Evaluating Resources and Creating an Annotated Bibliography

**Evaluating Resources: How should you evaluate your sources before you read them?**

1. **(Who) Look at the author** – What are its author’s credentials? Where does the author work? Is your author affiliated with any organizations that indicate that he/she might have a bias about your topic?

2. **(When) Look at the date of publication** – When was the article or book published?

3. **(Who) Look at the publisher** – If the article or book was published by a university press, the source is likely to be scholarly.

4. **(What) What type of source is this?** Is it a study with data? Is it an editorial/opinion from an expert? Is it a response to something else? Is it a summary of research? Is it a primary source document (e.g. The DREAM Act itself).

**How should you evaluate your sources’ contents as you read? Ask yourself the following questions:**

1. **(Who) Intended Audience** - Who is the intended audience? Is the information aimed at a specialized or general audience? Is the source too elementary, too technical, too advanced, or just right for your needs?

2. **(Why) Objective Reasoning** - Is the information covered fact, opinion, or propaganda? Does the information appear to be valid and well-researched, or is it questionable and unsupported by evidence? How do the arguments presented relate to the arguments that you have already read? Is the author’s point of view objective and impartial? Is the language free of bias?

3. **(Why) Coverage** - Does the work update other sources, substantiate other materials you have read, or add new information? Is the material primary or secondary in nature?

4. **(How) Logic** - How does the writer make his/her appeals, claims, arguments? How is evidence selected? What patterns or strands or themes do you see? What is not being discussed? What is the author’s perspective/point of view on the topic?

**Strategies for evaluating sources:**

Refer back to Chapter 10 in *Writing Analytically*. Use “1 on 10” and “10 on 1” to help you analyze your sources.

**1 on 10:** This strategy will allow you to identify the author’s pattern of evidence, understand how the author’s evidence relates to the sources that we have discussed in class, and evaluate how the author’s evidence might complement or contradict your claims.

- Identify one general claim (the author’s thesis statement is a good place to start) and map out the examples that the author uses to substantiate her claim.
- How does the claim relate to the other sources that we have referenced in class? Does your source contradict or complement the other readings that we have referenced? Is there any overlap between this source’s evidence and evidence from other sources?
- Reflect on the way that your source relates to your claim. Does your source supplement your argument? How can you use the evidence that you have gathered to refine your argument?

**10 on 1:** This strategy helps you investigate the authors’ claims in depth. Using 10 on 1 allows you to locate the range of possible meanings the evidence suggests. Remember to choose your example carefully and to concentrate on developing conclusions that are the most revealing to your argument.

- Focus on one piece of evidence and locate the range of meanings that the evidence suggests.
- What is the relationship between the piece of evidence and the source as a whole? Analyzing this question will make it easier to summarize your source.
- How do the conclusions that you have developed relate to the other readings that we have done in class? Can you draw similar conclusions from different sources?
- How do the conclusions that you draw from one piece of evidence relate to the conclusions that you would like to draw in your research paper?
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Annotated Bibliography

An annotated bibliography is a list of citations to books, articles, and documents. Each citation is followed by a brief description and evaluative paragraph. The purpose of the paragraph is to inform the reader about the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited.

**How does an annotated bibliography help you?**

- Proves that you have read and understood your source materials
- Situates your work or study in the context of a professional conversation
- Encourages you to think critically about the content of works that you are using, their place within a field of study, and their relation to your own ideas
- Establishes your work as a valid source and you as a competent researcher
- Provides a way for others to decide whether a source could be helpful to their research if they need it

**What should your annotated bibliography include?**

For this class, we want you to include a brief summary of your sources, information about how your sources relate to our class’s conversation about immigration (that is, how well your sources interact with the sources we have already looked at in class), and an analysis of how you will use each source to develop your argument.

**Example entry:**


Designed by scholars affiliated with the Institute for Latino Studies at the University of Notre Dame, “Attitudes toward Immigration: Findings from the Chicago-Area Survey” uses data from a random survey of 2,326 residents of metropolitan Chicago to present statistics about different demographics’ perceptions of immigrants in the Chicagoland area. The survey concludes that, overall, Chicagoans of all races and ethnicities look favorably on immigrants’ impact on the United States. To obtain a more precise idea of participants’ attitudes about immigration, researchers organized participants’ responses according to demographics: participants’ gender, their educational attainment, and their political party preference. Researchers conclude that, though immigration is a hotly contested political issue, Chicagoans’ overall perceptions of immigration are surprisingly positive. The researchers contend that their data about Chicago can be extrapolated to suggest that Americans, as a whole, view immigration as positive.

Published in 2007, the Chicago-Area Survey sets the context for Vargas and Krikorian’s debates over the DREAM Act and suggests that the debate about immigrants’ contributions to American society has been building for some years. Because the survey illustrates that most American adults believe that immigration levels should be maintained or increased, the survey responds to and contests Huntington’s 2004 argument that immigration at its current scale is detrimental to American culture.

The results from Knight, Ready, and Barboza demonstrate that baby boomers with post-secondary education overwhelmingly believe that current immigration levels should be increased or maintained, which supplements my argument that teachers of the baby boom generation support immigration but are ill-equipped to address bilingualism in the classroom. I will use the survey’s graph “Attitudes toward Immigration Levels by Educational Attainment” to suggest that educators’ resistance to bilingualism in American classrooms does not arise from teachers’ opinions about immigration. Middle-aged American teachers’ reservations about bilingualism in the classroom are not reflections of liberal immigration policy but are, instead, indicative of an outdated and inadequate teacher training system.