

Annotated Bibliography

An annotated bibliography is simply a reference list (bibliography) with a note (annotation) for each entry in the list. Each annotation is usually a paragraph, and looks like this:

Thomas, Stone & Greenwood (1990). The real cost of compensation. *Business and Administrative Research*, 15, 8, pp.146-162.

In an epidemiological analysis of 65,000 compensation claims for injured workers in the Victoria in 1989, the authors found a correlation of +.98 between the age of the worker and the average length of time spent by the worker on compensation benefits. This suggests that older workers may take longer to recover from injury than younger workers. The jurisdiction studied involved compulsory notification of all workers' compensation claims at that time, which amounts to a reliable population study of 65,000 claims. However, individual case data was not available to the researchers due to confidentiality considerations, so the effects of separate variables in their analysis could not be identified. The authors' findings are consistent with Whacklow, Furtle and Crun (1989), whose study of 2,000 compensation claims of a large county in Ireland found a strong association between age and claim duration. However, the study by Dunn (1989) conducted with US workers found no such association.

The purpose is to show that you understand the existing research in your field: its strengths, limitations, and usefulness for a particular project. Therefore, you will usually need to choose a range of relevant sources to annotate.

**So... how do
I do it**



Depending on the text type, and your assignment requirements, an annotated bibliography will usually include:

- Bibliographic details
- A brief summary or description of the research findings
- An evaluation of its usefulness to future research, its strengths, and its limitations
- Sometimes, an annotation will also make reference or explain links to other relevant research in the field.

The following list outlines in details the various elements that might be involved:

1. Reference it

- The first part of an annotation is to provide a full citation for the source you are reviewing. Remember to use the correct referencing style (e.g. APA, MLA, Harvard etc). This will vary from discipline to discipline.

2. Describe it

- The first few sentences of your annotated bibliography should introduce the source by including a detailed description and summary of the text.
- This information should include:
 - What type of source it is (i.e. a literature review, a best practice evidence sheet, a chapter from a text book, a cohort study, etc.)?
 - Who has produced the source? Who is the intended audience of the source?
 - What key topics, findings and information the source offers?
 - What evidence or research the source uses to establish its argument or support the key ideas being presented?

3. Evaluate it

- The next section of the annotation should provide an evaluation of the quality of the source; this allows you to demonstrate your critical reading and thinking skills.
- The evaluation should comment on any weaknesses or strengths in the source, their evidence and their argument. Is the study limited in some way? Or does provide a thorough examination and collection of evidence on the topic? Are there any potential biases?

4. Link it

- The final component of an annotation will make clear connections between the source and other aspects of your study. This section should build on what has been evaluated.
- The source can be linked to your own learning and research - what does the source contribute to your understanding of this topic? How useful is this source to your own purpose, research and learning?
- The source should also be contextualised by making links to the bigger picture surrounding this topic or area of study. Are there any connections between this source and other research on the topic? Does it connect to clinical practices and policies? What is significant about these connections?



Examples

The following examples have been analysed to demonstrate different ways to approach an annotated bibliography, considering different text and research types, and purposes.

McFarlane, J.K. (1973). Standards of care – what do we mean by care? <i>Nursing Mirror</i>. 143(23), 40 - 42	Bibliographic details
<i>This article examines the meaning of the word ‘care’ within a nursing context.</i>	Overview
<i>The responsibility of nurses to provide care is legitimised in numerous documents, and the author goes on to identify key concepts related to nursing care. In particular, these concepts include assisting, helping, and giving a service; offering this service to people who need help with daily living activities and to others who are affected by health deviations or illness of some kind. Moreover, the nurse’s caring role is legitimised by the patients. Finally, the article concludes by relating how these concepts are put into operation by using the steps of the nursing process – assessing, planning, implementing and evaluating the patient’s need for nursing care.</i>	Summary of research and conclusions drawn
<i>The main limitation of the article is that all of the research was exclusively conducted in large city hospitals.</i>	Limitations
<i>Therefore, while the article is useful for an analysis of nursing care, the limitations of its research base will require some adaptation to meet the needs of this assignment that requires a commentary on services in both city and country area hospitals</i>	Usefulness

(Source: UNE Academic Skills Office, n.d.).

Jevy, CO, Lando, B & Brown, JW 2004, ‘Employee turnover and job performance: monitoring the influences of salary growth and promotion’, <i>Journal of Armchair Psychology</i>, vol. 113, no. 1, pp. 54-64.	Bibliographic details
<i>In this article, Jevu, Lando and Brown review the influences of pay and job opportunities in respect to job performance, turnover rates and employee motivation.</i>	Introduction/ Summary
<i>The authors use data gained through blue-chip companies in Vancouver, Canada to try to identify the main cause of employee turnover and whether it is linked to salary growth.</i>	Research methods
<i>The article is useful as... there are numerous reasons for employee turnover and variances in employee motivation.</i>	Usefulness
<i>The main limitation of the article is that the survey sample was restricted to mid-level management</i>	Limitations
<i>thus the authors indicated that further, more extensive research needs to be undertaken to develop a more in-depth undertaking of employee turnover and job performance</i>	Conclusions
<i>This article will not form the basis of my research; however, it will be useful supplementary information for my research on pay structures</i>	Reflection

(Source: King, 2010, p. 35)

Bos, C., & Vaughn, S. (1991). <i>Strategies for teaching students with learning behavior problems</i> (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.	Bibliographic details
<i>"This book contains a short section of theory on the teaching-learning process, with a focus on students with learning and behavior problems. The majority of the book, however, provides specific, concrete ideas and suggestions for teaching special needs children in all subject areas.</i>	Overview
<i>The book covers a wide range of subjects, including: oral language, word identification, written expression, content area learning and study skills, mathematics, computer-assisted instruction and socialization.</i>	Strengths
<i>The focus is on elementary schools, but some ideas for secondary schools are given. Although the special education teachers are the primary audience,</i>	Limitations
<i>almost all of the book is applicable to regular education teachers"</i>	Usefulness

(Source: Rekkas, 1997, p. 169).

Thomas, Stone & Greenwood (1990). The real cost of compensation. <i>Business and Administrative Research</i>, 15, 8, pp.146-162.	Bibliographic details
<i>In an epidemiological analysis of 65,000 compensation claims for injured workers in the Victoria in 1989,</i>	Methodology
<i>the authors found a correlation of +.98 between the age of the worker and the average length of time spent by the worker on compensation benefits.</i>	Summary of findings
<i>This suggests that older workers may take longer to recover from injury than younger workers.</i>	Conclusions
<i>The jurisdiction studied involved compulsory notification of all workers' compensation claims at that time, which amounts to a reliable population study of 65,000 claims.</i>	Strengths
<i>However, individual case data was not available to the researchers due to confidentiality considerations, so the effects of separate variables in their analysis could not be identified.</i>	Limitations
<i>The authors' findings are consistent with Whacklow, Furtle and Crun (1989), whose study of 2,000 compensation claims of a large county in Ireland found a strong association between age and claim duration. However, the study by Dunn (1989) conducted with US workers found no such association.</i>	Links to previous studies

References

King, J. (2010). How to write an annotated bibliography. *Access*, 24(4), 34-37.

Rekkas, A. (1997). Strategies for inclusion: An annotated bibliography. *Childhood Education*, 73(3), 168-171.

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