



Writing an annotated bibliography

An annotated bibliography is a list of sources (bibliography) with added notes (annotations).

The bibliography is an alphabetical list, by author, date, publisher, volume, page number etc. of sources you have read to find information for an assignment.

The annotations are your notes about the source/s, where you summarise, evaluate, and reflect on the source/s.

Annotated bibliography example

Turnbull, D., Chugh, R., & Luck, J. (2023). Learning management systems and social media: A case for their integration in higher education institutions: Association for learning technology journal. *Research in Learning Technology*; 31, 1-16.

<https://doi.org/10.25304/rlt.v31.2814>

In their report, Turnbull, Chugh and Luck present an argument for integrating social media platforms with existing Learning Management Systems in higher education. The report assesses the benefits for students' learning, based on international studies, and considers the technological and security challenges of integrating learning management systems and social media platforms such as LinkedIn. The authors

conclude that the difficulties of integration are outweighed by the significant benefits for learning and teaching in higher education.

This report is relevant and useful because it links directly to my research question on the use of social media in higher education. It seems reliable and credible, given that it was published in the peer-reviewed *Research in Learning Technology* journal, and the authors' argument is supported by extensive research and references to international peer-reviewed studies. Moreover, the report is up-to-date, having been published in 2023.

A limitation of the report, which the authors acknowledge, is that the study is based solely on English-language publications. As such, this report will need to be supplemented by studies examining the use of social media in higher education in non-English-speaking countries. Nevertheless, it provides a useful foundation for my own research.

Components of an annotated bibliography

1. The bibliographical information

Example:

Turnbull, D., Chugh, R., & Luck, J. (2023). Learning management systems and social media: A case for their integration in higher education institutions: Association for learning technology journal. *Research in Learning Technology*; 31, 1-16.
<https://doi.org/10.25304/rlt.v31.2814>

This example uses APA7 referencing. In APA the bibliographical details follow this order:

Author/s, Year of publication, Title of Article, *Title of journal*, *Journal volume number*, Issue number, Page range and DOI (Digital Object Identifier).

A DOI (Digital Object Identifier) is a unique link for a published digital object such as a journal article. The DOI will take you directly to your source – unlike a URL which can change over time, a DOI will stay the same. This means you can always locate an online source again if you've listed its DOI.

Note: each referencing style presents the bibliographical details slightly differently. For more referencing styles and information about referencing, go to the [UWA Library guides for referencing](#).

2. Your summary

Your summary should give a brief overview of the article, the authors' argument/s, and findings or conclusions.

Example:

In their report, Turnbull, Chugh and Luck present an argument for integrating social media platforms with existing Learning Management Systems in higher education.

The report assesses the benefits for students' learning, based on international studies, and considers the technological and security challenges of integrating learning management systems and social media platforms such as LinkedIn. The authors conclude that the difficulties of integration are outweighed by the significant benefits for learning and teaching in higher education.

3. Your Evaluation

Your evaluation should assess how relevant the article is to your research topic and what it contributes to your research.

Look for any limitations, for example in the scope of the research or the date of publication (check if it's up to date).

For more guidance on evaluating sources, go to the [UWA Library guide to evaluating sources](#).

Example:

This report is relevant and useful because it links directly to my research question on the use of social media in higher education. It seems reliable and credible, given that it was published in the peer-reviewed *Research in Learning Technology* journal, and the authors' argument is supported by extensive research and references to international peer-reviewed studies. Moreover, the report is up-to-date, having been published in 2023.

A limitation of the report, which the authors acknowledge, is that the study is based solely on English-language publications.

4. Your reflection

Your reflection should describe how you will use this source for your research – for example, does it cover everything you need to know or will you need to find further articles to answer your research question?

Example:

As such, this report will need to be supplemented by studies examining the use of social media in higher education in non-English-speaking countries. Nevertheless, it provides a useful foundation for my own research.

More about writing an annotated bibliography

Writing an annotated bibliography may be set as an assessment task for one or more units you are taking. If you are undertaking research, for example for an Honours, Masters or PhD research project, you may be required to write an annotated bibliography for each source you plan to use.

Other reasons for writing an annotated bibliography

- Writing an annotated bibliography will help you keep track of your sources and give you an overview of each source (your summary will remind you what each source covers).
- Your annotations will also help you rank your sources according to how relevant, useful, up-to-date and reliable they are and assess how the sources relate to your research topic (for example, some sources will be more relevant than others).
- Finally, your annotations will help you decide how you will use your sources: for example, are they peer-reviewed studies you will cite frequently to support your thesis, or are they secondary sources you might refer to only once or twice?

FAQs for writing an annotated bibliography



How long should an annotated bibliography be?

Annotated bibliographies are usually quite brief; 150-300 words is a common length. They vary from a few sentences to a few paragraphs depending on the assignment requirements or your preference if you are writing an annotated bibliography for your own purposes. The assignment instructions in your unit LMS will tell you the required word length if you are writing an annotated bibliography for an assignment.

Does an annotated bibliography always cover just one source?

An annotated bibliography covers one source at a time. If you are required to write an annotated bibliography for more than one source, you should write a separate annotated bibliography entry for each source.

How should an annotated bibliography be formatted?

The bibliographical details always come first and should follow the referencing style used in your unit/area of study (each referencing style presents bibliographical information in a different order and with different formatting).

Check the unit instructions for your annotations as they may specify the font and font size required and whether to write your annotations as a single paragraph or in separate sections for your summary, evaluation and reflection.