

# How Do I Write an Annotated Bibliography?

## Web Sites

These sites provide detailed, “how-to” information and more.

Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y.  
<http://www.library.cornell.edu/okuref/research/skill28.htm>

University of Wisconsin, Madison  
<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/AnnotatedBibliography.html>

## Reference Books

Hackman and Harner provide good information about the process of researching and compiling a bibliography. The APA and MLA publication manuals have all the rules for formatting and good examples of citations.

Gibaldi, J. (2003). *MLA handbook for writers of research papers*. (6th ed.)  
New York: Modern Language Association of America.  
REF LB2369 G53 2003

Harner, J.L. (2000). *On compiling an annotated bibliography*. (2nd ed.) New  
York: Modern Language Association of America.  
REF Z1001 H33 2000

*Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*. (5th ed.)  
(2001). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.  
REF BF76.7 P 83 2001

## Library Staff are Here to Help!

Online Guides: <http://library.fgcu.edu/Guides/index.html>

In Person: Reference Assistance Hours:  
M-Th 9:00 am—9:00 pm  
Friday 9:00 am—5:00 pm  
Saturday 9:00 am—1:00 pm  
Sunday 1:00 pm—5:00 pm

By Email or Web Form: [libref@fgcu.edu](mailto:libref@fgcu.edu)  
<http://library.fgcu.edu/Forms/askref.htm>

Personal Consultation by Appointment:  
[http://library.fgcu.edu/forms/my\\_librarian.htm](http://library.fgcu.edu/forms/my_librarian.htm)

Library Services

# Writing an Annotated Bibliography

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Library Services

<http://library.fgcu.edu>

Ask a Question  
<http://library.fgcu.edu/forms/askref.htm>

Reference Desk: 590-7630  
Circulation Desk: 590-7610

**Step One: TALK TO YOUR INSTRUCTOR!**  
This guide provides general information about annotated bibliographies and how to write them. Your instructor may have specific requirements or instructions related to your assignment.

## What Is an Annotated Bibliography?

### An Annotated Bibliography Is:

An organized list of cited sources such as books, journals, newspapers, magazines, web pages etc., each of which is followed by an annotation, or description, of each item.

An annotation is a brief, descriptive and evaluative note, usually no longer than two or three sentences. Some entries may be longer. The purpose of the annotation is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited.

The annotation should include a summary of what the article is about and the author's professional credentials. The annotation may also include your opinion of the article's value or usefulness—good or bad.

## How Are Annotated Bibliographies Used?

### A Research Shortcut

Use published bibliographies—from books, journals, or the Web—to get a head start when searching for information. Use the Library's Catalog, Electronic Resources, and Inter-Library Loan service to get copies of the works you find in published bibliographies that you think apply to your own research.

### Make Yourself Look Good

People are more likely to listen to what you have to say and to value your opinions if you can prove that you know what you're talking about. Write an annotated bibliography to show your audience that you know your subject well.

### Join Your Professional Community

Annotated bibliographies are one of the many ways you can trade research and information with other people in your field.

## What Do Annotated Bibliographies Look Like?

### Sample:

**citation**

Finneran, K. (2001). What's food got to do with it? *Issues in Science and Technology* 17, 24-25.



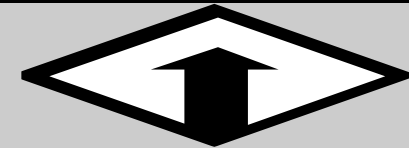
**summary  
of what  
the article  
is about**



**author's  
credentials**

In this editorial, Finneran questions why many people on both sides in the debate over the safety of genetically engineered food base their arguments on speculation, rumor, and emotion rather than scientific research. He references an article by Harvard biologist Richard Lewontin. Lewontin discusses an anti-genetic engineering physicist whose arguments are based on Hindu scripture instead of lab results and pro-genetic engineering scientists who advertise "Golden Rice" (a genetically engineered variety of rice rich in beta carotene) as a benefit for victims of malnutrition who lack vitamin A, even though many people suffering from malnutrition are too weak to properly metabolize the beta carotene into vitamin A. Kevin Finneran is editor-in-chief of *Issues in Science and Technology*, a policy journal sponsored by the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering, and the University of Texas at Dallas, making him someone qualified to write about forming opinions on scientific matters. This editorial serves as a cautionary reminder that sensible decisions on important issues must be grounded in fact and not influenced by vague fears, unrelated beliefs, unwarranted enthusiasm, or knee-jerk emotional reactions.

**annotation**



**value or usefulness of the  
work to your research**