

Bibliography - Annotations

National History Day requires each entry to include an annotated bibliography, and as such we tend to think of it as something we deal with at the 'end' of the project. This is not the case. Students need to be thinking about their bibliography and building it throughout the research process. Building the bibliography as they move through the project is vital to the students' success. It will help keep them organized and reduce anxiety as the deadline approaches.

What is an Annotated Bibliography and How does it differ from a standard bibliography?

A bibliography is an alphabetized list of the sources used in developing a historical project, but an annotated bibliography does something else. An annotated bibliography not only lists the sources, but also gives a short description of each source and how the student used it in their entry. These annotations should be short (2-3 sentences) and highlight Annotations should be written in third person.

TWO COMPONENTS OF A GOOD ANNOTATION

1. How was the source used in your project?
2. How did the source help you understand your topic?

So for example, an annotation would look something like this:

Morris, Edmund. *Theodore Rex*. New York: Modern Library, 2001.

This biography of Theodore Roosevelt helped me understand the way in which Philippe Bunau Varilla was able to get President Roosevelt to recognize the revolutionary government of Panama. It also gave me details regarding the specific treaties signed between the two nations that gave the U.S. control of the canal zone.

Please understand that it is NOT the purpose of an annotation to summarize the book but to assess its value to your research. The NHD *Contest Rule Book* states that the purpose of annotations "is to provide information about your research process, not to provide analysis to circumvent the word count." Do not recount what the source said in detail and keep your annotation to three sentences.

One final note: A National History Day bibliography should be separated into **primary** and **secondary sources** and alphabetized.

For guidelines on bibliographic style refer to *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* by Kate L. Turabian (Chicago Manual of Style), or the style guide of the Modern Language Association of America (MLA).

NHD has also produced a great set of “Quick Tip” videos on annotated bibliographies. You can view them by visiting NHD’s YouTube page! The national office has also created a set of webpages dedicated to annotated bibliographies. Visit their [Annotated Bibliography](#) page for more information

Documentation tools

National History Day requires that all projects come complete with an annotated bibliography. The tracking of resources can be a challenge when reviewing dozens if not hundreds of materials. Several electronic tools are available to help in this effort. Keep in mind, there are contest rules (see page 10 and 11 of the Contest Rule Book) to consider when looking at documentation tracking strategies.

Students are required to:

- follow MLA or Chicago Manual of Style styling for citations and bibliographic references.
- annotate each source to explain its contribution to their project and/or understanding.
- sort sources primary from secondary.

Both stylesheets are discussed in great detail at the Purdue University Writing Center website. Visit OWLatPurdue (<https://owl.purdue.edu>)

The following tools have been used with varying degrees of success and are provided in order of popularity. Bibliography tools are not perfect. With any bibliography help, students should consider the generated version a draft that needs to be checked and, when necessary, revised.

www.easybib.com

EasyBib helps users create citations with the option of adding an annotation. MLA citations can be created for free, Turabian requires a membership. The website provides 58 resource options. Source information can be exported into Google Docs or printed. A citation style guide is also offered.

www.bibme.com

BibMe provides users 11 resource options for formatting a bibliography as well as providing space for the annotation. Both MLA and Chicago/Turabian can be used for free. After citations are created, students can download to Microsoft Word or share their bibliography via a web link. A citation style guide is also offered.

www.citationmachine.net

Son of Citation Machine offers 25 MLA and 5 Chicago Manual of Style resource options. The website generates citations that students can then copy and paste into their own working document. This resource is not designed to track and/or store student work.

www.worldcat.org

WorldCat allows users to search their catalog and can generate citation information from the located sources. Once selected, source information can be exported into a document format or several online tools such as EasyBib. Users are limited to resources in the WorldCat catalog, but citation elements are automatically identified, reducing input error.

Microsoft Word Reference Tools

Newer versions (2007 forward) of Microsoft Word offer a “Reference” tab that can generate and insert parenthetical citations or footnotes/endnotes as well as a complete bibliography. The tool allows for 17 resource options.

MyBib: Free Citation Generator Chrome Extension

Automatically create APA style, MLA format, Chicago and Harvard referencing style citations with our citation generator add-on for Chrome. MyBib is a new FREE bibliography and citation generator that makes accurate citations for you to copy straight into your academic assignments and papers. Simply browse to any page on the internet (including PDFs) and click the MyBib button to generate an automatically formatted citation for that page.

[MyBib Chrome Extension](#)

Google Docs has a citation tool located under the “Tools” tab. Simply choose your format (MLA or Chicago).