

How to do an Annotated Bibliography

The **Works Cited** or **Reference** page is a list of citations of the sources (books, journals, web sites, periodicals, etc.) you have used for researching a topic. An **Annotated Bibliography** starts with a **citation**, and then includes a **summary** of each of the sources, plus an **assessment** and a **reflection**. *TIP:* Don't confuse it with an *abstract*. Abstracts are descriptive summaries often found at the beginning of scholarly journal articles or in periodical indexes. For an annotated bibliography you need to include your evaluation of the source.

The **summary** answers questions such as: What are the main topics or arguments? What is the point of this book or article? Use your own words to condense the author's ideas to a more **concise and brief** statement

After summarizing a source, it is important to **assess** it. Is it useful? Is the information credible or reliable? Is this source biased or objective? What is the goal of this source (informative or persuasive)?

Once you've summarized and assessed a source, you need to **reflect** on how it fits specifically into your research. Was this source helpful to you and how? How does it help you shape your argument? How can you use this source in your research project? Has it changed how you think about your topic?

Example of an Annotated Bibliography (Formatted in APA)

Finneran, K. (2001). What's food got to do with it? *Issues in Science and Technology*, 17, 24-25.

APA Citation

Type of Source Used

In this editorial from a **scholarly journal**, Finneran questions why many experts, including David Lewontin, on both sides in the debate over the safety of genetically engineered food base their arguments on speculation, rumor, and emotion rather than scientific research. He references an anti-genetic engineering physicist whose arguments are based on Hindu scripture instead of lab results and pro-genetic engineering scientists who advertise "Golden Rice" as a benefit for victims of malnutrition who lack vitamin A.

Summary of Author's Main Points

Kevin Finneran is editor-in-chief of *Issues in Science and Technology*, policy journal sponsored by the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering, and the University of Texas at Dallas, **making him someone qualified to write about forming opinions on scientific matters.**

Assessment of the reliability of source

This editorial serves as a cautionary reminder that sensible decisions on important issues must be grounded in fact and not influenced by vague fears, unrelated beliefs, unwarranted enthusiasm, or knee-jerk emotional reactions. **My study** will discuss the pro's and con's of genetically modified foods, **so I will use this article** to better understand the types of arguments used in the debate. This article **is also useful to me** because it contains several other relevant ideas I can pursue. For example, I will read the article by David Lewontin mentioned in this editorial, and also look for more information about "golden rice."

Reflection on how the source connects to the essay's topic and how it will be used in the paper. Remember: it is not enough to say "this source is perfect for my paper because it is exactly on my topic". **You have to explain why or how it is perfect!**

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