

Annotating 1

What is annotating? What does it involve? As you begin to delve into your sources, one of the important things you need to start doing is **annotating** or taking down notes of anything that may be important. This may be done at all stages of your research, but it is usually done during the preliminary and focused research stages. During the preliminary research stage, annotations may require that you briefly examine the source by skimming and scanning the source. Meanwhile, during the focused research stage, annotations will require comprehensive readings of the source. You will also be required to keep a record of what you have learned during this reading as you will most likely be incorporating this work into your paper.

Strategies for Annotating

It is essential that you take down notes as you read and interact with the text at all stages. The following are a few strategies that are very helpful when taking down notes.

1. **Skimming.** This involves reading from the top of any document; however, if you reach a point when you feel the information is no longer necessary then you break off and simply move to the top of the next paragraph.
2. **Scanning:** This requires looking over all the document (perhaps using a search function) in order to find key words.
3. **Dissecting.** This requires breaking up the source into small sized sections/paragraphs so you can process the information more easily.

4. **Sorting:** This requires looking for the subject headings and key words and using them to connect, categorize, and label the information from the different sources you have compiled, maybe based on arguments you are considering.
5. **Noting:** This requires recording useful information (e.g., facts, statistics, key ideas). In other words, this is data that has the potential to be included in the paper or that may help you determine how to proceed with your paper.
6. **Housekeeping:** This requires keeping a structured record of all information so that it is clear, organized, and logically presented.

SAMPLE ANNOTATION FORMAT

Source:

Cite the book, article, or document using the documentation style requested by the faculty, assignment guidelines (example: APA, MLA...etc. style) as you will see it in the reference/bibliography section. This will eliminate the time and effort that you will need when compiling the reference section of your paper, as you will just need to copy and paste if this is done from the start.

Summary:

Write a concise summary of the central idea(s), and all the points the source is talking about, the topics covered, the main arguments and counterarguments (if any).

Evaluation:

This section is where you may want to evaluate the source in terms of reliability, validity, bias, objectivity.... etc. and compare, contrast, relate, connect, the information found in this source with others you have read.

Additional Comments:

Here is where you want to include additional information, maybe where you got the book from, the call number, reminders, additional information/details/ideas needed...etc.