

Preliminary Annotated Bibliography

1. List your primary sources for your topic (that is, sources written close to the time of what you are studying) for this topic. Ideally about a third of your sources (at least three or four) will be primary sources.
2. List your secondary sources (late 20th-century or early 21st-century books or articles). At least half of your secondary sources should be journal articles (such as you found in the Database assignment) or works which look into the topic in similar detail and with similar documentation of sources. You should have at least 6 or 7 secondary sources.
3. Try to avoid using tertiary (third-hand sources) such as textbooks and reference works. If you feel the need to do so, note that these should be IN ADDITION to your 10 primary and secondary sources.
4. For each source in your Annotated Bibliography briefly indicate
 - what the source will add to your understanding of the topic
 - what biases or weaknesses might make it difficult to evaluate.
 - For example, "William Chester Jordan writes on the famines of the early fourteenth century (that is, before the Black Death). His research indicates that the years from 1310 through 1330 saw remarkably severe crises in food production. This relates to my study of labor markets because agricultural labor was the main form of employment in the fourteenth century; he also provides a good snapshot of the economy before the Black Death that will be useful in making comparisons."

Thesis Statement

1. State the topic for your final paper. Be sure to be specific as to (a) time, (b) place, (c) general topic. (For example, "The effects of the Black Death on the labor force in western Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.")
2. What scholarly problem surrounds the topic? That is, what do modern scholars studying this topic disagree about among themselves? (For example, "Scholars disagree about whether Black Death caused significant economic change in the long run.")
3. Give at least two views reached by modern scholars (secondary sources) on this issue. (For example, "At one time, historians wrote as if the Black Death was largely responsible for European changes in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. More recently, some historians have revised this view to suggest that the economy was already changing before the Black Death. They note that towns had been growing and serfdom declining before the Black Death, and that the economy rebounded fairly quickly immediately after the first outbreak in 1348.")
4. Based on the debate in #2-3, what question do you hope to answer about the topic? (For example, "What was the role of the Black Death in the decline of serfdom between the early 1300s and late 1400s?")
5. Sum up your answer to this question in one complete sentence. (For example, "Although the Black Death was not the only crisis affecting the European population, its initial severity and regular recurrences (every couple of decades) increased the pace of change in the labor market in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.")