

## Writing an Annotated Bibliography

### Definition

An annotated bibliography is a list of citations to books, articles, and other information sources. Each entry includes the standard bibliographic information (author, title, publication) and an annotation. The bibliographic information must follow the guidelines for one specific style (APA, MLA, etc.).

### Content of the Annotation

The annotation is a brief description and evaluation of the item being cited. The annotation should describe:

1. the authority and qualifications of the author
2. the subject, scope, theme of the work
3. any bias or limits
4. the intended audience
5. special features (charts, illustrations, statistics, etc.)

### Style of the Annotations

1. Length of each annotation: 30 - 150 words
2. Wording: may be in complete sentences or in an abbreviated style which omits introductory words and phrases, articles, and unnecessary modifiers. Be consistent in choice of style throughout the bibliography
3. Be consistent about spacing throughout (single, double, or a combination)
4. APA style: Entire annotation is indented 5 spaces to the right of the citation. The first line is not indented more than the others
5. MLA style: The annotation follows directly after the citation.
6. Arrangement of entries varies: alphabetical by author; in sections for primary and secondary material; in sections for different types of materials (books, articles, web sites, etc.)

## APA Style Examples

Daiute, C. A. (1983). The computer as stylus and audience. *College Composition and Communication*, 34, 134-145.

Daiute argues that computers can help writers overcome what she calls “psychological difficulties” in writing.

Dobrin, D. N. (1987). Some ideas about idea processors. In L. Gerrard (Ed.), *Writing at century's end: Essays on computer-assisted instruction* (pp. 17-23). New York: Random House.

Dobrin argues that idea processors, programs such as ThinkTank that produce outlines, can help some writers to order their thoughts, but for most writers they limit creativity.

## MLA Style Examples

**Annotation continues on the same line as the bibliographic citation.**

Daiute, Colette A. “The Computer as Stylus and Audience.” College Composition and Communication 34 (1983): 134-45. Daiute argues that computers can help writers overcome what she calls “psychological difficulties” in writing, such as the limits of short-term memory and the necessity of considering the reader’s point of view.

Dobrin, David N. “Some Ideas about Idea Processors.” In Writing at Century’s End: Essays on Computer-Assisted Instruction. Ed. Lisa Gerrard. New York: Random House, 1987. 17-23. Dobrin argues that idea processors, programs such as ThinkTank that produce outlines, can help some writers to order their thoughts, but for most writers they limit creativity.