



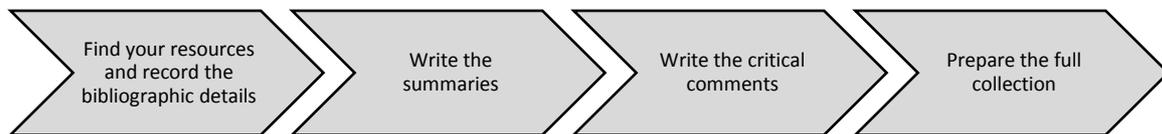
Annotated Bibliographies

An annotated bibliography is a summary of a set of resources that address a research topic or issue.

Bibliography = "a list of books"

Annotated = with notes added

Each resource has its own entry in the bibliography. Each entry includes the bibliographic information, a description of the resource summarising the main information or ideas, and some critical comments. The critical comments sometimes include how useful or relevant the article is for the research topic or issue. The following process is useful when preparing an annotated bibliography.



Working in this way is important, as the critical comments sections should include points about how each resource relates to other resources on the same topic. You can only make these critical comments if you have already read and summarised the other resources first.

Find resources and record the bibliographic details

To find relevant and good-quality resources:

- look through your course reading lists
- look at the bibliographies of your course texts for other relevant resources
- search for books and journal articles in the Library catalogue and databases

To record the bibliographic details follow the conventions of the prescribed [referencing style](#) (*opens in a new window*) for your course. Most courses at UniSA use the Harvard referencing system.

Write the summary

To write an effective summary for an annotation you need to read for the main ideas and write them clearly and concisely in your own words. To avoid unnecessary details, ask yourself the following questions to help you stay focussed on the **main ideas** in the resource:

- What is the main point the author is actually making?
- What ideas or sections are covered to discuss that point?
- What evidence is used to support that point?



When writing your summary, follow the same order in which the article is organised. You can use signposting words to help your reader visualise the structure of the text. For example, “the article first discusses X ..., then outlines y...” If there are headings, these can be used as a guide to the main sections.

You do not need to use in-text references as you would normally do when writing an essay or report, as the bibliographic details make it clear where the information is drawn from.

Write the critique

The critique is your critical response to the resource and comes after the summary. To write an effective critique you need to draw on your extended reading of the topic and consider what the resource offers, relative to other resources. You could ask yourself the following questions:

- What does it contribute to my understanding of the topic?
- How does it 'fit in' with other resources on the topic?
- What points does it address that are common to other resources on the topic?
- What points or perspectives does it provide that are unique?
- How strong is the evidence/argument presented?
- What does it add to the existing field of knowledge?
- Would I recommend it to someone interested in the topic? Why/why not?

A Reading log (see link below) provides a useful template for taking notes and also includes more questions like this.

Prepare the full collection

To finalise your draft of the annotated bibliography:

- **Consider where you could make linkages** between the entries by highlighting similarities and differences between resources;
- **Arrange your collection in alphabetical order** according to the authors' family names, unless your lecturer has specified otherwise, and
- **Check the accuracy of your entries.** For example, you may have thought that the first article you read contained some unusual or original ideas, but after reading other sources you realise the ideas are similar to the other texts. This means you will need to change your comments.

In some annotated bibliographies, you add an introductory and/or concluding paragraph that identifies important themes or issues, or indicates which resources were particularly useful/not useful.



Useful links *(all open in a new window)*

Visit the link below for:

- [More information on annotated bibliographies, including language use, audience, and an annotated example \(RMIT\)](#)

Visit the module [Improving your academic skills](#) for more information about:

- Paragraph writing (see Writing section)
- Reading Logs that can be used as templates for notes, summaries and critical comments (see Reading section)

There may be resources that have been created with your lecturers, addressing assignment tasks and topics specific to your courses. Follow the links below to find out:

[Business](#)

[Education, Arts and
Social Sciences](#)

[Health Sciences](#)

[IT, Engineering and the
Environment](#)