

## **Annotated Bibliography**

An **annotated bibliography** is a formatted list of researched sources that includes a brief evaluation of each source. These descriptive paragraphs, or annotations, are usually less than 150 words in length and are meant to demonstrate the accuracy, quality, and relevance of the sources in relation to the topic being researched.

Unlike abstracts, which are purely descriptive summaries, annotations not only summarize the information after each work cited or each reference, but they also analyze the content's perspective, credibility, and relevance. Composing an annotated bibliography, therefore, encourages the researcher to critically examine each of his or her sources for central themes, intended audience, the authority and background of the author, and areas in which the text supports, contradicts, or illuminates the research topic. This process of critical thinking also helps the writer clarify the focus of the research topic as he or she evaluates and refines a list of sources to support a strong thesis.

The citation style used in an annotated bibliography should be consistent with the style used in the rest of the research paper. Usually, this is either MLA or APA format but may vary according to instructors' preferences. Individual instructors should be consulted for their specific formatting requirements. For further assistance, Germanna students are also welcome to make an appointment with Tutoring Services for an individual tutoring session or to stop by the Writing Center. On the reverse side of this page is a sample MLA annotated bibliography.

Annotated Bibliography

Bibliography in MLA citation style.

Bell, Kimberly. "Merlin as Historian in *Historia Regum Britannie*." *Arthuriana*, vol. 10, no. 1, Spring 2000, pp. 14-26. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/27869518](http://www.jstor.org/stable/27869518).

The sources should be listed in alphabetical order.

Write a paragraph about why this source is an important resource for the paper. This paragraph should be in the same "hanging indent" format as the Works Cited page.

In this article, Kimberly Bell argues that Merlin's role in Geoffrey's *HRB* is to alert readers to the fictitious nature of the text, thereby calling the legitimacy of historical works into question. This article was published in *Arthuriana* as part of a special Merlin issue. Although I do not plan to discuss the metafictional function of Merlin within the *HRB*, Bell's article not only provides an aspect of the scholarly conversation surrounding Merlin, but it also provides a detailed analysis of the language Merlin employs in his prophecy. The article also includes a discussion of the connection between Merlin's transportation of Stonehenge to Geoffrey's borrowing of material from other cultures to construct his own version of the history of the British people.

Evaluate the source's credibility and/or intended audience.

Notice how the length of the paragraph varies for each source.

Malcor, Linda. "Merlin and the Pendragon: King Arthur's Draconarius." *Arthuriana*, vol. 10, no.1, Spring 2000, pp. 3-13. *Project Muse*, doi:10.1353/art.2000.0005.

Discuss and evaluate the author's credentials and/or affiliations. Analyze if they take away from the author's credibility.

Linda Malcor, an American scholar of the Arthurian legend with a doctorate in Folklore and Mythology from UCLA, argues that the dragon and sword imagery in Merlin legends suggests that Merlin was a warrior before he evolved into a prophet or a magician.

Malcor discusses the symbolism of the serpent and dragon in Christian iconography as well as Roman military standards. She also explains that dragons and serpents had the same meaning during the Middle Ages and argues that Merlin "is firmly attached to the warrior image of the dragon" (7). This article is useful in drawing a parallel between the Merlin in *HRB* and the Merlin in *VM*: one is connected to dragons; the other is a former warrior.

Make sure to explain how the source is useful to your paper.