How to Annotate a Bibliography in APA Format

Annotated bibliographies use standard APA format for the references, then add a brief abstract (one paragraph) for each entry, including:

Three (3) to 4 sentences to summarize the main idea(s) of the item:
- Clear summary (setting, sample, methodology, key findings, and conclusions)
- Include a brief statement about the author’s theoretical frame of reference or bias.

One (1) or 2 sentences to relate the article to the research topic:
- Student’s critical assessment of source.
- How it informs his or her work.

Basic APA Style Format for an Annotated Bibliography

References are formatted in the same manner as for a normal reference list, and then follow these instructions for spacing an annotation.

1. Reference lists and annotated bibliographies are double-spaced, although some instructors allow single-spacing for student APA papers to save space.
2. Hanging indents are required for references in the bibliography. (Do not use TAB or the SPACE BAR to format an indent.) To create a hanging indent:
   - **In Word:** First type the reference. Then highlight it with your cursor.
   - **On PCs with Word (in Windows XP),** use the following steps:
     1. Under the HOME tab, in the section labeled PARAGRAPH, click on the LINE SPACING button.
     2. Click on LINE SPACING OPTIONS...
     3. In the INDENTATION section, under SPECIAL, choose HANGING.
     4. Click OK at the bottom.
   - **On PCs with Older Word Software (’97-2003),** use the following steps:
     1. Choose PARAGRAPH from the Format menu. You will then see the Paragraph dialog box.
     2. In the Special drop-down list, choose HANGING.
     3. Click on OK at the bottom.
   - **On MACs:**
     - Insert non-breaking space Option-Space bar
     - Insert line break (soft return) Shift-Return or Control-Return

3. The annotation is one paragraph and is indented as a block a bit farther in than the hanging indent; it starts on the next line without an extra space between the bibliographic citation and the annotation. (See annotation format on next page.) To indent a paragraph as a block:
   - Type the annotation.
   - Put your cursor on the second line and push TAB until the whole block indents as far as you want it to indent.

4. Any direct quotes in the annotation must be inside quotation marks and include the page number in parentheses directly following the quote.

This article examines socio-cultural concerns of blacks and their beliefs regarding weight, exercise and health. The empirical study was conducted via phone interviews and the researchers’ findings highlight some conflicting views of black Americans concerning their health and weight. Only 35 percent of those interviewed acknowledged that they were overweight (when research shows that 71 percent of the black American population is overweight) and most responded that it was possible to be overweight and healthy. Most acknowledged that exercise was important for healthy living, and yet most also reported very limited activity. Weight management intervention programs have been unsuccessful in the black community, and these results give me more insight as to why traditional models have failed and how mind, body, spirit education might help.


Dillard speaks to what Dubois tagged as the “spiritual strivings of black folk” (p. 37). He asserted that black Americans are in a constant battle to attempt to merge the African and American self. Dillard adds to this by acknowledging that for those in positions of education, we are expected to distance ourselves from our language, our communities and our spirituality. Her theoretical worldview is constructivists/critical race theory/ feminist theory. This text is important because it is a text written by an African American professor who addresses the split of spirituality and body that is expected in academia. For Dillard, she is specific about the importance of healing and cultural legacies of Africa and makes that the center of her research and service as an educator. What really resonated with me is that she speaks to being guided by spirit and that
that same spirit is moving her away from an academic life in the university and into work that
bridges her African and diaspora communities. This is something that has been resonating with
me for quite some time, and is also echoes my attempts to look outside of academia in order to
understand the work of black women educators and organizers.

India: Krieger.

This is a text about spirituality in adult education and examines spirituality in the workplace,
strategies for teaching holistically, teacher-learner relationships, and the development of
programs of spirituality and ethics. The major assumptions are that the goal of education is
about assisting the growth of the human spirit, and that adults embrace spirituality in different
ways, which embodies a constructivist outlook. This book also has great resources for adult
educators on other texts about spirituality and education. It covers how spirituality can be
integrated into the workplace, and addresses this idea of connecting the personal to the
professional or the mind/body split so many have written about. The authors offer specifics for
incorporating spirituality into one’s life and professional practices in higher education, as well as
ways to acknowledge spirituality in our students. This is foundational resource that will serve as
a springboard to tell me how black women educators adhere to these practices and develop
their own.

Groen, J. (2008). Paradoxical tensions in creating a teaching and learning space within a graduate
education course on spirituality. Teaching in Higher Education, 13, 193-204.

Groen teaches the course, Spirituality in the Workplace that is offered through the Workplace
and Adult Learning Specialization within the Graduate Division of Educational Research at the
University of Calgary. Her assumptions arise from her own protestant upbringing and the