

Annotated Bibliography

An annotated bibliography is a bibliography that lists the sources used with a description of the sources and comments on their values and limitations for research of one's specific topic.

An annotation should include

1. A brief description of the author's main argument(s)
2. A discussion of the academic nature of the source if it is a secondary source (Is it popular history designed for audiences not familiar with the topic? Is it designed for academics who specialize in the field? Who is the intended audience?)
3. A discussion of the values of the source specifically for the paper you are writing.
4. A discussion of the limits of those values.

When writing the annotated bibliography it is important to think about the

- Origin of the source (When was it written and by whom?)
- Purpose of the source (Who was the intended audience?)
- Content of the source (What elements are in this source that are not in other sources?)
- Values that the origin, purpose, and content, bring to one who is studying this topic.
- Limitations of that value.

Remember,

- All sources have values (they may just not be valuable for this specific paper)
- All values have limits

Bias alone is not a limit.

Bias can be very valuable. Whether or not it is secondary or primary, the authors bias provides a valuable perspective that a historian can use.

One final thought

Primary sources are not more valuable than secondary sources. And secondary sources are not more valuable than primary sources. All sources have values, and all values have limits.