

How to Create an Annotated Bibliography for National History Day

NHD Rule 15: Annotated Bibliography

An annotated bibliography is required for all categories. It should contain all sources that provided usable information or new perspectives in preparing your entry. You should list only those sources that contributed to the development of your entry. Sources of visual materials and oral interviews must be included. **NOTE:** Oral history transcripts, correspondence between you and experts, questionnaires, and other primary or secondary materials used as sources for your entry should be cited in your bibliography but not included as attachments to your bibliography.

Annotations should always answer the following questions:

1. Who is the author of the source? What is their background?
2. What information did I get out of the source?
3. How did it help me understand the topic better?

Other things to include in annotations, if necessary:

Classification of primary or secondary source. You should use the annotation to explain why you categorized a particular source as primary or secondary, **IF** that is likely to be at all controversial. Historians do sometimes disagree and there's not always one right answer, so justify your choice to the judges.

Secondary sources which include primary materials. You also may use the annotation to explain that a book or other secondary source included several primary sources used for the paper. Examples: "This book included three letters between person X on the frontier and person Y back in New England, which provided insight into the struggles and experiences of the settlers." "This book provided four photos of settlers on the Great Plains and their homes, which were used on the exhibit." Please note that the materials included in secondary sources, like your text book, are not primary in this instance because they have been taken out of their original context. For example, an image of a painting may have been cropped, or a letter may be missing sentences.

Fuller explanation of photo credits for documentaries. You are supposed to give credit in the documentary itself for photos or other primary sources, but you can do this in a general way, such as by writing, "Photos from: National Archives, Ohio Historical Society, A Photographic History of the Civil War" rather than listing each photo individually in the documentary credits, which would take up too much of your allotted 10 minutes. You then must use the annotation in the bibliography to provide more detailed information.

The annotations for each source must explain the origin of the source (who the author was), how you used the source and how it helped you understand your topic. Annotations of web sites should include a description of who sponsors the site. See example below, which includes typical bibliographic source info, then annotation below.

Bates, Daisy. *The Long Shadow of Little Rock*. New York: David McKay Co. Inc., 1962.

Daisy Bates was the president of the Arkansas NAACP and the one who met and listened to the students each day. This firsthand account was very important to my paper because it made me more aware of the feelings of the people involved.

NHD Rule 16: The Separation of Primary and Secondary Sources

You are required to separate your annotated bibliography into primary and secondary sources. Primary sources should be listed first.

Definitions:

Primary Source = Something that is written or produced in the time period you are investigating. Primary sources include letters, speeches, diaries, newspaper articles from the time, oral history interviews of people from the time, documents, photographs, artifacts, and anything else that provides firsthand accounts about a person or event. This definition also applies to primary sources found on the Internet. A letter written by President Lincoln in 1862, whether scanned, transcribed, or otherwise reproduced, is a primary source for a student researching the Civil War era. A newspaper article about the Battle of Gettysburg written by a contemporary in July 1863 is a primary source. An article about Gettysburg published in June 2001 and **NOT** written by an eyewitness or participant is **NOT** a primary source. The memories of a person who took part in the battle also can serve as a primary source because he or she was an eyewitness to and a participant in this historical event at the time.

However, an interview with an expert (such as a professor) is not a primary source UNLESS that expert actually lived through and has firsthand knowledge of the events being described.

NOTE: Primary materials, such as quotes from historical figures or photographs of historical events, when found in secondary sources, can be used effectively in History Day projects. However, these are not considered primary sources. See notes above “**Secondary sources which include primary materials.**”

Secondary Source = A source by an author who was not an eyewitness or a participant in the historical event or period. Secondary sources are interpretations of primary sources, research, and study. Secondary sources provide context for a historical event. For example, high school history textbooks and history books about a particular topic are secondary sources; so are biographies, newspaper retrospectives, and reference books such as encyclopedias. This definition also applies to interpretations found on the Internet.

NHD Rule 17: Citation Style Guides

Style for citations and bibliographic references must follow the principles in one of the following style guides:

- (1) Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*.
- (2) Joseph Gibaldi, *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 5th Edition.

Regardless of which manual you use, the style must be consistent throughout the project.

Use NoodleBib to create your Bibliographic source information, then copy that information into a Word document. You can then add your annotations about the nature and usefulness of that source for your research project, as seen in the example on the front side of this page.

NHD Rule 18: Plagiarism

Plagiarism: Presenting the work or ideas of others in ways that give the impression that they are your own (e.g., copying information word-for-word without using both quotations and footnotes; paraphrasing an author’s ideas without proper attribution; using visuals or music without giving proper credit).

You must acknowledge in your annotated bibliography all sources used in your entry. Failure to credit sources is plagiarism and will result in disqualification and failure.