

GLENDALE COLLEGE LIBRARY

HOW TO WRITE AN ANNOTATION FOR A SOURCE

Once you've selected a topic and some sources, it's time to start thinking about what you've found and how it supports and/or influences your research topic. If you investigate, think about, and answer the following questions about each source, writing the final annotations will be easier. You might not be able to answer *all* of the questions for all of your sources, but try to answer *as many as you can*. (See the completed example on the other side of this page.)

Use this handout to break down the article and write your annotation:

Who is the author and why should you pay attention to what she or he has to say? That is, what are the author's credentials?

Who is the intended audience? Scholars? General adult population? Everyday consumers?

What are the author's main ideas?

What is the purpose and depth of the work? Is it a broad, general overview? Does it cover something specific? Does it leave anything out?

Is there any indication of bias, such as strong language or a one-sided presentation of the facts/issues? How can you tell?

How does this source compare/contrast to others in your bibliography?

How does this source support/influence your thesis?

How is your source organized? Is there any supplemental information that is helpful, such as appendices, index, and bibliography?

*Put all of the above ideas together and
you have an annotation for your source!*

☆ Need help coming up with transitional words and phrases? Go to
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/574/01/>

☆ Need help with MLA, APA, or other citation styles? Go to
<http://www.glendale.edu/library/research/citing.htm>

On this site, the GCC Library has brief guides of MLA and APA style for print, electronic, and media sources available. Paper copies of these guides are available at the Reference Desk and the citation manuals are available to use in the library or to check out.

FAQs

Q: What is an annotated bibliography?

A: An annotated bibliography is a list of sources (books, journals, websites, periodicals, etc.) that includes an annotation of each source consulted for a research topic.

Q: Isn't an annotation the same as an abstract or summary of my source?

A: No. In addition to a brief description of the content, annotations provide critical analysis and evaluation of the work.

Q: How long should an annotation be?

A: Between 5 and 8 sentences.

Q: What is the difference between an annotated bibliography and a works cited list?

A: A works cited list includes all of the sources used in your paper. Your in-text citations refer to items on your works cited list. An annotated bibliography lists all of the works that you referenced in your paper as well as those items you consulted; items on the bibliography are not necessarily items actually used as support or evidence in your paper.

Q: Why write an annotated bibliography?

A: To illustrate the scope and quality of your research, to show that you've read and understand your sources, to place your research in context, and to prepare to write your final paper.

Completed Example of an Annotation

Excerpt from original source:

A thorough understanding of the role of body language is a vital tool in today's business environment. And yet I see it time and time again: professionals at all levels of the organization who aren't reading the clear signals of others or who don't have a clue how their own nonverbal behavior is sabotaging their efforts. Six factors have converged to make body language in the workplace more important now than ever before. [...] And influence relies on the effective use of two communication skills: (1) the ability to really understand the other person's perspective (which means listening to what's being said) and knowing how to read the messages that are being delivered nonverbally, and (2) the ability to communicate congruently, to align the spoken word with body language that supports an intended message. [...] Reaching that goal of understanding, of empathy, can mean a big difference in the business world.

*Carol Kinsey Goman, Ph.D., author of *The Nonverbal Advantage: Secrets and Science of Body Language at Work**

Example: Use this handout to break down the article and write your annotation:

Who is the author and why should you pay attention to what she or he has to say? That is, what are the author's credentials?

Goman has a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Columbia Pacific University and is a speaker and an author of several books and articles on communication.

Who is the intended audience? Scholars? General adult population? Everyday consumers?

Business professionals and a general audience interested in communication issues.

What are the author's main ideas?

The article focuses on how nonverbal communication can undermine your verbal message and how to avoid doing this in order to be a more effective communicator.

What is the purpose and depth of the work? Is it a broad, general overview? Does it cover something specific? Does it leave anything out?

The article is not overly specific; it provides a good overview of nonverbal communication and is based on her recent book, *The Nonverbal Advantage: Secrets and Science of Body Language at Work*.

Is there any indication of bias, such as strong language or a one-sided presentation of the facts/issues? How can you tell?

There doesn't seem to be any bias. Her language seems straightforward, balanced, and clear. She seems to be an expert in this area given her education and experience.

How does this source compare/contrast to others in your bibliography?

This article is from a trade journal, which is similar to a popular source. She does use some jargon, but it is very readable. It is not as in-depth as other sources.

How does this source support/influence your thesis?

This article supports my argument that nonverbal communication is an essential skill to have and that it should be taught to children at an early age.

How is your source organized? Is there any supplemental information that is helpful, such as appendices, index, and bibliography?

There are no works cited, but the author provides some additional tips on nonverbal communication called, "Improve Your Interpretation Using the 5 'Cs' of Body Language."

Here's what an entry for this article would look like in an annotated bibliography using MLA style, 7th ed.:

Goman, Carol K. "Lost in Translation." *Communication World* 25.4 (2008): 31-33. *ABI/Inform Global, ProQuest*. Web. 11 Aug. 2009.

Carol Kinsey Goman earned her PhD in Clinical Psychology from Columbia Park University and contributes articles regularly to such publications as *Communication World*, a trade publication on business communication. She has written several books, and her most recent is *The Nonverbal Advantage: Secrets and Science of Body Language*. Kinsey Goman argues in "Lost in Translation" that nonverbal messages such as body language, gestures, and facial expression can often send visual messages that are contradictory to what we are saying. She urges people to pay attention to these nonverbal cues and how such cues influence our effectiveness in communicating with others. She discusses six factors that we should consider in our communication style as well as tips on improving our nonverbal communication skills. I found this article very readable and useful for my research paper especially since her ideas can be applied to everyday communication and not just to business communication. I do not detect any bias in her language. The article does not contain an appendix, index, or bibliography.