

Writing Center Handouts

Annotated Bibliography and Literature Reviews

An annotated bibliography includes a summary and/or evaluation of each of the sources.

Questions You Should Ask: Assessing, reflecting, and summarizing.

- **Assessing:** How useful was this source to your analysis? What potential does this source have towards your analysis? Has this source changed how you think about your topic?
- **Reflecting:** Was this source helpful to you? 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?
- **Summarization:** What does the source say? The main arguments of the source? What sources have this source cited?

Writing the Annotated Bibliography:

- The annotations for each source are written in paragraph form. The lengths of the annotations can vary significantly from a couple of sentences to a couple of pages.
- The bibliographic information should follow whatever style that you are adhering to.

Literature Review

A literature review discusses published information in a particular subject area and helps to contextualize the information within your own writing. It provides an overview of a particular topic or problem by summarizing and explaining the most significant and relevant sources in the field that you are researching.

How is a Literature Review Different from an Annotated Bibliography?

- In the case of an annotated bibliography, there is a separate paragraph for each source cited. In a literature review, each body paragraph should include several sources.
- An annotated bibliography must organize sources alphabetically, but a literature review is likely to use problem/solution, cause/effect, comparison/contrast to organize sources. A literature review's organization thus is more conceptual than an annotated bibliography.

How to do a Literature Review

- A literature review provides an overview on a problem by summarizing and listing the sources that are most relevant to the argument
- Unlike an annotated bibliography, a literature review's sources should be discussed with reference to other sources. You can mention other sources in the paragraph and compare them.
 - The purpose of a literature review is to compare how sources will operate thematically and organizationally, so comparing and contrasting the sources are vital parts of the literature review.