

chicago manual citation

The Chicago Manual of Style Citation: A Comprehensive Guide

chicago manual citation is a cornerstone of academic and professional writing, providing a standardized framework for acknowledging sources and ensuring scholarly integrity. This authoritative style guide, often referred to as "Chicago" or "CMS," offers two distinct but related citation systems: the Notes-Bibliography (NB) system and the Author-Date (AD) system. Understanding these systems is crucial for writers aiming to present their research clearly, avoid plagiarism, and adhere to the expectations of various academic disciplines and publishing houses. This comprehensive guide will delve into the intricacies of Chicago style citation, covering its fundamental principles, the structure of both citation systems, and practical advice for implementing them effectively. We will explore the components of bibliographical entries and in-text citations, discuss common source types, and highlight key differences between the two systems, empowering you to navigate the complexities of Chicago manual citation with confidence.

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Understanding the Chicago Manual of Style Citation Systems

The Chicago Manual of Style offers two primary approaches to citation, each suited for different types of scholarly work. The choice between the Notes-Bibliography (NB) system and the Author-Date (AD) system often depends on the discipline or the specific requirements of a publisher or institution. Both systems aim for clarity, consistency, and the accurate attribution of sources, but they achieve this through different structural organizations.

The NB system is prevalent in the humanities, including literature, history, and the arts. It relies heavily on footnotes or endnotes to provide citation information within the text, supplemented by a bibliography at the end of the work. Conversely, the AD system is more common in the social sciences and natural sciences, using brief parenthetical citations within the text that refer to a full reference list at the end. Both methods require meticulous attention to detail to ensure accurate and complete citations.

The Notes-Bibliography System Explained

The Notes-Bibliography (NB) system, a hallmark of Chicago style, prioritizes detailed information presented at the point of citation. This system utilizes footnotes or endnotes, which are numerically sequenced markers embedded within the text that correspond to a full citation at the bottom of the page (footnotes) or at the end of the document (endnotes). This method allows for extensive commentary and supplemental information to be included alongside the citation, making it particularly useful for in-depth scholarly analysis.

When a writer encounters a source that needs to be cited, they insert a superscript number at the end of the relevant sentence or phrase. This number then directs the reader to the corresponding note. The first time a source is cited, the note provides a full bibliographic entry. Subsequent citations of the same source are typically shortened, often using the author's last name, a shortened title, and the page number, a format known as "short-form" citation. This system aims to keep the main body of the text uncluttered by detailed bibliographic data while still providing comprehensive source attribution.

Components of Notes

Each note, whether a footnote or endnote, comprises several key elements to identify the source accurately. These elements are arranged in a specific order, and punctuation plays a vital role in distinguishing them. Typically, a note begins with the author's name (first name first), followed by the title of the work (italicized or in quotation marks, depending on the type of source), publication details such as the place of publication, publisher, and year, and finally, the specific page number(s) being referenced.

The punctuation within a Chicago style note is also important. Commas generally separate different pieces of information, while periods mark the end of the citation. For books, the author's name, title, publication information, and page number are distinct components. For articles or chapters within a larger work, the title of the article or chapter is usually in quotation marks, followed by the title of the larger work (e.g., journal or edited book) in italics, and then publication details and page numbers. The precise formatting depends on the source material being cited.

The Role of the Bibliography

Following the main text, the bibliography in the NB system provides a comprehensive, alphabetical list of all sources cited within the notes. Unlike the notes, which might contain full details for the first citation and shortened versions thereafter, the bibliography entries are always complete. This allows readers to easily locate and consult the original sources without having to cross-reference extensive notes.

The structure of a bibliography entry closely mirrors that of a full note, but with key differences in punctuation and order. For instance, in a bibliography entry for a book, the author's last name typically comes first, followed by a comma, then the first name. The title is italicized, followed by a period. Publication information, including place, publisher, and year, is presented, and the entry concludes with a period. The entire bibliography is alphabetized by the author's last name, providing a convenient reference for further research.

The Author-Date System Explained

The Author-Date (AD) system within the Chicago Manual of Style is favored in disciplines where it is common to refer to sources by author and date of publication directly within the text. This system aims to provide immediate context for the information being presented by signaling the source and its publication year as the reader engages with the material. It is a more streamlined approach for in-text referencing compared to the detailed notes of the NB system.

