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### The Annotated Bibliography: An Overview and Examples

#### **What is an Annotated Bibliography?**

An annotated bibliography is a list of sources on a given topic that offers a summary and, often, an evaluation of those sources. In other words, annotated bibliographies not only show us how to locate a source; they also show us the author's main points and reveal whether the source can be useful in the study of a particular subject. Annotations may vary in length from a sentence synopsis to multi-sentence analysis of a source's content. Annotated bibliographies function to provide researchers with enough information about a source to determine whether such sources merit closer attention.

#### **What Does an Annotated Bibliography Do, Exactly?**

Annotated bibliographies may be purely **descriptive**, giving the gist of a source. Or, they may be **evaluative**. Or they may be a combination, both **descriptive and evaluative**. Consider these examples:

##### ***Descriptive (MLA):***

Evans, Mary. *Introducing Contemporary Feminist Thought*. Cambridge, England: Polity, 1997.

The author writes about the American black culture. Her focus is on blacks in the academy and on the courses that they teach. Black feminism is seen as an act of identification, or a desire for a place called home. Evans states that the purpose of her book is to suggest some of the main ways in which a feminist understanding of the world can disrupt conventional assumptions.

##### ***Evaluative (APA):***

Sulloway, F. (1996). *Born to rebel: Birth order, family dynamics, and creative lives*. NY: Pantheon Books.

Sulloway is powerful when delving into the psychology of the birth order and is successful at incorporating many Darwinist philosophies while doing so. He shows the reader that the essence of birth order and sibling rivalry is truly how each child expresses their desire to achieve parental approval and attention. It incorporates his own analysis that the primary engine of history is located within families, not between them.

##### ***Descriptive/Evaluative (APA):***

Forer, L. (1969). *Birth order and life roles*. Springfield, IL: Thomas Publishing.

This book covers the long term development of individuals in families of various sizes. The author is specific in her suggestions for how to optimally utilize this information to better ones marital, social, parental and working relationships. I was pleased after choosing this book as it gave a slightly different perspective from some of my other resources. This book was published in 1969 and gives a bit of insight into how the lives of children were viewed then, in contrast to the present day.