**Lesson Plan: Understanding and Creating Annotated Bibliographies**

**Grade Level:** 9–12
**Subject:** English Language Arts / Social Studies / Research Writing
**Time Needed:** 2–3 class periods (45–60 minutes each)

**Lesson Objectives**

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Define what an annotated bibliography is and explain its purpose.
2. Identify the components of a well-written annotation.
3. Evaluate sources for credibility, relevance, and perspective.
4. Create an annotated bibliography using at least three reliable sources related to a famous woman in history.
5. Reflect on how annotated bibliographies help deepen research and critical thinking.

**Materials Needed**

* Whiteboard or digital projector
* Handouts:
	+ Definition and Components of an Annotated Bibliography
	+ Example Annotations (provided below)
	+ Source Evaluation Checklist
* Laptops or tablets for research
* Access to library databases or internet
* Rubric for culminating activity

**Day 1: Introduction to Annotated Bibliographies**

**1. Bell Ringer (5 min)**

Prompt: *"What is the purpose of a bibliography? Why might a researcher include notes with their citations?"*

**2. Direct Instruction (15 min)**

Explain:

* **What is an annotated bibliography?**
	+ A list of citations to books, articles, and documents, each followed by a brief (usually 150–200 words) descriptive and evaluative paragraph.
* **Why is it important?**
	+ Helps researchers keep track of sources.
	+ Encourages critical engagement with texts.
	+ Allows others to see the research process and find sources quickly.

**3. Components of an Annotation (10 min)**

Distribute handout. Walk through:

* Citation (Chicago/MLA/APA format)
* Summary of the source
* Evaluation of the source’s credibility
* Reflection on how the source will be used

**4. Example Annotations (15 min)**

Provide these two annotated examples:

**Chicago Style Example:**
Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth. *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins.* New York: Crossroad, 1983.
*This book reinterprets the role of women in early Christianity using feminist theology and historical-critical methods. The author argues that women were central to the Jesus movement but were systematically excluded from ecclesiastical structures. Schüssler Fiorenza's scholarship is pioneering in feminist biblical studies, and this source is essential for any research on women in religious history. The book is both credible and widely cited by scholars in theology and women's studies.*

**MLA Style Example:**
Shetterly, Margot Lee. *Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win the Space Race.* William Morrow, 2016.
*This book highlights the significant but previously overlooked contributions of African American women working as NASA mathematicians during the mid-20th century. It presents a rich narrative grounded in thorough historical research. Shetterly's work provides insight into both racial and gender inequality and is a powerful example of women's contributions to STEM fields. This book is useful for examining how institutional bias affects historical memory.*

**Guided and Independent Practice**

**1. Guided Practice (20 min)**

In pairs, students:

* Receive a pre-selected article or book excerpt on a woman in history (e.g., Harriet Tubman, Malala Yousafzai, Ada Lovelace).
* Use the “Source Evaluation Checklist” to assess it.
* Write a short annotation using the correct citation style.

**2. Independent Research and Annotation Writing (25–30 min)**

Students choose one famous woman in history to research (e.g., Rosa Parks, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Marie Curie, Dolores Huerta).
They must:

* Locate **three credible sources**
* Cite them properly
* Write a full annotation for each

Encourage a balance of source types (book, article, documentary, academic journal, website).

**Culminating Activity – "Gallery of Her Story"**

**1. Project Instructions (10 min)**

Each student will create a **mini-poster or digital slide** highlighting:

* The name and legacy of the woman they researched
* 1–2 quotes from their annotations
* A brief reflection: *“How did creating an annotated bibliography help you better understand this person’s life and legacy?”*

**2. Creation Time (30–40 min)**

Students work individually or in pairs to design and prepare their posters or digital slides.

**3. Gallery Walk / Presentations (15–20 min)**

Classmates circulate and view one another’s work.
Optional: Each student presents a 1-minute “spotlight” on their chosen figure and what they learned.

