Other types of writing

1. Writing a case study, book review or annotated bibliography

**Case studies**

Case study assignments are studies into real world situations to which students have to apply the theories they are learning. Depending on your area of study, the assignment question may be presented in the form of facts for analysis. For example, these facts may be about an organisation (for management students and finance and accounting students), or a utility or building site (engineering). Your analysis may involve identifying and solving problems associated with the case, answering specific questions, or making recommendations: for example, engineers may be asked to recommend the best type of waste management control for a particular site.

Generally, case study refers more to the assignment question than the format of the finished assignment. The results of your analysis will normally be written up either in the form of a report, or an essay: that is, if you are required to analyse data, show results, then make recommendations, your assignment is more likely to follow the report format. On the other hand, if you are required to answer one or two questions related to the case study data, it is more likely that your assignment will resemble an essay, with a clear thesis statement made at the beginning of the essay. However, essays written in response to case studies generally share a number of characteristics of reports, that is, information can be organised into sections with headings, and recommendations can be made in the conclusion. Finally, some case study assignments are presented in question-answer format.

To view an example of a student essay written in response to case study material, see the self-access module [Annotated Models of Disciplinary Essays: Unit 5 - Annotated Management Essay](#). To view reports written in response to case study questions, see the module [Report Writing: Unit 3 - Writing Accounting and Finance Reports](#).

**Book review**

First year university students are sometimes given a book review assignment due not long after semester starts. The rationale for this is often as follows:

- a book review in this context is a relatively small task, so you receive practice writing at university before you hand in a major piece of written work
- lecturers can detect any stylistic problems and provide feedback which should be taken into account before you embark on a longer assignment
- you can become familiar with the library gradually without having to find books for a major assignment
- book reviews require you to distill the argument or issues dealt with in the book; in other words, writing book reviews helps you to improve your skills of critical analysis
When writing your review you should include full bibliographic details of the book you are reviewing. That is, include author, title, and publication details, then give a brief overview of the book’s contents and arguments. Your lecturer also wants you to discuss and evaluate the book’s arguments, and to provide evidence in the form of examples to support your claims. Finally, you should conclude by evaluating the book on the whole, its strengths and weaknesses, and its contribution to your understanding of the area of study.

**Annotated bibliography**

Annotated bibliographies are bibliographies (alphabetical list of books, journals, and other source material used to write an assignment or paper) which include short comments for each item. These comments should briefly summarise the contents and the main arguments of the book or article. However, your comments should focus on the way in which the book or article was useful to you when preparing your assignment.

All essays must include a bibliography or reference list; however, your lecturer will instruct you if he or she requires an annotated bibliography. You must include the full bibliographic details for each item, then follow this with your comments. The example below is from a first year history essay.

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<th><strong>Annotated bibliography</strong></th>
<th><strong>Comments</strong></th>
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In this book Frost argues that there were several reasons behind the establishment of a penal colony at Botany Bay. Convicts and Empire was especially helpful in offering good background information on the wars and in describing the naval strategy. It was also helpful in describing the influence of French competition on the final decision.

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<th>student’s summary of book’s contents and arguments student’s evaluation of the material</th>
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**Acknowledgment**

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