

Annotated Bibliography Guidelines

Your bibliography must follow either MLA or APA format EXACTLY. Each entry must include all source information and a three-sentence (minimum) evaluation of the content and value of the source.

Topic:

1. You should choose a topic related to your educational or professional interest.
2. The topic must deal with an American SOCIAL problem.
3. And, finally, you want a topic that will lend itself to papers examining the causes of the problem and proposing a solution to the problem.

Bibliography requirements:

Sources

- Your bibliography MUST include three sources from scholarly journals
- and three sources from scholarly, well-researched books (or essays in book length collections).
- Your bibliography must also include two sources from popular magazines and/or newspapers
- and two web-based sources (this does not include web-based magazines, newspapers, or journals).
- You may not use a source published prior to 1990 without my permission and at least two-thirds of your sources should have a publication date after 1995.

This ten-source minimum is just that, a minimum. To adequately research your topic you may have to do much more than that. You may, of course, use more than the minimum source requirements and you may explore other sources of information (such as documentaries, interviews, census data, government reports, legislation, etc.). Indeed, your topic may require you to explore these sources.

Evaluation Criteria:

I will evaluate your bibliography for the following:

- quality of sources,
- quality of your evaluation of those sources,
- proper documentation of sources, and
- the appropriateness of the number and types of sources you have chosen to the topic you have selected.

I have included a brief annotated bibliography below. It does not include all the types of publications and sources you must find, nor does it address the same kind of topic you must address. But it does model basic citation technique and give you a good idea of what I am looking for in your annotations.

Works Cited

Burns, Ken. Mark Twain: A Film Directed by Ken Burns. PBS, 2002.

Burns' film combines an extraordinary collection of Twain images and memorabilia with an all-star cast of Twain critics, inspired quotations from and performances of Twain's language, and a detailed study of the connections between Twain's life and his writing.

Burns has particularly useful sections on Roughing It and The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.”

Emerson, Everett. Mark Twain: A Literary Life. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000.

The new gold standard in balanced “literary” biographies of Twain, Elliot's biography focuses more on Twain's literary evolution than on provocative arguments about his personal life. This biography offers an excellent starting point for anyone interested in further Twain reading. I have used it to develop a broad sense of the scope of Twain's life and to cull interesting quotations from Twain and his critics.

Powers, Ron. Dangerous Water: A Biography of the Boy Who Became Mark Twain. New York: Basic Books, 1999.

In this trade paperback biography of Twain's early years, Powers looks at the early influences on Twain's life including his childhood friends and early family difficulties. Powers provides a useful context for understanding the personal evolution of Twain's humor and writing. I have used this text to develop a sense of the importance of Twain's childhood to his writing. Although I believe that the author exaggerates this impact, I think it important to keep this view in mind as I read Twain.

Robinson, Forrest G., ed. The Cambridge Companion to Mark Twain. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Robinson edits a superior collection of introductory essays about Twain and his works. A chronology and “best of” bibliography make this collection particularly useful, although the reader should remember that Twain studies have exploded since the 1995 publication of this book. I used this book to give me a sense of what scholars had to say about Twain up until 1995, but I supplemented Robinson’s book by reading more recent criticism.

Wilson, Rob. “Exporting Christian Transcendentalism, Importing Hawaiiin Sugar: The Trans-Americanization of Hawaii.” American Literature 72 (2000): 531-552.

Wilson excoriates Twain for his personal and ideological complicity in America’s absorption of Hawaii. By so doing, he provides a welcome alternative perspective to the many Twain critics who have worked so diligently to present Twain as a social visionary. I am particularly interested in what Twain had to say about America, so Wilson’s piece proved an invaluable starting point for me.