Evaluating your sources: The annotated bibliography

A bibliography is a list of books, articles, web pages, etc. that you use for a research project. The list includes all the information another scholar would need to find the item you used for your project such as author, title, publication date, etc. This information is presented in a special format called a citation.

An annotated bibliography gives the citation along with short paragraph in which you describe and evaluate the information. Your annotation should answer the following questions:

- What is the book, article, web page, etc. about?
- Who is the author or source of the information, and what is the basis of his/her authority and point of view (bias)?
- Is the information recent or old? Does age matter for your specific question or need?
- How is this information useful or important to you?

Select the best sources of information that you find to include in your annotated bibliography.

Here’s an example of an annotation written by a student who wanted to learn about becoming a lawyer:


The article I read talked about the work lawyers do and their working conditions. It also described the training and education required to become a lawyer and the average amount of money different types of lawyers make. I found the article online in the Occupational Outlook Handbook which is a source I learned about at the library. The handbook is a government website so it is a reliable source. There is no author listed on the article, but the handbook was created by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics so I think the information is balanced. The date of the handbook is 2008-2009 so I think the information is accurate. It's important to use current information for this project because I want to find out what it is like to be a lawyer today. This source was helpful because it had information about how to become a lawyer and what I could expect if I worked as a lawyer.

Now, turn the page over and build your own bibliographic citation and annotation!
Citation: 

Annotation:
1) What kind of source did you find? (Book, article in a journal or encyclopedia, interview, web page, etc.)

2) What is the source about (be specific)?

3) Who is the author or source of the information, and what is the basis of his/her authority and point of view (bias)?

4) Is the information recent or old? Does age matter for your specific question or need?

5) How is this information useful or important to you?

Reflection:
Where did you find the source?

How did you find the source?

Would you use this source again or recommend that others use it?

Was it easy or difficult to find this source?

Did you learn anything from looking for or using this source that you could use in the future?