Genre of Annotated Bibliography

**Genre:** An annotated bibliography, in addition to standard bibliographical data, includes a brief summary and evaluation of the works listed. Annotated bibliographies are particularly useful in the early stages of gathering research. When it comes time to narrow your topic and outline and compose your first draft, the annotated bibliography is refined and easily used to reference the main ideas from your sources and to facilitate in-text citations. In professional disciplines, the annotated bibliography is a valued genre, especially when an evaluative component is incorporated.

**Purposes:** To demonstrate proficiency in citing sources in MLA style; to demonstrate proficiency in locating, summarizing, and evaluating scholarly sources to be used in your research paper.

**Audience/ or Who Reads Annotated Bibliographies?** There tend to be three major audiences for annotated bibliographies: the authors of the annotations, instructors, and other researchers.

**Self as Audience**—Many people find it useful to craft an annotated bibliography while researching topics. Writing brief summaries of the research you consult, whether it's newspapers, journals, books, or videos, helps you remember these sources over time. More than that, by writing critical evaluations of the research you consult, you will identify common themes and methods. You will find what research is commonly cited on a topic, what methods are employed, and what a community of scholars believes needs additional inquiry. You will more deeply understand the ideas in your sources, and be better prepared to discuss and quote from your sources in an essay.

**Instructors as Audience**—In college and university contexts, instructors often require students to craft annotated bibliographies as a preliminary step to writing a formal research paper. Asking students to construct an annotated bibliography enables instructors to see that students understand the importance of research and documentation. It helps ensure that the student has consulted a variety of timely and reputable sources.

**Other Researchers**—Many professionals will actually publish their annotated bibliographies. This occurs in research fields where a lot of information is being published, and others would benefit from having all that information categorized and summarized. In this way, bibliographies really save other researchers a lot of time. Professional researchers often begin their survey of research by finding annotated bibliographies on a topic that interests them.