

**Get ready to annotate:**  
**Describe the source (NOT your topic)**

1. Describe the central theme of the article. Is it focused completely on your topic? Or does it mention other issues, with your topic being only a small part?

2. What is the scope of the article; which aspects are covered? Does it contain a wide range of information about your topic? Or is there some important information left out (which information)?

3. What do you know about the author of the article (background, education, expertise)?

4. How easy or difficult is the writing style for you to read? What aspects of the writing or layout made it easy or difficult to read?

5. What kind of audience would best appreciate and understand this article (children, high school students, adults, scholars or professionals)? Why?

# Annotations

<http://www.nhvweb.net/nhhs/MediaCenter/electronic/pathfinders/english/annotated-bib-erwin.htm>

## What is an annotation

An annotated bibliography should help the reader understand what in particular was helpful in each source so that your reader can decide about the best sources for further research. Your annotation should answer the questions:

- What specific information made this source helpful and worth my time?
- What qualities of this source make it believable and reliable?

## What to write about

Describe your article, not your topic. Article features to write about in an annotation can include:

- Length of article, level of detail
- Categories of information the article contains (scope)
- Organization of the information (chronological, alphabetical, by importance; subheads; charts, graphics, illustrations)
- Style of writing, ease of reading
- Drawbacks or limitations of the article (missing information, bias)
- Audience that would find the article useful
- Qualifications of the article's author (if known)

Your annotations should be written in complete sentences with flawless spelling, grammar, and punctuation. The quality of your writing will affect the credibility of your research paper.

## DO: Examples of good annotations

Annotation	Why is it good?
This brief White House biography of Eleanor Roosevelt covers highlights of her life and work, including her unhappy childhood and her service as first lady. Because of its brevity, however, students may not get a complete understanding of the controversy that surrounded her. The page offers a link to the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, where students can find more information, making it a good starting point for students just beginning their research on Eleanor Roosevelt.	Rather than listing facts about the topic, this annotation describes specific, important features of the article: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Length of article (<i>"brief"</i>)</li><li>• Scope of content (<i>"highlights of her life and work, including ..."</i>)</li><li>• Supplemental material and features (<i>"offers a link ..."</i>)</li><li>• Audience (<i>"students just beginning their research ..."</i>)</li><li>• Drawback (<i>"Because of its brevity ..."</i>)</li></ul>
This brief article compares and contrasts depression in women and men, stating that depression is just as common in men as it is in women. This source is good for a student beginning a research paper because it includes a short description of symptoms, causes, and treatments for depression.	This excellent annotation was written by an NHHS student, who described: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Length (<i>"brief"</i>)</li><li>• Scope of content (<i>"compares and contrasts ..."</i>, <i>"short description of symptoms ..."</i>)</li><li>• Audience (<i>"student beginning a research paper"</i>)</li></ul>

## DON'T: Examples of poor annotation

Annotation	Why is it poor?
It has a lot of backround information on his life and i think its helpful.	This annotation is vague ( <i>"a lot of backround information"</i> ) and contains errors in spelling ( <i>backround, its</i> ) and capitalization ( <i>i</i> ).  This annotation could be improved by providing specific details about the article ( <i>What aspects of his life are covered? Childhood? Career? Death? Awards? Legacy?</i> ) and correcting the writing errors.
Frederick Douglass was born in Maryland in 1817. He was a slave on a plantation. He escaped to New York and settled in Massachusetts. He began to speak about abolition and became the first African American of national stature in United States history.	This annotation describes the topic ( <i>Frederick Douglass</i> ) rather than the article.  This annotation could be improved by rewriting it to describe specific features of the article and to eliminate details about the topic ( <i>save those for the body of the research paper</i> ).

