

HANDOUT: ALL ABOUT ANNOTATIONS

Annotations are brief descriptions (two to three sentences) of how each source contributed to your understanding or to the project. They generally include the following elements:

- A brief description of what the source was (the format of source or what it contained) and how you used it in your project.
- An explanation of how it was useful in shaping your understanding of your project.
- Optional: An explanation of why you categorized the source as primary or secondary – only if it would be unclear or confusing to the judges.

Example Annotations

“This source helped me understand what role the Interim Committee (a group of distinguished scientific, industrial, and political figures) played in the decision of the bomb. It helped me understand their reasoning for dropping the atomic bomb. The Interim Committee advised the President on nuclear energy.”

“We used this book to learn more about recent events in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, especially the war. It also contained some maps in it, which we used to get a better picture of the partition.”

“This book was a collection of the letters that Joe Kennedy wrote from 1914 until his disabling stroke in 1961. Although there were no letters speaking of Rosemary receiving the lobotomy, Joe did write of his concerns for his daughter and the prospect of getting her the operation.”

Annotation Sentence Starters

Try not to use “this source...” to start each annotation. Change it up by trying any one of the following. Remember: If you are working in a group, your annotations should use words like “we” and “our.” If you are working alone, your annotations should use words like “I” and “my.”

- This *book* helped me / us to understand...
- This *document* was important to my/our topic because...
- After reading this *newspaper article* I / we
- I / We used this *speech* to...
- This *website* was...
- I / We found out that...
- This *memoir* provided me / us with...
- I / We learned that...
- This *manuscript* showed me/us that...
- I / We had a new perspective on the topic after reading this source because...
- This *interview* talked about...
- This *book* helped me / us to understand our topic better because...

Stuck? Feel like you’re repeating yourself?

- Pretend that you’re describing the book to your teacher. Try describing the author’s point of view in the source.
- Did this source surprise or shock you? Tell us more.
- Was this one of your favorite sources? Describe why.
- Be specific. Was there one particularly important part of the source?