

## What are Annotated Bibliographies?

The name itself gives a clue as to what it is: *annotated* = notes and *bibliography* = an organized list of resources. Therefore, an annotated bibliography is an organized list of resources with notes. The annotation that follow each bibliographic entry is usually written in 1–2 paragraphs and is typically 100–250 words long.

## What is the Purpose of Annotated Bibliographies?

An annotation is a summary of a resource, typically used by researchers to keep their sources organized and condensed. If a researcher reads 20 resources, and each one is about 20 pages, then that equals 400 pages of research to keep organized. An annotated bibliography can reduce that to about ½ to 1 page per resource (10–20 pages total), which is more manageable.

## Who Reads Annotated Bibliographies?

While some annotated bibliographies are published, most are not and are only for the researcher's own reference. Therefore, when thinking about who the audience is, think of yourself in the future: What would *future you* need to know about the resource to remember (a) what it is about and (b) how useful it is.

## Types of Annotated Bibliographies

There are two major types of annotated bibliographies:

1. Summative (also known as descriptive or informative)
2. Evaluative (also known as analytical or critical)

### Summative

A summative annotated bibliography describes or summarizes a source. It describes the author's main arguments and conclusions without evaluating what the author says or concludes. Consider the following pieces of information when summarizing a resource:

- Type of source (book, article, website, etc.)
- The purpose of the work (to review, to test, to investigate, etc.)
- A summary of its content (the methods/kind of information collected and cited)
- Main findings/conclusions

### Evaluative

In addition to summarizing the material, an evaluative annotation also examines the strengths and weaknesses of the resource as well as its applicability to your research. When evaluating a source, consider using the CRAAP test (see handout on the CRAAP test for more information):

- **Credibility** = The timeliness of the information (outdated research is questionable).
- **Relevance** = The importance of the information for your needs (how useful the source is for your own research interests & how you intend to apply it)
- **Authority** = The source of the information (who the author/publisher/sponsor is/are and their credentials, qualifications, and affiliations)
- **Accuracy** = The reliability, truthfulness and correctness of the content (the sources of information, research methods, etc.)
- **Purpose** = The reason the information exists (to inform, persuade, entertain; opinion-based or fact-based; biases, agendas).

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## APA Format for Annotated Bibliography

Begin with a full citation in APA format, followed by the annotation. Use a *hanging indent* for the whole paragraph, just as you would for the citation alone, and *double-space* the entire entry. Annotated bibliographies may be arranged alphabetically, chronologically, or thematically; check with your instructor to see what he or she prefers. When in doubt, organize it alphabetically.

## Examples in APA Style

### Summative

Weigel, F. K., Switaj, T. L., & Hamilton, J. (2015). Leveraging health information technology to improve quality in federal healthcare. *U.S. Army Medical Department Journal*, 68–74. Retrieved from [http://www.cs.amedd.army.mil/amedd\\_journal.aspx](http://www.cs.amedd.army.mil/amedd_journal.aspx)

This journal article from the *U.S. Army Medical Department Journal* reports the results of a comprehensive literature review aimed at addressing the potential for the federal healthcare system to transform federal healthcare quality by managing the complexities associated with healthcare delivery, namely through the adoption and development of health information technology (HIT). By searching Google Scholar, PubMed, and Cochrane databases, the authors identified an initial list of 42 articles relevant to HIT and quality, which they then refined down to 11 articles through exclusion criteria pertaining to currency of the article, citation frequency, applicability to the federal health system, and quality of research. After analyzing those 11 articles, the authors found that increased integration of HIT corresponded to more accurate dosages and decreased medication error; however, interoperability and usability are continuing challenges for HIT implementation.

### Evaluative

Moerenhout, T., Devisch, I., & Cornelis, G. C. (2018). E-health beyond technology: Analyzing the paradigm shift that lies beneath. *Medicine, Health Care & Philosophy*, 21(1), 31-41. doi:10.1007/s11019-017-9780-3

This scholarly journal article addresses the question of what is changing in the e-health component of healthcare and whether these changes can be considered a paradigm shift. The authors approach these questions from a philosophical perspective using the works of Thomas Kuhn, Larry Laudan, and Michel Foucault among other philosophers. E-health constitutes an essential part of the shift away from curative medicine towards preventative medicine. The authors conclude that the most important changes occurring in healthcare are not changes towards more personalized care but towards more preventative care.

While this resource raises some interesting questions about the role of e-health in changing healthcare practices, it fails to support its claims with concrete evidence. It somewhat haphazardly relies on philosophers to determine whether the changes in healthcare can be considered a paradigm shift, but there is no clear logical method for determining why these philosophers were included in the analysis. Overall, the article ends up being too theoretical to lend much support to my own research.

Note: These examples are single-spaced to conserve space, but typically your assignment submission should be double-spaced. Also note that the summative annotation is one paragraph while the evaluative is two paragraphs with indents. While an evaluative annotation could be written in a single paragraph, it still needs to contain both the summary and evaluation components. As always, check with your instructor to see if he or she prefers summative or evaluative annotations and one or two paragraphs.

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