

AP Language and Composition
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn
Postreading Assignment

Is The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn a racist novel?

1. Reading the Sources

Read “Say it Ain’t So Huck” by Jane Smiley, “Huck, Jim, and the American Racial Discourse” by David Smith, and “Introduction” by Toni Morrison.

2. Annotated Bibliography

Next, write an annotated bibliography for the three enclosed sources by following the directions on the next page.

3. Essay

Finally, write an essay by responding to the question “Is The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn a racist novel?” Consider Twain’s use of the n-word, the way he employs racist stereotypes of African-Americans, Twain’s characterization of Jim, and the relationship between Jim and Huck.

Incorporate support and information from **all three sources** in your response. Be sure to acknowledge opposing viewpoints while making your own argument.

Make sure your argument is central to your essay; use the sources to illustrate and support your reasoning. Avoid merely summarizing the sources. Indicate clearly which sources you are drawing from, whether through direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary. You should cite the sources by including the author’s last name AND the page number. Citations are required for quotations, paraphrases, and summaries. You may use an introductory phrase, a parenthetical citation, or a combination of the two. See below for an example.

Citation options:

1. Last name and page number in parentheses

While some see “namecalling [as] a plague of childhood” (Morrison 153), it doesn’t seem that this applies to the use of the harmful and painful N-word.

2. Introductory phrase with page number in parentheses

According to Morrison, “namecalling is a plague of childhood” (153), but it doesn’t seem that this applies to the use of the harmful and painful N-word.

3. Author’s name and page number in introductory phrase

Morrison claims on p. 153 that “namecalling is a plague of childhood,” but it doesn’t seem that this applies to the use of the harmful and painful N-word.

*The title is not required for MLA style, but may be included if you would like. The author’s last name and page number are **required**.

Your rough draft (annotated bibliography and essay) does not have to be typed. **Your *final* draft should be typed**, double-spaced, size 12 Times or Calibri font, with 1 inch margins. It should have a title and include a header formatted like the sample below.

Sample Header

Your Name

Title

AP English Language & Composition

Anderson County High School

Instructor's Name

Date Completed

Tentative Due Dates (based on weather):

| Assignment | Due Date |
|---|----------|
| Finish Reading | |
| Annotated Bibliography Rough Draft (20 pts) | |
| Essay Rough Draft (30 pts) | |
| Peer Review (20 pts) | |
| Revision Plan (30 pts) | |
| Final Draft (100 pts) | |

How to Write an Annotated Bibliography (adapted from Purdue Online Writing Lab)

A **bibliography** is a list of sources (books, journals, Web sites, periodicals, etc.) one has used for researching a topic. Bibliographies are sometimes called "References" or "Works Cited" depending on the style format you are using. A bibliography usually just includes the bibliographic information (i.e., the author, title, publisher, etc.).

An **annotation** is a summary and evaluation. Therefore, an **annotated bibliography** includes a summary and evaluation of each of the sources. Annotations should:

A. Cite Include a citation from a citation machine like Easybib (www.easybib.com). To create a citation on this website, you'll need to choose the source type by clicking "All 59 options" above the Blue Box, then clicking the appropriate type from the list. Each source type at the top of the source. For each source, be sure to indicate that medium is "In print."

B. Paraphrase Paraphrasing is one way to use a text in your own writing without directly quoting source material. What are the main arguments? What is the point of this book or article? What topics are covered? If someone asked what this article/book is about, what would you say?

6 Steps to Effective Paraphrasing

1. Reread the original passage until you understand its full meaning.
2. Set the original aside, and write your paraphrase.
3. Check your rendition with the original to make sure that your version accurately expresses all the essential information in a new form.
4. Use quotation marks to identify any unique terms or phrases you have borrowed exactly from the source.
5. Record the source (including the page) so that you can credit it easily if you decide to incorporate the material into your paper.

C. Assess: After summarizing a source, it may be helpful to evaluate it. Is it a useful source? How does it compare with other sources in your bibliography? Is the information reliable? Is this source biased or objective? What is the author's purpose? Does he or she achieve that purpose?

D. Reflect: Once you've summarized and assessed a source, you need to ask how it fits into your research. Was this source helpful to you? How does it help you shape your argument? How can you use this source in your research project? Has it changed how you think about your topic?

MLA Style Sample Annotated Bibliography Entry

In the sample annotation below, the writer includes a citation followed by three paragraphs: a summary, an evaluation of the text, and a reflection on its applicability to his/her own research.

Lamott, Anne. *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*. New York: Anchor Books, 1995. Print.

Lamott's book offers honest advice on the nature of a writing life, complete with its insecurities and failures. Taking a humorous approach to the realities of being a writer, the chapters in Lamott's book are wry and anecdotal and offer advice on everything from plot development to jealousy, from perfectionism to struggling with one's own internal critic. In the process, Lamott includes writing exercises designed to be both productive and fun.

Lamott offers sane advice for those struggling with the anxieties of writing, but her main project seems to be offering the reader a reality check regarding writing, publishing, and struggling with one's own imperfect humanity in the process. Rather than a practical handbook to producing and/or publishing, this text is indispensable because of its honest perspective, its down-to-earth humor, and its encouraging approach.

Chapters in this text could easily be included in the curriculum for a writing class. Several of the chapters in Part 1 address the writing process and would serve to generate discussion on students' own drafting and revising processes. Some of the writing exercises would also be appropriate for generating classroom writing exercises. Students should find Lamott's style both engaging and enjoyable.