



Follow this pattern in writing your annotated bibliography - a citation followed by a short paragraph.¹

- Begin with the citation using MLA bibliography form.
- The first sentence should be formatted as follows - This (book/essay/article/website/etc.) a descriptive verb (such as asserts, argues, suggests, reports) and a “that” clause containing the major assertion (thesis statement) of the work. Be sure to use the word “that” followed by a clear statement of the thesis.
- A brief but accurate explanation of how the author develops or supports the thesis, usually in the same order as developed in the book or essay.
- A statement of the author’s apparent purpose, followed by an “in order to” phrase. This will not restate the thesis, but will state the intended effect on the audience. What does the author want you to do, think, or feel?
- You may include a description of the intended audience and/or the qualifications of the writer. Most writers target certain audiences, and shape their messages to influence that group.

Here is an example.

Goodall, Jane. “Primate Research Is Inhumane.” *Animal Rights: Opposing Viewpoint*.
Ed. Janell Rohr. San Diego, CA: Greenhaven, 1989. 95-100. Print.

This essay argues that most laboratories using primates engage in inhumane practices. She supports her argument through detailed descriptions of lab environments and draws special attention to the neglect of psychological comforts that these primates endure until they sometimes become insane. Her purpose is to speak on behalf of the chimpanzees (because they cannot speak for themselves) in order to persuade her readers to see that if we do not fight for improvements in lab care, “we make a mockery of the whole concept of justice.” Goodall writes to those who have compassion for other species and who might have enough courage to speak out for chimpanzees and other primates.

¹ This information is based on instructions on how to write a rhetorical précis found in Harnack, Andrew. Writing Research Papers: A Student Guide for Use with Opposing Viewpoints. 2nd ed. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 1998: pp 3-7.