

Annotated Bibliography

The goal of an annotated bibliography is to state after each entry what you learned from that source. Two or three sentences are sufficient to get your information across.

The bibliography should be split into two sections, one for primary and one for secondary sources. Each section should be put in alphabetical order. The bibliography should follow the MLA format required by NHD. The following websites are available to help with formatting your bibliography.

- Citation Machine – <http://www.citationmachine.net>
- EasyBib – <http://www.easybib.com>
- NoodleBib – <http://www.noodletools.com>

Every picture you use, book you cite, and web site from which you got information needs to be cited and included in the bibliography. If you do not do so, it is considered plagiarism.

Bad Examples of Annotations:

SOURCE 1: I used this source to get primary information.

SOURCE 2: This source supplied me pictures.

Better Examples of Annotations:

SOURCE 1: This source is George Washington's personal diary. It supplied me with an insight into Washington as a person. The journal also supplied numerous direct quotes from Washington for my project.

SOURCE 2: This site is a database including numerous primary source images on Lithuanian book smugglers. The pictures of Vlata's family, Euko the Smuggler, and the Soviet Police all came from this site.

Common Questions:

Classification of primary or secondary source. You should use the annotation to explain why you categorized a particular source as primary or secondary, if that is likely to be at all controversial. Historians do sometimes disagree and there's not always one right answer, so justify your choice to the judges.

Secondary source that included primary sources. You also may use the annotation to explain that a book or other secondary source included several primary sources used for the paper. Examples: "This book included three letters between person X on the frontier and person Y back in New England, which provided insight into the struggles and experiences of the

settlers." "This book provided four photos of settlers on the Great Plains and their homes, which were used on the exhibit."

Fuller explanation of credits for documentaries. You are supposed to give credit in the documentary itself for photos or other primary sources, but you can do this in a general way, such as by writing, "Photos from: National Archives, Ohio Historical Society, A Photographic History of the Civil War" rather than listing each photo individually in the documentary credits, which would take up too much of your allotted 10 minutes. You then can use the annotation in the bibliography to provide more detailed information.

Should I list each photograph or document individually? You should handle this differently in notes than in the bibliography. When you are citing sources for specific pieces of information or interpretations, such as in footnotes or endnotes, you should cite the individual document or photograph. In the bibliography, however, you would cite only the collection as a whole, not all the individual items. You should include the full title of the collection (e.g., Digges-Sewall Papers or the Hutzler Collection), the institution, city and state where the collection is located (e.g., Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Md.). You can use the annotation to explain that this collection provided 7 photographs which you used in your exhibit or that collection provided 14 letters which were important in helping you trace what happened. The same treatment applies to newspaper articles. In the footnotes or endnotes, you should cite the individual articles and issues of a newspaper. In the bibliography, you would list only the newspaper itself, not the individual issues or articles; you can use the annotation to explain that you used X number of days of the newspaper for your research.

How many sources should I have for my annotated bibliography? We can't tell you a specific number of sources, as that will vary by the topic and by the resources to which you have reasonable access. For some topics, such as the Civil War or many 20th-century U.S. topics, there are many sources available to you. For other topics, such as those in ancient history or non-U.S. history, there likely are far fewer sources available to you. The more good sources you have, the better, but don't pad your bibliography. Only list items which you actually use; if you looked at a source but it didn't help you at all, don't list it in your bibliography.