

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES

What is an annotated bibliography?

An annotated bibliography is a list of sources relevant to your research topic that are **annotated**, meaning each entry includes a brief summary of the source's main points, approach or methodology, and relevance or connection to your own argument.

Generally speaking, each annotation should do the following:

1. Provide a concise summary of what the author(s) present or argue in the source
2. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the research/argument
3. Include a brief discussion of how this source might impact your own argument, or why it is has significant implications for your chosen topic

Format and Structure:

Source (properly cited in chosen citation style)

Annotation (length may depend on your instructor's requirements, but usually ~100 words)

- 1-3 sentences on the context—basically, summarize the important details of what you've read:
 - What is the primary object of analysis for the author(s)? Are the author(s) credible? What is their disciplinary background? Where does this source come from? What was the central research question the author was trying to answer?
- 1-3 sentences on the significance of the source— basically, what were their main arguments and why should we care:
 - What is the source's central thesis? What conclusions did the author(s) reach? Was their argument convincing? Why or why not?
- 1-3 sentences on how this source might connect to your own work:
 - How might you use this source in your paper? Is it helpful in proving your point? Or does it serve as a counterargument? Does it provide background information that you need to produce your contextual analysis?

Other things you can include in your annotations:

- Any lingering questions you have about the source
- Potential ways the source connects to other sources you have read
- Specific ways you might integrate the source into your body paragraphs/paper

Remember: the goal of an annotated bibliography is to **summarize, evaluate, and connect**

Sample Annotation:

(1) Cohen, Esther. "Symbols of Culpability and the Universal Language of Justice: The Ritual of Public Executions in Late Medieval Europe." *History of European Ideas* 11 (1989): 407- 416.

(2) Cohen's article looks at the ritual of public executions as primarily "spectacles of suffering" which were designed to spark fear and awe within the spectators and exercise a form of discipline and control. (3) One interesting aspect of this article is Cohen's discussion of the function of pain in late medieval society, which she argues was associated with the trials of the martyrs. To this end, Cogen suggests that pain was less a punitive measure than it was a means of preparation for the afterlife; (4) this point parallels Kirk Amrbose, who writes that sculptures of the damned often displayed passive facial expressions to emphasize violence against the soul rather than body. (5) Finally, Cohen uses these notions to approach her argument about the other ways that the criminality of the condemned was communicated to others, although one limitation of the article is that this line of inquiry was less developed than those discussed above. (6) This article will be useful for my own research and argument not only because it is interested in the ways that public execution was a mode of performance, but also because it questions our assumptions about the function of the symbolic body in pain and delves into the myriad ways that criminals were put to death in the late medieval world.

- (1) Citation
- (2) Introduction
- (3) Summary of main points
- (4) Connection to other annotated source
- (5) Limitations
- (6) Connection to research topic or question