may:

- *demonstrate wide reading* across a range of sources appropriate for the topic (journals, books, websites, government reports)

- *summarise* the content and main points/arguments of each source

- *evaluate* the strengths and weaknesses of each source

- *reflect on the usefulness* of each source for thinking about the topic.

> An annotated bibliography demonstrates that you have read widely on a topic, and also that you have *thought carefully about the quality* and *relevance* of each source.

Key components:

Be guided by the sources your lecturers prefer you to read in your course. If you are studying Psychology, it's likely that you'll draw mainly on peer-reviewed journal articles. If you are studying in Business, books, textbooks, and company reports may be appropriate. Relevance is also important. Ask yourself:

- What question/s am I trying to answer on my topic?

- What kinds of sources would be most useful for helping me?

- How does this source help me answer my question, or what does it offer me?

- What sources are most often referred to in things I am reading?

What does an annotated bibliography look like?

Annotated bibliographies are usually written in full sentences, but are brief and to the point. Write about main ideas and points, or those particularly relevant for your topic. Each annotation can contain any or all of the following components:

Summarising	Reviewing / evaluating
• The bibliographic details (a reference) for the source • Details about the authors • Aims or scope of the source and the main argument • The methodology or theoretical framework • Key claims or conclusions • Anything significant the source contributes to the topic area • The intended audience	• The experience or credibility of the authors • The relevance / usefulness of the text for answering your question • The source's relationship to other sources (similarities and differences) • The strength of the evidence used to support the claims • The strengths and weaknesses of the source overall

Sample:

Section	Key features	Example
Reference	Correctly formatted Use referencing guide	**Smith, J. (2009). Blending effective behaviour management and literacy strategies for preschoolers exhibiting negative behaviour. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 37 (2),* 147-151. doi: 10.1007/s10643-009-0326-z**
Summary	Broad aim/scope Brief outline of main ideas	Smith investigates the technique of blending behaviour management and literacy skills to assist children with behavioural issues at the preschool level. The reward for positive behaviour change is literature-rich activities, games or books. Smith describes ways to use the method in different situations, and describes three stages of progression from prevention to intervention: group contingencies (stage one), anger management (stage two), and individualised behaviour plans (stage three).
Evaluation	Limitations Evidence (weak) Applicability	The main limitation of this strategy, as the author implies, is that it works effectively with preschool children. Also, there was no evidence of its implementation in a school setting. While the author assumes the technique could be used easily in any classroom, the study was American, and the technique may not be transferable to an Australian preschool context.
Usefulness	Possible audience Relevance for topic What the text offers	This article would, however, be useful for preschool teachers interested in innovative behaviour management techniques. While this technique isn't directly related to this specific topic of whole-school approaches to discipline, its approach of rewarding behaviour with learning is innovative and could be adapted for use with older year groups.

Handy links

Writing an Annotated Bibliography, UNE:

http://www.une.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/11132/WE_Writing-an-annotated-bibliography.pdf