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Annotated Bibliography: What is it? How to write one? Examples.

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WHAT IS AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY?

An annotated bibliography is a list of citations to books, articles, and documents. Each citation is followed by a brief (usually about 150 words, 4 – 6 sentences) descriptive and evaluative paragraph, the annotation. The purpose of the annotation is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited. Annotations may include some or all of the following information:

- Main focus or purpose of the work
- Intended audience for the work
- Usefulness or relevance to your research topic (or why it did not meet your expectations)
- Special features of the work that were unique or helpful
- Background and credibility of the author
- Conclusions or observations reached by the author
- Conclusions or observations reached by you

ANNOTATIONS vs. ABSTRACTS

Abstracts are the purely descriptive summaries often found at the beginning of scholarly journal articles or in periodical indexes. **Annotations are descriptive and critical**; they expose the author's point of view, clarity and appropriateness of expression, and authority.

SAMPLE ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY ENTRY FOR A JOURNAL ARTICLE

This example uses the MLA format for the journal citation. NOTE: Standard MLA practice requires double spacing within citations.

Waite, Linda J., Frances Koberlin Goldscheider, and Christina Witsberger. "Nonfamily Living and the Erosion of Traditional Family Orientations Among Young Adults." *American Sociological Review* 51.4 (1986): 541-554. Print.

The authors, researchers at the Rand Corporation and Brown University, use data from the National Longitudinal Surveys of Young Women and Young Men to test their hypothesis that nonfamily living by young adults alters their attitudes, values, plans, and expectations, moving them away from their belief in traditional sex roles. They find their hypothesis strongly supported in young females, while the effects were fewer in studies of young males. Increasing the time away from parents before marrying increased individualism, self-sufficiency, and changes in attitudes about families. In contrast, an earlier study by Williams cited below shows no significant gender differences in sex role attitudes as a result of nonfamily living.

(<http://olinuris.library.cornell.edu/ref/research/skill28.htm>)

(<http://lib.calpoly.edu/research/guides/bibliography.html>)

Annotated Bibliography

Colvin, Richard Lee and Martha Groves. "Schools Learn Perils of Using a Single Test."

Los Angeles Times 25 September 2003: A1. Print.

[Note: *Double space and indent (5 spaces) all bibliography entries of two lines or more.*]

This article **discusses** the recent grading mistakes made by some of the top test-making companies in the United States. The results supplied by CTB/McGraw-Hill sent over 8,600 students in New York to summer school, by mistake, due to faulty results. This has also occurred with other publishers and in other states. With so much at risk, such as high school graduation, it is imperative that results are given accurately. It is also necessary to make sure standardized tests are not the only factor in getting a diploma or advancing to the next grade.

[Note: *Use literary present tense. In the annotations, do not use "The article talks about . . ."*]
[*Single space all annotations*]

Herman, Joan L. and Jamal Abedi. "Assessing the Effects of Standardized Testing on

Schools." Educational and Psychological Measurement 54 (Summer 2004): 471-482.

Print. [**<<<< Include a medium designation for all entries**]

This article **gives** statistical data collected from upper elementary teachers in 48 different schools. 450 questionnaires were sent to the teachers to get information on what they thought of standardized testing. Questions included: how much pressure is felt from the principal or school district, how much time is spent reviewing for standardized tests, and to what extent changes in test scores are due to a change in instruction. The surveys

were given out to all types of schools, poor and wealthy, and approximately 341 were received back.

Jones, Jeffrey M., M.D., Ph.D. "The Assessment Debate." Parent Soup 6 December 2003.

Web. 30 Nov. 2004.

In this article the author **supports** the standardized, multiple-choice test. He **believes** the professional test makers know how to create a good test for all students. He **thinks** the tests are valid and reliable and can be trusted, as opposed to performance tests. Performance tests include essays that, as the author concludes, take too long to grade and cannot cover a wide variety of subjects. The format should be kept the same, and the high-stake associated with the test should remain in place. He **believes** people will complain no matter what the format.



Lyman, Howard B. Test Scores and What They Mean. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2004. Print.

This book **gives** a detailed view on both sides of the argument for standardized testing, but also how to prepare for them. A large part of the book **is** used to discuss ethical issues in testing. Is it right or wrong? The author **leaves** that decision up to the reader. Some sections include validity, reliability, and usability of the standardized test. Also included **are** sample test questions for the readers to look at to help them decide whether a sophomore in high school should know the information.

Mitchell, Ruth. Testing for Learning: How New Approaches to Evaluation Can Improve

American Schools. New York: The Free Press, 2003. Print.

This book **discusses** both the insider's and the outsider's point of view on education. Since the "education summit" in 2001, where governors from all 50 states met with President Bush to discuss the growing problem in education, a need for standards was apparent, but is it in the form of a test? This question **is** posed throughout the book, and is the question the author is trying to answer. Many education officials do not believe a single test is the best

way to determine a person's intelligence, but those people are also being put under pressure by the big business and politics of today's society.

Morse, Jodie, et al. "Is That Your Final Answer?" Time 19 June 2002: 28-32. Print.

This article **discusses** the uproar that teachers, students, and even some principals are in because the standardized testing is beginning to be mandated for graduation from high school and for children to move on to the next grade. Students are signing petitions and marching on city halls around the United States. Students and teachers are protesting by walking out of tests and helping students with answers. Because of the high-stakes associated with standardized tests cheating is now occurring and problems are arising every day.

Neill, Monty. "High-Stakes Testing Flunks." FairTest 6 December 2003. Web. 26 Nov. 2004.

This article **describes** how the high-stakes tests are doomed to fail, just as they have failed in some states that already administer them. Many people learn different ways, and one standard test is not the way to see what students are learning. There are too many factors in education to make a black and white, pass or fail test. It is even more important to see that teachers are now just drilling students for the exams instead of giving them information needed in the "real world."

"Testing, Testing, 123." New Internationalist August 2004: 21-25. Print.

This article **describes** not only how high-stake tests are sweeping across America but also in the United Kingdom and other parts of the world. It **discusses** how the arts and the information about a moral and critical understanding of the world will be pushed aside to make room for the new curriculum that must be taught in order to pass a test. The arts and electives matter as well as the core classes of math and literature.

Unger, Harlow G. Encyclopedia of American Education. 2003 edition. Print.

This encyclopedia **contains** the exact definition of what a standardized test entails. It also **includes** how and why a teacher would teach to the test, why people are evaluated on their performance in school and the types of evaluation that exist, and the academic quality that is seen in the United States. The encyclopedia **does** not give opinions, but well researched definitions of what is a part of education.

Yardley, Jim. "A Test is Born." New York Times 5 October 2004: A20. Print.

This article **details** how a test is made. A reporter was allowed to report on how Psychological Corporation, the company that makes the Stanford 9s, comes up with their exams. Tests can take years to produce, and much hard work and thought goes into making these tests as fair as possible. In just a few years, it is projected that over 26 states will require a test to graduate, keeping companies that publish the tests in business.

(This sample annotated bibliography is courtesy of Prof. Robert Mugford, Scottsdale Community College, Scottsdale AZ. <http://www.scottsdalecc.edu/mugford/bib.htm>)



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