

MONTSERRAT COLLEGE OF ART

Writing Studio Tip Sheet

Writing and Using an Annotated Bibliography

The purpose of an annotated bibliography is to **explore** possible sources, **document and contextualize** those sources, and **guide** your research. Your annotated bibliography is not the same as your list of references. The annotated bibliography allows you to have a more complete picture of your research to help you organize and refine your ideas.

Each annotation in an annotated bibliography is generally structured as follows, although these elements might be blended into a single paragraph within the annotation (see the second sample annotation as an example):

1. The first paragraph introduces and summarizes the source.
2. The second paragraph evaluates the source overall (effectiveness, usefulness, and if relevant, limitations).
3. The third paragraph contextualizes the source relative to your research goals.

Note: It is always a good practice to check with your instructor to make sure you are following the guidelines for the assignment. Some annotated bibliography assignments do not require all three elements, or your instructor might be asking you for a variation of what is outlined above.

To help guide your writing, here are two **sample annotations (formatted in MLA style)**:

BOOK

Jones, Janice. *The Book of Paint*. University of Iowa Press, 2014.

This 200-page book covers the history of paints and pigments from pre-history to the 21st century. Each chapter covers a particular material, such as clay or polymers. It starts with natural materials and ends with computer drawing programs. The book includes a lot of information on the actual manufacturing process of paints. While there is no index, it does include a detailed timeline at the end of the book.

Overall, *The Book of Paint* offers a solid history of the making of paint. The text is surprisingly readable and interesting, and the book contains appealing graphic elements, including clear and beautiful photos. On the other hand, the book is Euro-centric, and the lack of information on cultures outside of Europe is a substantial drawback. While the timeline provides a helpful visual reference on the history of paint, an index would also be useful, considering the amount of information in the book.

Although the book will not provide the research I'm seeking on non-European cultures' use of paint in ritual, it is useful for its descriptions of the chemistry of paint, and the many pages of shades of color will be helpful for my color research. The timeline will also be beneficial as it is an effective visualization of the history of paint.

JOURNAL ARTICLE

Raffle, Burton. "Mary Barnard's Sappho." *The Hudson Review*, vol. 18, no. 2, 1965, pp. 236–41. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3848520>. Accessed 19 Oct. 2023.

In his essay in vol. 18 of *The Hudson Review*, published in 1965, Burton Raffle praises the new-at-the-time translation of Sappho poem fragments by Mary Barnard and compares them to previously well-received translations. Burton goes so far as to say that Barnard, who is a poet herself, "is Sappho" (Raffle 238). While Raffle compares Barnard's translations to those of two other translators, he does not offer the larger context of Sappho scholarship and the fact that there are so many contradictory assertions and unanswered questions about Sappho's life. That being said, Raffle's perspective offers a compelling lens through which to acquaint oneself with Sappho's mysterious writings. Sappho is an enduring icon of lesbian and

homosexual love, and while Raffle does not address this phenomenon, he does offer praise for a more contemporary translation—one that, he asserts, is much more readable than even the most celebrated translations that preceded it. This perspective supports my view that Sappho's work is not meant to be formal; it is at once intimate and accessible, offering a window into the life of a woman who many consider to have been far ahead of her time.