

How to Construct an Effective Annotated Bibliography

A. Bibliography vs. Works Cited?

In the studies of your documentation style, you will likely see both of these terms used. It is important to understand the difference and what IB expects from you. For your extended essay, the IBO expects you to call your list of sources a bibliography, not a works cited page, regardless of what your documentation manual calls it. From the IBO's viewpoint, "a bibliography is an alphabetical list of every source used to research and write the essay" (International Baccalaureate Organization 2007). This means that any background material you read but are not using as note cards to write your extended essay should not be included on your annotated bibliography.

B. Annotated Bibliography vs. Traditional Bibliography

On the final copy of your extended essay, you will be submitting a simple bibliography. For your interview with your supervisor, you will be required to bring in an annotated bibliography. The main difference is that in addition to the correct entry and format for a bibliography, an annotated bibliography includes a brief paragraph—four to six sentences—that both summarizes and explains the usefulness of each particular source for your essay. It allows you to have a much easier dialogue with your supervisor about why you chose to include that source for your extended essay by explaining its value and/or allowing your supervisor to quickly scan it for authenticity and merit. For the final draft of your extended essay, these explanations come out; all that remains are the entries themselves.

C. Formatting of an Annotated Bibliography

This formatting and structure of your bibliography will vary slightly depending on your documentation style. But generally, they all appear the same at first glance. The catch to a good bibliography is its parallelism and neatness. For example, if each entry requires a period at the end of an entry, you must make sure that this occurs at every step along the way *and* in each entry. In terms of neatness, margins must be even and consistent, spelling and punctuation exact, and fonts in traditional styles. Keeping in mind that this annotated bibliography is formatted in MLA style, your annotated bibliography may look something like this:

Annotated Bibliography

Jarrell, Randall. "Robert Frost's 'Home Burial.'" *Critical Reading and Writing Across the Disciplines*. Ed. Cyndia Susan Clegg. New York: Holt, 1988. Print. Randall Jarrell, a respected poet himself, analyzes the dramatic dialogue and action of Robert Frost's "Home Burial," showing how the rhythms of the lines and the word choices illustrate the separate ways of grieving and the failure of the couple to reach the understanding of each other's pain at the loss of their child. Jarrell's emphasis on the domineering manner will support my own view that the husband attempts to devalue his wife's feelings, suggesting a pattern in their relationship that has caused previous anguish and explains her rejection of his efforts to appease her.

Malinski, Sean. "Anger and Sorrow in 'Home Burial' by Robert Frost." *Journal of American Poetics* 57.4 (1993): 27-49. Print. Malinski offers an alternative view about the husband's...

D. Using Your Annotated Bibliography in Your Supervision Conference

As you might imagine, your annotated bibliography and outline will be the central focus of your Pre-Drafting Conference with your supervisor. It is imperative that you have a complete annotated bibliography for this interview.