An annotated bibliography is similar to a Works Cited/References page in that it has the complete citation of your source. However, an annotated bib includes a summary paragraph that relates relevant source information to your topic. To write a thorough annotated bibliography, consider the following.

**What is the purpose of your annotated bib?**

Are you identifying and critiquing available scholarship on a given topic? Are you relating that research to the purpose of a bigger paper?

**What format are you required to use?**

APA, MLA, Chicago, etc. have different formatting guidelines for citations. Use the format determined by your instructor correctly.

**Summarize and paraphrase source information.**

- What is the article about? What is its purpose? Main supporting points? Findings? Conclusions?
- Generally, this is not a space for quotations since you are writing a broad overview of the source.

**Assess/analyze the source.**

- Is it a quality, credible source? How does it relate to the broader subject? What new information/insight does it contribute to your topic? How does it fit in with your other research?
- Sometimes, you will be asked to explain how you plan to use this source in another related assignment.

**General tips**

- Keep your annotation between 250-500 words. Use complete sentences. Most often, annotated bibliographies are written in the present tense (“John Doe finds that whales…”).
- Paraphrasing is different from commentary. Paraphrasing represents the information from your point of view. Most often, you will want to paraphrase, not write commentary. Be aware of your own biases on your topic.
SAMPLE ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY ENTRY (in MLA format)


In this article, Archakis and Tsakona analyze the construction of identity through the use of verbal humor. They identify two different types of verbal humor: reinforcing and subversive humor, both of which enforce in-group and out-group stratifications. To study these types of humor and their influence on identity, the researchers analyze the conversations of young Greek males, focusing on the targets of their humor: out-group targets that reinforce their own group identity, and in-group targets that subvert the targets’ behaviors and reinforce in-group identity. A target is not the person at whom the humor is directed, but the subject about which a joke is made. The researchers conclude that a person’s use of humor is indicative of their identity and their subjective understanding of their position in their in-group. In the present study, I would use the two types of humor defined here in my analysis of memes, analyzing meme targets to find the reinforcing and subversive types of humor present, and what those types imply about the presence of in-groups and out-groups, and the perception of prestige.

SAMPLE ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY ENTRY (in APA format)

[Courtesy of Jim Meurer, Regis College Division of Business Administration]


The article discusses adult education, which is currently characterized by a diversity of educational programs and providers. One of the major concerns resulting from this diversity is meeting the needs of typically voluntary learners. The article discusses the overall scope of distance education and describes the general area of adult learners in the context of distance education. It also suggests a number of implications for teaching adults and areas of particular promise for further research in distance education. Adult education is typically defined by the learners, rather than by a particular subject matter, educational practice, or setting, which makes it difficult to determine when and where adult education is taking place and makes overall statistics about number of participants and providers questionable. Implications for distance education that can be drawn from understanding adult learning include assessing learner needs, determining active learner involvement, providing accommodation and relating instruction to adult roles and promoting developmentally related outcomes. Although somewhat clinical, I enjoyed the article and would recommend to others.