Annotated Bibliography Instructions

What is an annotated bibliography?
- It is similar to a regular bibliography or References/Works Cited list. The difference is, in an annotated bibliography each citation or reference is followed by an annotation.

What is an annotation?
- A brief paragraph (50-200 words), usually after the citation, that describes and/or evaluates each source of information listed, usually within the context of a research assignment/specific topic.

Why should I do this?
- Annotations quickly inform the reader about the topic of an information source, as well as its relevance, accuracy, and quality.
- Creating an annotation helps to determine the usefulness of a source for an assignment, and shows you have applied critical thinking skills to search for and evaluate information sources.

How do I start?
- Find out the required citation style for your assignment (in this case, APA 6th Edition).
- Create citations for your best-quality information sources. Put your citations in alphabetical order by last name of the first author of each source.
- Create your annotations. The annotation style below is evaluative.

How to write an annotation:

Evaluative Annotations describe the content and assess its value as research in the field and in relation to your topic. The annotation doesn’t have to be long (50 to 200 words). Use the questions below as a guide to creating appropriate annotations:

- What is it? book, chapter, scholarly article, web page
- What is the source about? topics covered
- What is the purpose? introduction, commentary, research report
- Who is the intended audience? scholars, general public
- Who is/are the author(s)? journalists, researchers
- Why are the authors qualified to write about this topic? academic qualifications, research background
- Authority of the source? peer-reviewed journal, reputable publisher
- Are there any clear biases? personal or corporate agenda, unbalanced discussion
- What are the deficiencies or limitations of the work? research methods seem suspect, information is clearly missing
- What are the strengths of the work? thorough discussion, major work in the field
- What is the value to your project?

Do I have to read the entire book / article / chapter?
- Not necessarily. Answers may be found in introductions/conclusions, book reviews, websites, first and last paragraphs, publisher’s information, abstracts, etc.
Examples (APA Citation) [Note: APA does not have specific guidelines for formatting annotations; follow the format below for this assignment.]

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   Linda Johns is a Nova Scotia artist and creative non-fiction writer. The book *For the birds: Nature notes from a woodland studio* is a charming account of the inhabitants of the indoor bird sanctuary she has in her rural home. As a writer, clearly the author has talent; the book is well-written and frequently laugh-out-loud funny. One of Johns’ previous books won the 1994 Edna Stebler Award for Creative Non-fiction. The publisher, McClelland & Stewart is respected and well-established, especially in the realm of Canadian literature. However, the information in *For the birds* is anecdotal; while suitable for a wide range of readers, it is not scientific enough as a source for a research paper. There are no references supplied, and there is clearly an environmentalist agenda.


   Susan Murray, an Assistant Professor of Culture and Communication at New York University, is the author of this encyclopedia article. The encyclopedia article outlines a brief history of reality television in the United States. The article includes a short list of types of programming deemed reality television and a few examples of early American reality TV programs. The encyclopedia is published with the support of the Museum of Broadcast Journalism, an institution housing major television archives. Murray’s particular article, while well-referenced, is limited in scope, focusing on American television. It does not deal with the issues of participant recruitment, psychological effects on past participants, nor the sustainability of the genre. This article could be a useful first resource for defining the topic of reality television. It would be of limited use to advanced researchers or those seeking information about the future of the genre or possible societal impacts.