Annotated Bibliography

A bibliography, sometimes referred to as References or Works Cited, is a list of the sources consulted in the research process. A bibliography includes information about these sources such as author, title, and publishing information recorded in the citation style required by the instructor.

An annotated bibliography includes annotations on the sources used. These annotations are typically three to seven sentences long. Annotated bibliographies may summarize or evaluate. Check with your instructor to see what kind of annotations they expect.

A summary annotation describes the source:

What is it about?
What are the main ideas?
How is it relevant to your research?

An evaluative annotation considers the value of each source to the writer in researching a topic. It may also include these elements:

Authority – What are the creator’s credentials? Do they have expertise in the field?
Currency – Is it up-to-date for your topic? Is currency important to your topic?
Reliability – Is the information accurate?
Purpose – What was the reason for creating this work? Who is the main audience? Is there a clear point of view present? Is it biased?
Usefulness – Mention any features of the work that are unique or especially helpful. How does the source compare to the other sources you have found?

Websites:
Cal Poly’s How to Write an Annotated Bibliography
Purdue OWL’s Annotated Bibliography Guide