

# Annotated Bibliographies

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*Writing Center*

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This handout is based on *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, Sixth Edition, 2010, and *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, Seventh Edition, 2009.

An annotated bibliography adds additional information to a list of References or Works Cited. An annotated bibliography has two components:

- A full bibliographic citation for a source, completed in standard format for a References page (APA) or a Works Cited page (MLA).
- Information about that source.

Depending on the instructor's requirements and assignment guidelines, the information in an annotated bibliography may take one of several different formats:

- **Summary:** What are the main points in this source? What topics are covered?
- **Evaluation:** Is this a useful source? Is the source biased? Is the information reliable? How does this source compare with other sources in your bibliography?
- **Reflection:** How does this source fit into your research topic? How can you use this source in your paper? Has this source changed your opinion about the topic?

The summary, evaluation, and/or reflection will appear after the bibliographic information. The length of each annotation will depend on how much detail is required and may vary from several sentences to several pages, depending on the assignment.

*Please note: examples below are single-spaced to conserve space.*

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## APA Examples

1) An annotated bibliography citation that includes summary and evaluation:

Gerbner, G., & Gross, L. (1976). Living with television: The violence profile. *Journal of Communication*, 26, 172-199.

Gerbner and Gross, in their pioneering article, lay the groundwork for cultivation theory. They begin by discussing the power of television to dramatize society and reinforce society's status quo, arguing that television creates basic assumptions about the "facts" of life and becomes a force of enculturation. Moreover, television helps members of society learn how large institutions such as medicine, law enforcement and justice, big business, and entertainment work. By using a textual analysis of television and identifying broad themes, the researchers created a survey to see how these broad themes affect perception. They found that heavy television viewers were more likely than light television viewers to believe the television representation of reality in the areas of law enforcement, human trustworthiness, and likelihood of being involved in violence. Their results also supported the effects of television on broad demographic groups--it affected minorities, the poor, the undereducated, and even college students in similar ways.

This foundational research study on cultivation theory is well-written and well-supported. The use of logic and clear explanation makes the new theory easy to understand. By addressing common reader concerns about the establishment of cultivation, including questions about its effects on different demographics of television viewers, the authors are able to establish strong credibility.

- 2) An annotated bibliography citation that includes summary, reflection, and evaluation:

Blackmon, W.D. (1994). Dungeons and dragons: The use of a fantasy game in psychotherapeutic treatment of a young adult. *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, 48(4). Retrieved from <http://www.ajp.org/>

This article describes a case study of an emotionally challenged young man who is able to overcome his handicap by playing the game Dungeons and Dragons (D&D). The article follows the patient's history, detailing his family and life history and describing his suicide attempt. The article also describes the treatment plan (using D&D) that helped the man cope with life. The article emphasized that D&D allowed the patient to have social contact and to use characters in order to express his fantasies and innermost feelings. The suspension of real-world rules in juxtaposition with a great number of game-governing rules shows the reader how players can cope with problems within a structured environment. The article ends by explaining how the patient was able to enact his feelings through the characters in the game and recuperate to live a normal adult life.

This article will be somewhat useful for the cultural observation analysis. It provides a very different perspective of D&D--a psychological one. In addition, the article shows how individuals may view D&D as a friendship-building, social activity. This viewpoint supports somewhat the themes of collaboration and teamwork which I have identified and will be helpful mostly because it supports the cultural themes which I have identified as important in the Dungeons and Dragons game playing culture.

Particularly helpful and interesting is the description of how D&D allows its players to enact their feelings and live out their fantasies in a safe environment. This supports my conclusions from observations about creativity and role playing. It confirms several similar studies that have demonstrated the psychological impact of electronic games.

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### MLA examples

- 3) An annotated bibliography citation with a summary:

Wendt, Tracy. "Body as Mentality in Edith Wharton's *Ethan Frome*." *Atenea*. 25.2 (2005): 155-170. Print.

In this short essay, Wendt analyzes the use of internal monologue and verbal dialogue in Wharton's novella. Wendt argues that the psychologies of the characters in *Ethan Frome* are best seen through the language of their bodies, rather than in their internal monologue and external dialogue. Wendt focuses on the simple language that the characters use, and contends that the language itself masks a complex psychology, arguing that in order to survive, Frome's "bodily needs dominate the intellectual" (159). Wendt highlights a specific scene involving Ethan Frome and Mattie to emphasize the relationship between thought, understanding, and physical actions, particularly the description of Ethan's eyebrows as "an almost physical semblance of the brain." Wendt goes on to compare the themes in *Ethan Frome* to the themes present in *Summer*, another one of Wharton's works.

- 4) An annotated bibliography citation that includes summary and reflection:

Roosevelt, Franklin D. "The Four Freedoms" (delivered 6 January, 1941). *American Rhetoric: Top 100 Speeches*. N.d. Web. 15 Mar. 2010.

This speech by President Roosevelt focuses on humanitarian issues relating to WWII, persuading Americans to answer the call of freedom. Roosevelt called on Americans to make sacrifices on behalf of their country to resist the evil influence of the Nazis and defeat them utterly. I'll use this speech to show that military involvement was not the only type of intervention Roosevelt was calling for. The speech also illustrates Roosevelt's capacity as a leader to oppose the forces that were attempting to isolate the U.S. Roosevelt further expresses the need to go beyond the borders of the U.S. and not be "soft hearted." This further demonstrates his ability to lead in a democratic yet assertive way.