

Writing the MLA Annotated Bibliography

What is a bibliography?

A bibliography is another word for a Works Cited page. Most simply, it is a list of sources.

- A list of the works of a specific author
- A list of items relating to a given subject [articles, books, websites...]

What is an annotation?

- An annotation includes descriptive and sometimes evaluative comments on a particular source.
- Annotation is the act or process of adding commentary or notes.

What is the difference between an annotation and an abstract?

- An abstract is a brief factual description of a specific article or book, often written by the author.
- An annotation, however, will reflect the personal judgment and opinion of the person compiling the bibliography.
- An annotation may include a summary of the source, an evaluation of the source, and/or commentary on how this source may fit into the research paper or assignment.
- Be sure to follow your instructor's instructions for the annotation content.

An **annotated bibliography**, therefore, is a listing which contains both the citation information, as well as a critical description of the items selected.

How long are annotations?

This depends on your assignment. Your instructor will specify the required length of the annotations. Typically, annotations are around 150 words.

To get started:

- Select a topic.
- Read the books, articles, or other resources you will write about.
- Read or view the selected items. Take notes on your readings as these will help in writing the annotation. Be careful to avoid plagiarizing an annotation or summary provided with the source citation.
- Arrange the list in alphabetical order by the main entry (usually authors).

A sample annotated bibliography is listed on the back.

For more information on how to create citations in MLA format, check the TCC Library website:

Sample Annotated Bibliography

Bain, Jenn. "Celebrate Graceland's 70th Anniversary." *Travel + Leisure*, June 2009,

www.travelandleisure.com/articles/celebrate-graceland-70-anniversary. Journalist Bain describes the cultural and historical significance of the Tennessee landmark. The article illustrates the lasting impact of Presley's celebrity on his current fans through vividly descriptive direct quotations from visitors to Graceland. This article is particularly useful for its statistics on the number of visitors who arrive at Graceland each year.

Markowitz, Robin. "Graceland." *St. James Encyclopedia of Popular Culture*, edited by Thomas Riggs, 2nd ed.,

vol. 2, St. James Press, 2013, p. 520. *Gale Virtual Reference Library*,

db28.linccweb.org/login?url=http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CCX2735801123&v=2.1&u=linclin_tcc&it=r&p=GVRL&sw=w&asid=090cc3242f27ec90970bac2a0b2360ce. Author Markowitz,

a sociologist who has taught at California State University, describes Graceland in the context of the American Dream. This encyclopedia entry frames the mansion as a status symbol in the rags-to-riches trajectory of Presley's life. In addition to providing significant dates and facts from the history of the building, information included within the article can be used for understanding the continuing appeal of the mansion for visitors.

"The 100 Most Influential Figures in American History." *The Atlantic*, Dec. 2006,

[www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2006/12/the-100-most-influential-figures-in-american-](http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2006/12/the-100-most-influential-figures-in-american-history/305384/)

[history/305384/](http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2006/12/the-100-most-influential-figures-in-american-history/305384/). Developed by a panel of ten American historians, including Doris Kearns Goodwin, this slideshow from the popular American magazine provides a ranked list of men and women who have impacted American history. Ringing in at number 66 on the list, Elvis Presley is described as the "king of rock and roll." Presley's presence on this list offers evidence of his lasting influence on American culture.