What is an MLA Annotated Bibliography?

- An annotated bibliography is a list of citations, in MLA format, to books, articles, and media sources where each citation is followed by descriptive paragraphs called "annotations."
- Each annotation may be approximately 100-200 words (ask your instructor or read the assignment).
- An annotation may summarize the source, evaluate it (for accuracy, authority, bias & quality), or reflect on the possible uses of that source for your specific research project; some annotations do all three of these (ask your instructor or read the assignment directions).

Sample MLA Annotation


This guide for aspiring fiction writers is based on the author’s creative writing courses and seminars. Topics include literary-aesthetic theories, technique, plotting, and avoiding common errors. Gardner began teaching college-level writing in 1958 and continued in one form or another until his death in 1982. He was himself the author of eight books of fiction, including the critically-acclaimed *Grendel* (1971). *The Art of Fiction* is written in an easy, flowing prose. It is filled with practical advice writers can put to use immediately, such as how to avoid clumsy sentence structure or improve the pacing of a story. But there is also more profound advice the serious writer will ponder for a lifetime. Among this latter category is the idea that, “Telling truth in fiction can mean one of three things”: factual truth, essential truth, and moral truth. The last of these, he writes, is "the highest truth of art" (129). As a practical matter, this isn't the sort of guide I would refer to in order to quickly check grammar, or format a manuscript. But it is the sort of book I would read for pleasure as much as advice, the sort I'd read repeatedly as both a guide to excellent writing, and an example of the same.
How do I format an MLA Annotated Bibliography?

An MLA Annotated Bibliography is formatted just like a regular MLA Bibliography (or Works Cited page):

- Alphabetize your entries by the first element (usually the author’s last name, or title of the work);
- Indent the second and subsequent lines of citations by 0.5 inches to create a "hanging indent" (In MS Word, a "hanging indent" can be created from the "Paragraph" menu);
- Place the annotation directly beneath its citation and indent;
- Double space the entries and do not skip lines between entries.

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Writing 102
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Tolkien’s Roverandom as Voyage Tale: An Annotated Bibliography


This ground-breaking article explores J.R.R. Tolkien’s sea-voyage tales, C.S. Lewis’ The Voyage of the Dawn Treader, and Charles Williams’ Arthurian writings, and their common concern with blessed lands across the sea (e.g. Valinor, Aslan’s Country, and Avalon). Huttar includes Tolkien’s Roverandom in this category. This well-researched article will be key evidence for my argument.


Lawyer compares the medieval Voyage of St. Brendan with C.S. Lewis’s The Voyage of the Dawn Treader (1952) and Frederick Buechner’s Brendan (1987). As examples of Irish spiritual voyage tales, the heroes encounter wondrous islands, receive supernatural help, and seek intangible ideals of perfection (319). This article is potentially useful in showing the similarities between Tolkien’s Roverandom and other modern works as medieval Irish voyage stories.


Brief entry from the most important encyclopedia covering J.R.R. Tolkien. Discusses the historical St. Brendan, his appearance in and influence on Tolkien’s work. Handy for references to dates and publications of Tolkien’s Brendan material. Includes a short but useful bibliography.