**Assessment**

**Formative**

* Participation in class discussion and guided practice
* Source Evaluation Checklist completion

**Summative**

* Final annotated bibliography (3 sources, evaluated with a rubric)
* “Gallery of Her Story” poster or slide (creativity, clarity, reflection)

**Rubric for Annotated Bibliography (Out of 20 Points)**

| **Criteria** | **Excellent (5)** | **Good (4)** | **Fair (3)** | **Needs Work (1–2)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Correct Citation Format |  |  |  |  |
| Clear, Accurate Summary |  |  |  |  |
| Critical Evaluation of Source |  |  |  |  |
| Relevance to Topic & Reflection |  |  |  |  |

**Extension Ideas**

* Compare two women from different eras in a dual annotated bibliography.
* Convert research into a podcast or TikTok-style biography.
* Debate: "Whose legacy has been most unfairly ignored by history?"

**📄 Student Handout: Understanding Annotated Bibliographies**

**📘 What Is an Annotated Bibliography?**

An **annotated bibliography** is a list of sources (books, articles, websites, etc.) you have used or plan to use in a research project. Each citation is followed by a brief paragraph (called an annotation) that:

* Summarizes the source
* Evaluates its credibility and usefulness
* Explains how it fits into your research

**🛠️ Why Use Annotated Bibliographies?**

Annotated bibliographies help you:

* Keep track of your research
* Understand the credibility and purpose of your sources
* Show your teacher or audience that you’ve done thorough, thoughtful work
* Organize your ideas and prepare for writing a paper or giving a presentation

**📚 Parts of an Annotation**

Each entry in an annotated bibliography includes:

1. **Citation** (APA, MLA, or Chicago style)
2. **Summary**: What is the main point of this source?
3. **Evaluation**: Is it trustworthy? Is it biased? Who is the author?
4. **Reflection**: How will this source help your project?

**✍️ Example Annotation (Chicago Style)**

**Citation:**
Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth. *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins.* New York: Crossroad, 1983

**Annotation:**
This book reinterprets the role of women in early Christianity using feminist theology and historical-critical methods. The author argues that women were central to the Jesus movement but were systematically excluded from ecclesiastical structures. Schüssler Fiorenza’s scholarship is pioneering in feminist biblical studies, and this source is essential for research on women in religious history. The book is both credible and widely cited by scholars in theology and women’s studies.

**✅ Source Evaluation Checklist**

Use these questions to decide if a source is reliable and useful:

| **Question** | **Yes** | **No** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Is the author an expert in the field? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Is the source recent or historically appropriate? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Is the information supported with evidence or citations? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Is the source biased or trying to persuade emotionally? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Is it relevant to your research question or topic? | ☐ | ☐ |

**📝 Practice Activity**

**Instructions:** Read the following citation and write a 3–5 sentence annotation using the summary, evaluation, and reflection method.

**Source:**
Shetterly, Margot Lee. *Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win the Space Race.* William Morrow, 2016.

**Your Annotation:**

**🎯 Independent Research Planning**

**Choose a woman in history** you want to research. Write her name below:
➡️ **Name:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

List 3 potential sources you might use:

**📣 Reflection Question**

Why do you think historians and researchers benefit from creating annotated bibliographies before writing essays or giving presentations?

**✅ Answer Key / Sample Responses for Teacher**

**📝 Practice Annotation Sample Answer:**

**Annotation:**
This book highlights the previously overlooked contributions of African American women working as mathematicians at NASA. Shetterly uses interviews, historical documents, and narrative storytelling to showcase how these women helped drive the success of the U.S. space program. The book is credible, well-researched, and helps readers understand the intersection of race, gender, and science. It will be useful for my project because it shows how women made major contributions despite discrimination.

**🎯 Independent Research Planning – Example (Flexible)**

**Name:** Marie Curie
**Potential Sources:**

1. Curie, Eve. *Madame Curie: A Biography*.
2. NobelPrize.org biography of Marie Curie
3. “Marie Curie and the Science of Radioactivity” – PBS Online

**📣 Reflection Question – Sample Answer:**

Creating an annotated bibliography helps organize sources and encourages deeper understanding of the material. It also helps avoid using unreliable sources and makes writing a final paper easier because you already know what each source contributes.