

# A Guide to Writing an Annotated Bibliography

**Please note:** This guide should be used to familiarise yourself with this writing style. You may find some customisation is necessary to achieve the outcomes for your assessments. Please be sure to read your assignment question carefully, along with any provided documentation in that assignment.

This resource provides a set of guidelines for writing an annotated bibliography which differs from the standard bibliography you would normally include in an assessment. This annotated bibliography follows the Chicago/Turabian referencing conventions in accordance with ACOM Referencing Guidelines.

## What is an annotated bibliography?

An annotated bibliography is a structured list of research sources in which each citation is followed by a concise explanatory paragraph. This paragraph summarises the source's content and provides a critical evaluation of its relevance and usefulness for the research topic. Instead of simply listing the citation as you would in a standard bibliography, the annotated bibliography follows the citation with this brief summary.

## Steps to Writing Your Annotated Bibliography?

### 1. *Be prepared before you start reading*

It is helpful to know in advance that you will be writing an annotated bibliography, as this enables you to read each source actively and take purposeful notes. In addition to your usual research notes, you should pay attention to the following considerations:

- What is the purpose of the article, chapter or book you are reading?
- Can you summarise this purpose in one sentence?
- What is the author's main argument?
- How relevant is this source to your research topic?
- What methods does the author use to reach their conclusions?
- What is the quality of this source (respected journal, established author etc.)?
- How reliable is their research methodology or evidence presented?
- Who is the intended audience and does this affect how you interpret the source?
- Are there any identifiable assumptions, limitations and biases?
- How does this source help shape or inform your research question?
- Thinking critically as you read is essential, and these questions are designed to guide that process.

## 2. Format your citations

Add your citations using the Chicago/Turabian style and take the time to ensure they are correct. An example of a journal and book citation in this style is:

Longman, Tremper, III. "The 'Fear of God' in the Book of Ecclesiastes." *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 25, no. 1 (2015): 13–21.

Walton, John H., Mark W. Chavalas, and Victor Harold Matthews. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*. Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2000.

## 3. Format your annotated bibliography

Unless requested otherwise, your annotated bibliography will follow this standard format.

1. **Citation** details (set out as above). Put it in **bold** for the annotated bibliography.
2. A **short one sentence statement** that explains the main focus or purpose of the work
3. A **short summary** of the theory, research findings or argument (e.g. audience, subjects covered, major arguments, research methods, conclusions and anything else deemed relevant).
4. **Statement on the usefulness and/or limitations of the text** for the purposes of your specific research question (e.g. reliability of the text, credibility of the author, poor features of the research, left-out content, weaknesses in argument)
5. Your **evaluative comment** on the source based on your opinion of how this work will fit into your research question.

An example that follows this structure can be seen on the following page

Klein, Anja. "Prophecy Continued: Reflections on Innerbiblical Exegesis in the Book of Ezekiel." *Vetus Testamentum* 60, no. 4 (2010): 571-82.

Short one sentence statement

Short summary

Statement on the usefulness and/or limitations of the text

Evaluative comment

In this article, Klein examines the concept of innerbiblical exegesis using three passages from Ezekiel. Using Ezekiel 37:1-14, 34 and 36:23b-38, she demonstrates the way in which these passages have developed similar themes and motifs over time in keeping with the literary layers she identifies as part of her literary critical and redaction history analysis. This article is relevant to the research question due to its focus on Ezekiel 36:23b-38 which is one of the three key texts being focused on. The limitation of this article is the assumption that the authorship of Ezekiel was a combination of the prophet himself, followed by other material added and edited by the "school of the prophet". While this may be one of the primary views in the authorship of Ezekiel, it would have been helpful to have some commentary on this issue from the other perspectives. However, as this is a key aspect of the research being carried out, this article will provide important background when looking specifically at Ezekiel 36 and therefore will be an important source.

#### 4. Write in a formal academic style

Your annotated bibliography is a piece of formal academic writing and NOT a personal reflection. Ensure the following;

- List citations in alphabetical order by surname.
- Write each entry in a single paragraph and usually no more than 100-250 words (unless told otherwise in your assessment).
- Write in full sentences using third person academic writing style