An annotated bibliography is a list of sources that includes not only publication information, but also a brief summary, analysis, or evaluation of each source. This additional information is called an *annotation*.

The purpose and scope of annotations varies, so be sure you understand what kinds of information your instructor expects you to provide in each annotation. Purpose often dictates length; the more comprehensive or detailed the information required, the longer the annotation. Some annotations require only one or two sentences; others may demand a substantial paragraph. Again, check with your instructor to be sure you understand his or her expectations.

The following process will allow you to compile an annotated bibliography:

**Research:**

The most important step in compiling an annotated bibliography is completing the research necessary to find appropriate sources. When choosing materials to include in your bibliography, consider both the relevance and the reliability of each source.

**Read:**

Finding materials is only half the battle. Once you identify appropriate sources, you must *read* them. You’ll have to understand the structure, purpose, scope, and content of each source. As you read, take careful notes, recording the main points and relevant details. To save time when preparing citation, include page numbers in your notes.

**Compose:**

Prepare your bibliography according to the appropriate citation style guide. Include the annotation immediately following each entry in the bibliography.

**Example** (using MLA citation style):

Thompson, Stith. *The Folktale*. New York: Dryden, 1946. A comprehensive survey of the most common folktale type and the themes and motifs of each, including their histories and use in works of literature.