MLA Format for an Annotated Bibliography

An annotated bibliography is very useful. It is helpful because it helps you collect and organize your sources, to have work and material to share, and to double check your citations before you begin your writing. It will help both you and your supervisor see the work that you have done and help guide you further.

Some teachers will require an annotated bibliography at a key point in your research process. It will assure your teacher that you are on the right course and are not missing any key information.

An annotation should include the following information:
• MLA Source Citation
• A concise summary of the source
• The source’s strengths and weaknesses (values and limitations)
• The source’s conclusions about the topic
• Why the source is relevant to your paper (or reflections about the source)

You may also choose to include the following, depending on your topic:
• Relationships to other sources of the same topic (connections, relevance)
• Evaluation of the research methodology
• Scope of the research and methods
• Information about the author’s background
• A quote that would be useful in your paper

Here is an example annotation, with all of the pieces.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concise Summary, with focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In this article, Trevor et al. review the influences of pay and job opportunities in respect to job performance, turnover rates and employee motivation. Their research focuses on assessing a range of pay structures such as pay for performance and organizational reward schemes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values/Limitation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The main limitation of the article is that the survey sample was restricted to mid-level management, thus the authors indicate that further, more extensive, research needs to be undertaken to develop a more in-depth understanding of employee turnover and job performance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relevance to your topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The article is useful to my research topic, as Trevor et al. suggest that there are numerous reasons for employee turnover and variances in employee motivation and performance. This article will not form the basis of my research; however it will be useful supplementary information for my research on pay structures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Here is a series of questions, which may help if you. It is similar to the previous example, but not quite the same.

MLA Citation

- The first thing you should do with an annotated bib is write down all of the information about the source as you would a normal MLA citation. Notice that if there is more than one author, all of the authors must be included. You only use et al. in your text and in-text citations.
- Once you have that information and format that entry, then you can begin your annotation.

Sentence 1: How is the information important

- What type of work is this? Is it an overview of a topic? Is it a study?
- What part of the book/article be useful? Or only a chapter or a section or the whole source?
- What information is found about the author?

Sentence 2: Summarize the work with these questions

- How are the chapters and sections divided? How are they arranged?
- What all can be found in the work?
- Why is this information important, interesting, or relevant?
- You can also use this sentence to set up your quote.

Sentence 3: The quote

This is the easy part, find a quote that is important to your research, copy it down with all the information directly. Should look like this:
Sampson says on page 3, “Living life as a scrap yard technician was hard, but the time I spent with my son was even more challenging.”

Sentence 4: Validity

- This sentence simply wraps up the article by stating how you would use the source, at all, in your research?
- Is it a primary source? Does it contradict or agree with your own thesis proposal?
- Will you use it as a building block for your own research argument?
- Is the article at all biased or set up in a manner that makes you question its worth?