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Professor Stacks

English 102

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Stem Cell Research: An Annotated Bibliography

Holland, Suzanne. The Human Embryonic Stem Cell Debate : Science, Ethics, and Public Policy. Boston: MIT Press, 2001.

This is the annotation of the above source. In this example, I am following MLA guidelines for the bibliographic information listed above. If I was really writing an annotation for this source, I would now be offering a brief summary of what this book says about stem cell research.

After a brief summary, it would be appropriate to assess this source and offer some criticisms of it. Does it seem like a reliable and current source? Why? Is the research biased or objective? Are the facts well documented? Who is the author? Is she qualified in this subject? Is this source scholarly, popular, some of both?

The length of your annotation will depend on the assignment or on the purpose of your annotated bibliography. After summarizing and assessing, you can now reflect on this source. How does it fit into your research? Is this a helpful resource? Too scholarly? Not scholarly enough? Too general/specific? Since "stem cell research" is a very broad topic, has this source helped you to narrow your topic?

Relevancy: Your annotation should now go on to briefly assess the value of the source to an investigation of your research question or problem. If your bibliography is part of a research project, briefly identify how you intend to use the source and why. If your bibliography is an independent project, try to assess the source's contribution to the research on your topic.

**Senior, K. "Extending the Ethical Boundaries of Stem Cell Research."
Trends in Molecular Medicine. 7 (2001):5-6.**

Not all annotations have to be the same length. For example, this source is a very short scholarly article. It may only take a sentence or two to

summarize. Even if you are using a book, you should only focus on the sections that relate to your topic.

Not all annotated bibliographies assess and reflect; some merely summarize. That may not be the most helpful for you, but, if this is an assignment, you should always ask your instructor for specific guidelines.

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Wallace, Kelly. "Bush Stands Pat on Stem Cell Policy." CNN. 13

August 2001. 17 August 2001 <<http://www.cnn.com/2001/stem.cell/index.html>>.

Notice that in this example, I have chosen a variety of sources: a book, a scholarly journal, and a web page. Using a variety of sources can help give you a broader picture of what is being said about your topic. You may want to investigate how scholarly sources are treating this topic differently than more popular sources. But again, if your assignment is to only use scholarly sources, then you will probably want to avoid magazines and popular web sites.

Notice that the bibliographic information above is proper MLA format (use whatever style is appropriate in your field) and the annotations are in paragraph form. Note also that the entries are alphabetized by the first word in the bibliographic entry. If you are writing an annotated bibliography with many sources, it may be helpful to divide the sources into categories. For example, if I was putting together an extensive annotated bibliography for stem cell research, I may divide the sources into categories such as ethical concerns, scholarly analyses, and political ramifications.

For more examples, a quick search at a library or even on the Internet should produce several examples of annotated bibliographies in your area.

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use the source and why. If your bibliography is an independent project, try to assess the source's contribution to the research on your topic.