**Annotated Bibliographies**

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/or evaluation. Therefore, an annotated bibliography includes a summary and/or evaluation of each of the sources. Depending on your project or the assignment, your annotations may do one or more of the following.

* Summarize: Some annotations merely summarize the source. 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? The length of your annotations will determine how detailed your summary is.
* 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 goal of this source?
* 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?

Example Below:

Selected Annotated Bibliography

Bemis, Samuel Flagg. *John Quincy Adams and the Foundations of American Foreign Policy*. 2nd

ed. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956.

Along with Professor Thomas Bailey, Professor Bemis was one of America’s first leading authorities on the history of American foreign policy during the Progressive Era. In this book, Bemis profiled Adams’ diplomatic career before he was elected president in 1824. To Bemis, Adams was a unique figure worth writing about in the context of American foreign relations. As he put it when describing his work, “here you have a diplomatic biography—if such a thing there can be—a biography of the man from boyhood to Presidency against the background of American foreign policy, or a study of the foundations of American foreign policy against the background of John Quincy Adams.”[[1]](#footnote-1) As would be expected, Bemis generously consulted Adams’ twelve volumes of memoirs and seven volumes of his writings.

Earl Weeks, William. *John Quincy Adams and American Global Empire.* Lexington, Kentucky:

University of Kentucky Press, 1992.

Professor Earl Weeks has researched and written extensively about American foreign policy from the American Revolution to the Civil War. In this book, he analyzed “in detail Adams’ greatest contribution to the American nation: the Transcontinental Treaty of 1819.”[[2]](#footnote-2) Like Bemis, Professor Weeks believed Adams played a significant role in shaping the early stages of American foreign policy, so much so he wrote the following: “[Adams] realized that his destiny (and that of the Adams family) was not to lead the nation but to serve as a symbol for all that Jacksonian American rejected.”[[3]](#footnote-3) In addition to the Adams Family Papers and the papers of Adams’ closest contemporaries, Weeks consulted newspapers and numerous secondary sources for his book.

Lang, Daniel G., and Greg Russell. "The Ethics of Power in American Diplomacy: The

Statecraft of John Quincy Adams." *The Review of Politics* 52, no. 1 (1990): 3-31.

<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.snhu.edu/stable/1407628>.

In their essay, historians Lang and Russel analyzed John Quincy Adams’ role in applying ethics and morality in the making of American foreign policy. They asserted “that the distinctive diplomatic legacy of John Quincy Adams [constituted] an important case study documenting the significance of moral reasoning in the statesman’s obligation to uphold the national interest in a universal system of power politics.”[[4]](#footnote-4) Both authors have previously written about ethics and morality in government in other capacities. Of Adams, they contended that he was able to “[recognize] that men and nations proclaim goals transcending national defense or sovereignty is a first step, but not a solution to, the moral problem in international politics.”[[5]](#footnote-5) The authors were generous in their reference of other volumes that considered the role of ideology, ethics, and morality in making foreign policy.

Nagel, Paul C. *John Quincy Adams: A Public Life, A Private Life*. Cambridge, Massachusetts:

Harvard University Press, 1997.

Professor Nagel has written numerous volumes about members of the Adams family. In his biography about John Quincy, he made an attempt “to illuminate the entire Adams, private as well as public.”[[6]](#footnote-6) Nagel’s more intimate interpretation of Adams nicely counters the more policy orientated works selected for this project. Moreover, Nagel claimed that of his book it was “the first biography that [drew] upon Adams’ massive manuscript diary.”[[7]](#footnote-7) In this sense, Nagel’s work is differentiated from other biographies about Adams such as James Traub’s *John Quincy Adams, Militant Spirit* and Harlow Giles Unger’s *John Quincy Adams*.

1. Samuel Flagg Bemis, *John Quincy Adams and the Foundations of American Foreign Policy* 2nd ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), ix. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. William Earl Weeks, *John Quincy Adams and American Global Empire* (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1992), 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Earl Weeks, 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Daniel G. Lang and Greg Russell, "The Ethics of Power in American Diplomacy: The Statecraft of John Quincy Adams," *The Review of Politics* 52, no. 1 (1990): <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.snhu.edu/stable/1407628>, 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Lang and Russell, 28. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Paul C. Nagel, *John Quincy Adams: A Public Life, A Private Life* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997), ix. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Nagel, ix. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)