Tips for Creating an Annotated Bibliography

WHAT IS AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY?
An annotated bibliography is an alphabetical list of research sources (citations to books, articles, web sources, etc.) Each citation is followed by a brief descriptive and evaluative paragraph called the annotation. The purpose of the annotation is to inform the reader of the accuracy, quality, and relevance of the sources cited.

You will find that the process of creating an annotated bibliography will help you explore your subject and determine what the issues are within your research field.

HOW IS AN ANNOTATION DIFFERENT FROM A SUMMARY OR ABSTRACT?
An abstract or summary is just descriptive. An annotation is both descriptive and critical.

WHAT ARE THE STEPS IN CREATING AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY?
Creating an annotated bibliography will require that you use a variety of intellectual skills: evaluation, analysis, and careful library research.

Step One: Locate and record citations to books, articles, web sites, and/or newspapers on your topic. Briefly examine and review the actual items, then select those resources that provide the best information on your topic.

Step Two: Cite your sources using an appropriate documentation style.

Step Three: Write a concise descriptive and evaluative summary of the information in the sources. You may want to include the following:
- main focus or purpose of the work
- Background or credibility of the author (if available)
- Intended audience (students, experts, etc.)
- Unique features (if applicable)
- Weakness or bias

Your annotation should include critical commentary that evaluates the source and its usefulness for your topic and research. Some things to consider:
- Does the source offer a good introduction on the topic/issue?
- Does the source (or section from the source) deal with a particular aspect of the topic/issue?
- Would a non-expert on the topic understand the source or is it geared to an audience already familiar with the topic/issue?
- What limitations, if any, does the source have (reading level, timeliness, reliability, etc.)?
- What is your overall reaction to the information and the source overall?