

OAS Skill Module Required for the Humanities Inquiry: Annotated, MLA Style Bibliography

This skill module must be completed at least one week before you turn in your humanities inquiry.

Original thought in the humanities requires exhaustive research concerning the topic you intend to analyze. You may find as you do research that you have trouble remembering which source made what argument. A detailed annotated bibliography will help you keep track of your sources and will make referencing them in your paper much easier. This skill module requires you to begin your research for your humanities inquiry. You will turn in an annotated bibliography of at least **six secondary sources you will cite in your inquiry**. Keep your internet sources to the limit prescribed in the inquiry instructions.

What is an annotated bibliography?

A bibliography is first and foremost a list of the publishing details of the books, journal articles, and websites you use in your inquiry or paper. These details allow the readers of your work to verify your claims and check up on the quality of your references. You must list every source you utilize in order to avoid plagiarism. An *annotated* bibliography is a list of the relevant sources you have read in alphabetical order by author's last name that includes a brief description of the text's relevance to your project (the annotation). Annotations are usually no longer than 300-500 words, and include such details as the text's main argument, the author's methodology, the connection or lack of connection to the argument you wish to make, any important details or quotes you wish to especially remember for your paper, and your opinion about the source.

Why MLA Style?

The Modern Language Association is the major scholarly organization for the study of modern languages and literatures. Scholars and editors take their cues concerning proper bibliography formatting from the standards published in the MLA reference guide. While other bibliographic styles exist in the humanities, most notably Chicago Style, MLA style is generally considered the default humanities format. Bibliographic styles can often seem draconian in their insistence on where commas, periods, and semicolons go in the reference. Please remember these rules for exactness are to help your reader verify your work. You wouldn't make a mistake in communicating a proof or equation in a lab report, please take the correct MLA format as seriously.

That said, let me tell you a secret: none of your professors have MLA Style memorized. While the most common forms (books, journal articles) may now be second nature to them, they undoubtedly still keep a well-worn copy of the Style manual at hand to reference how to cite unusual texts. **If you are in doubt take that time to look up the correct citation style.**

The Undergraduate Writing Center in FAC 211 has several MLA Style Manuals that you can use at any time or you can make an appointment with a consultant to discuss proper bibliographic formatting.