

How to do an Annotated Bibliography



An **Annotated Bibliography** reflects a deeper look into and overall evaluation of the articles, websites, and other outside sources providing information to a paper. For each source, start with a **citation** (1), and then add a **summary** (2) of the article, book, etc, plus an **assessment** (3) and a **reflection** (4).

TIP: Don't confuse this with an *abstract*. Abstracts are descriptive summaries often found at the beginning of scholarly journal articles. For an Annotated Bibliography you need to include your evaluation of the source.

1. **Citation** – should be formatted in MLA, APA, or whichever format is specified for the overall assignment
2. **Summary** - condense the author's ideas to a more concise and brief statement. Answers questions such as: What are the main topics or arguments? What is the point of this book or article?
3. **Assessment** - is the source useful? Is the information credible or reliable? Is it biased or objective? What is the goal of this source (informative vs persuasive)?
4. **Reflection** - how does the source fit specifically into the paper's argument? Was it helpful and how? Has it changed your views about your topic? Does it suggest any other directions for research?

TIP: It is not adequate 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.*

Example of an Annotated Bibliography (Formatted in APA Ver. 7)

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

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 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*, a policy journal sponsored by the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering, and the University of Texas, **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, 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 this source contributes to your paper**

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