

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

OVERVIEW

The annotated bibliography assignment asks you to develop and narrow a research question about the current (*arose within the last 18-24 months*) and unresolved (*not yet settled*) issue you chose and compile sources that provide evidence about the issue that will help you answer your question.

The annotated bibliography is a key step in inquiry-based, or question driven research. You will not be formulating a thesis at this point.

ASSIGNMENT

PART 1: IDENTIFY AN ISSUE AND DEVELOP YOUR RESEARCH QUESTION

Finding a current and unresolved issue in your field can be challenging, but if you know where to look, you can find an abundance of ongoing conversations in public writing to explore:

- Recent legislation that has been introduced in Congress or in state legislatures that is relevant to your field but has not yet been voted upon. [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov) is a great source for tracking federal legislation. This is often a great source for identifying a possible issue in your field.
- Major newspapers such as The New York Times or The Wall Street Journal often publish articles relevant to issues in your field of study.
- Trade publications in your field also publish articles about current trends and/or controversies in the field
- The advocacy pages of the major professional association for your academic discipline or future profession often list the issues for which the association “advocates” to help the professional.

Make sure your sources lead you to an issue in your field that meets the requirements for the Issue, Audience, and Genre Analysis: the issue must be current (arisen within the last 18-24 months), unresolved (the issue is not settled), and has a researchable audience (stakeholder) who has decision-making authority over the issue.

Once you have an issue that meets these requirements, use the instructional material in our course to craft a narrowed research question that the sources you are about to compile can help answer.

Use that question, and the search terms it can yield, to begin compiling sources for your annotated bibliography.

PART 2: COMPILER YOUR ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

List five highly credible sources that help you understand the scope of a current and unresolved issue in your field and the audiences who have decision-making authority over it. (NOTE: To arrive at five great sources, you will review many more than that). At Least two of those sources must be from a peer-reviewed article published in a scholarly journal. The remainder can be from the major newspapers, trade publications, federal agencies (good for data), notable blogs written by credentialed authors, and prestigious periodicals.

Include sources that address the following aspects of research for your final argument paper:

- One source for background information about the issue (scholarly sources are usually good for this purpose)
- One source that provides evidence about a potential audience, someone with decision-making authority over the issue you are investigating
- Two sources that offer differing perspectives on the issue
- One source the establishes why this issue is current and unresolved in your field

PART 3: WRITING THE ANNOTATIONS

ADAPTED FROM ANDREW HARNACK'S WRITING RESEARCH PAPERS

For each of your sources, you must write a rhetorical précis, a four-sentence summary or "annotation" that does the following:

Sentence 1 Name of author and title of work [publishing information, date, and page numbers in parentheses]; a rhetorically accurate verb (such as asserts, argues, suggests, contends, believes, reports, indicates, insists); and a "that" clause containing the thesis or main argument of the work.

Sentence 2 A brief but accurate explanation of how the author develops or supports the thesis, usually in the same order as was developed in the essay.

Sentence 3 A statement of the author's apparent purpose, followed by an "in order to" phrase.

Sentence 4 An explanation of how this source is relevant to your research and why you chose it.

Student Example of a Rhetorical Précis

Enrico Di Minin in “Banning Trophy Hunting Will Exacerbate Biodiversity Loss” (Trends in Ecology & Evolution. 31(2), 99-102) **argues that** if there is a blanket ban on trophy hunting then biodiversity will decrease in the areas where trophy hunting is benefiting wildlife populations. **He supports his argument** by describing how the trophy hunting system works in certain parts of Africa, by providing data for how much revenue it brings in, and using examples of the current problems with trophy hunting and how they have been solved. His purpose is to prove that trophy hunting is important **in order to** ensure that there is less biodiversity loss in Sub-Saharan Africa. **I chose this source because** I agree with the side De Minin took, it provides a lot of evidence for the benefits of trophy hunting and because there is another source that directly responds to it.



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