

Annotated Bibliography Overview

Annotated bibliographies vary in size, depth, and scope according to their purpose. Generally an annotated bibliography consists of two parts:

Part 1: A list of books, articles, and documents which are most often organized alphabetically by the author's last name using a particular bibliographic style (i.e., MLA, APA or Chicago).

Part 2: Each item in the list is followed by an annotation. The annotation may include such things as a summary of the item, an evaluation of the item, and a description of how the item might be used. Annotations can vary in length from a few sentences to several pages. Most commonly, instructors ask for 100-400 word annotations.

Preparing Annotated Bibliographies

In order to represent a work well, it is usually necessary to:

- read the entire text or applicable chapter
- describe and/or evaluate the work using full sentences
- paraphrase, summarize or quote the author directly
- compare the work with similar writings and others in your bibliography
- include information about the author's background and views
- review and edit your annotations, strive for accuracy and clarity.

1. Descriptive Information

Descriptive information in an annotation may include the following:

- Content (What are the main themes/arguments/findings? How do they relate to each other and to the other items in the bibliography?)
- Breadth (What is the scope of the work? Is it an historical overview or a discussion of a small aspect of a field?)
- Thesis and arguments (What does the author claim and what evidence is provided?)
- Information to explain the authority and/or qualifications of the author
- Currency (if the work is older, subsequent researchers may have analyzed and commented on this text)
- Location (Where was the research conducted (if relevant?))
- Audience (Who is the intended audience and what is their level of reading difficulty?)
- Format (Is the format of the work unique or does it have special features, i.e. maps, graphs, etc.?)

The description should contain enough information to allow the reader to decide if they would find the material useful for their purposes. If unelaborated, phrases such as "much information," "various ways," "several theories," "interesting consequences" will carry little meaning for your reader. Focus on the actual content and organization of the material you are describing.

2. Evaluative Information

Evaluative information in an annotation may include the following:

- Theoretical basis and currency of the author's argument
- Value and significance of the work
- Shortcomings or bias in the work



- Your own brief impression of the work
- Compare or contrast this work with another you have cited (While A argues this, B proposes that..)
- A summary comment

The evaluative content may also contain a discussion of what you find useful about the article in the specific context of your writing assignment. How will you use it? How does it support your discussion of the topic?

Example of a short annotation:

Paul, R. J. & Weinbach, A. P. (2011). Determinants of attendance in the Quebec major junior hockey league: role of winning, scoring and fighting. *Atlantic Economic Journal*, 39(3), 303-311. doi: 10.1007/s11293-011-9275-1

Economics professors Paul and Weinbach study the role of various factors on attendance at all Quebec Major Junior Hockey League games for one specific year. They consider, for example, whether the average number of total goals scored in a team's previous games influences the number of people who attend that team's next home game. They are particularly interested in whether the number of fights a team has had in previous games increases attendance, a result they claim has been found for NHL games. Paul and Weinbach combine all of their hypothesized influences on attendance in a regression analysis and determine that the most significant influences are the percentage of previous games the home team has won, day of the week of the game (higher attendance on weekends), and month in which game played (higher attendance later in the season). No support is found for the hypothesis that fighting influences attendance. Despite their results, the authors write a great deal about their sense of the importance of fighting to hockey fans. More interesting for further study is their brief mention in conclusion that hockey may have important cultural significance for rural Quebecers and that attendance may be closely related to these cultural meanings.

Example of a long annotation:

Paul, R. J. & Weinbach, A. P. (2011). Determinants of attendance in the Quebec major junior hockey league: role of winning, scoring and fighting. *Atlantic Economic Journal*, 39(3), 303-311. doi: 10.1007/s11293-011-9275-1

Paul and Weinbach, professors of Economics with research interests in the economic study of sports, examine attendance for one season of Quebec Major Junior Hockey League games and several factors hypothesized to influence attendance. The factors considered as possible influences are limited to ones that can be obtained from the official box scores of each game in the season, but these do include important ones considered in other studies. The specific variables that Paul and Weinbach define and calculate for each game of the season as possible influences are: *average number of fights per game for previous games, average total goals per game for previous games, percentage of previous games won, month of the season when game played, day of the week when game played, which team provides the opposition*. The primary

concern of the authors was whether relevant factors in attendance would be the same at the major junior hockey level as have been found for the NHL, particularly whether fighting is a major factor on attendance.

Paul and Weinbach include each of the variables listed above in a regression analysis to determine which ones were most closely associated with attendance. In contrast to findings from studies focused on the NHL, they found that fighting did not attract more fans to games at the major junior hockey level. Neither did teams that played higher scoring games attract more fans to their games. Teams that won frequently during the regular season, however, did attract more fans. Attendance also was higher on weekends and towards the end of the season. The home team's opposition was not generally related to attendance, but an exception was that in two of the league's four divisions attendance was higher when the opposing team was the division leader.

The study has several limitations: it focuses on only one of the 3 leagues in the Canadian Hockey League, so findings may not apply to other regions; and data is analysed for only one season, so trends over time cannot be ascertained. The authors acknowledge these shortcomings and call for further research on the subject.

The literature review in the article is quite limited. Although the authors point out that there have been few studies about attendance in hockey compared to other sports, they fail to cite any relevant research about other sports. The authors seem reluctant to give up on the idea that Quebec junior hockey league fans enjoy fighting. They drift quite far from their results to devote a considerable portion of their article to a description of notorious past fights in the league; they even speculate that their own finding (that fighting does not increase attendance) is nothing more than a short-term reaction to a few of those incidents and will not persist into future seasons.

Paul and Weinbach's study confirms some seemingly obvious factors in hockey game attendance (winning percentage, for example) but calls others into question (fighting, scoring) and thus sets the stage for additional research on the subject. Particularly interesting for such research would be pursuit of the cultural meaning of hockey attendance for rural Quebecers, a topic Paul and Weinbach mention briefly toward the end of their article.

Ask at the reference desk for help finding appropriate biographical reference materials and book review sources.