What is an annotated bibliography?
An annotated bibliography is a list of books, articles and other sources used in your research. Each entry in an annotated bibliography has two parts:

1. The citation provides the author, title, date and other descriptive details about the source. Your instructor will let you know which style manual (MLA, APA, etc.) to use for formatting citations.
2. The annotation is a paragraph that describes and evaluates the content of the source.

Elements of the Annotation
Check with your instructor to determine what he/she wants to be included in annotations. In general, an annotation should inform the reader of the quality and relevance of the source. Annotations are detailed but succinct, typically about 150 words, and include:

- a brief summary (2-4 sentences) of the article, including the author’s name and what you think is the author’s primary point or thought;
- a description of the intended audience;
- an evaluation of the source’s usefulness, reliability, strengths and weaknesses and its value for your research.

Sample Entry from an Annotated Bibliography


Booker reports on the launch of a joint research program on the human and environmental health effects from spraying Agent Orange and other herbicides during the Vietnam War. The extent of Agent Orange exposure among the Vietnamese, identification of highly contaminated areas and monitoring migration of dioxin are assessed. The author asserts the government is not doing enough to help the Vietnamese people who still suffer from Agent Orange. This is written for people with little prior knowledge of this...