

## Introduction to Annotated Bibliographies

A **bibliography** is a list of sources (books, journals, Web sites, periodicals, etc.) one has used for researching a topic. In the MLA style, bibliographies are called "Works Cited."

An **annotation** is a summary and/or evaluation of the work. Therefore, an **annotated bibliography** includes both a MLA-style reference entry for the work and a summary/evaluation of each of the sources. Your annotations must include a paragraph or two that address the following:

- **Summary:** What are the main arguments? What is the point of this book/article/chapter? What topics are covered? If someone asked what this article/book/chapter is about, what would you say?
- **Assess:** How does this source compare to other sources we read? To what other works does it most closely relate? What arguments might you make in an essay that you could support with evidence from this source?

Sample Annotated Bibliography entry:

Lamott, Anne. *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*. Anchor Books, 1995.

Lamott's book offers honest advice on the nature of a writing life, complete with its insecurities and failures. Taking a humorous approach to the realities of being a writer, the chapters in Lamott's book are wry and anecdotal and offer advice on everything from plot development to jealousy, from perfectionism to struggling with one's own internal critic. In the process, Lamott includes writing exercises designed to be both productive and fun.

Chapters in this text could easily be included in the curriculum for a writing class. Several of the chapters in Part 1 address the writing process and would serve to generate discussion on students' own drafting and revising processes. Some of the writing exercises would also be appropriate for generating classroom writing exercises. Students should find Lamott's style both engaging and enjoyable.