In the Author-Date system, in-text citations consist of the author's last name and the year of publication, enclosed in parentheses. If a specific page number is being referenced, it is added after the year, separated by a comma. This parenthetical citation directly follows the material being attributed, allowing for quick identification of the source. This method is particularly useful in scientific and social science writing, where the timeliness and origin of research findings are often paramount.

In-Text Citations in Author-Date

The core of the Author-Date system lies in its concise in-text citations. When referencing a source, a writer inserts the author's last name and the publication year within parentheses. For example, (Smith 2020). If a specific passage or quotation is being used, the page number is appended: (Smith 2020, 45). This brief notation immediately directs the reader to the corresponding full entry in the reference list.

There are variations for integrating these citations smoothly into the prose. For instance, if the author's name is already part of the sentence, only the year needs to be placed in parentheses: As Smith (2020) argued, This flexibility helps maintain the flow of the writing while still providing essential source information. The key is to ensure that every piece of information derived from an external source is clearly attributed with an in-text citation.

The Reference List

Complementing the Author-Date in-text citations is the reference list, which appears at the end of the document. This list is an alphabetical compilation of all the sources cited in the body of the work. Unlike the bibliography in the NB system, the reference list in the AD system typically does not include all the publication details in the same way as the first note in the NB system, but it provides all the necessary information to identify and locate the sources.

Each entry in the reference list includes the author's full name, the year of publication (placed prominently), the title of the work, and publication information. For books, this includes the publisher. For articles, it includes the journal title, volume, issue number, and page range. The alphabetical ordering by author's last name facilitates easy look-up, allowing readers to find the full bibliographic details for any source mentioned parenthetically in the text. The format of these entries is standardized within Chicago style, ensuring consistency across the reference list.

Crafting Chicago Style Citations: Key Components

Regardless of whether you are using the Notes-Bibliography or Author-Date system, crafting accurate Chicago style citations involves understanding the essential components that identify a source. These components work together to provide the reader with enough information to locate the original material. The specific order and punctuation may vary slightly between the two systems and depending on the type of source, but the core elements remain consistent.

Key components typically include the author's name, the title of the work, publication information (publisher, place, date), and locational information (page numbers, volume, issue). Mastering the precise inclusion and formatting of these elements is fundamental to effective Chicago manual citation practice.

Author Information

The author's name is a primary identifier for any source. In Chicago style, the convention for presenting author names differs slightly between notes/bibliography and the reference list in the AD system. In notes and the bibliography of the NB system, the author's first name typically precedes their last name (e.g., Jane Austen). In the reference list of the AD system and for bibliography entries in the NB system, the author's last name is usually listed first, followed by their first name (e.g., Austen, Jane).

When there are multiple authors, Chicago style has specific rules for how many names to list and how to punctuate them. For two authors, both are typically listed. For three or more authors, usually only the first author's name is listed, followed by "et al." (an abbreviation for *et alia*, meaning "and others") in the in-text citations and notes. The bibliography or reference list may list all authors or follow a similar convention depending on the specific edition of the Manual and the context.

Title of the Work

The title of a source is another critical element for its identification. The way a title is presented—whether italicized or enclosed in quotation marks—depends on the type of source. Generally, titles of larger, independent works, such as books, journals, and websites, are italicized. Titles of shorter, self-contained works that are part of a larger whole, such as articles, chapters, essays, and poems, are typically enclosed in quotation marks.

For example, a book titled "The History of Chicago" would have its title italicized: *The History of Chicago*. An article within that book, perhaps titled "Early Settlement Patterns," would have its title in quotation marks: "Early Settlement Patterns." This distinction is crucial for clarity and adheres to the stylistic conventions of Chicago manual citation.

Publication Details and Locators

Publication details provide essential context about where and when a source was made available. For books, this includes the place of publication, the publisher's name, and the year of publication. For articles in journals, it includes the journal title, volume number,

issue number, and the page range of the article. For online sources, it might include the website name, URL, and access date.

Locators, such as page numbers, are vital for directing readers to specific information within a source. In the NB system, page numbers are a primary component of footnotes and endnotes. In the AD system, they are included in the parenthetical in-text citations. The precise format for these details—including the use of abbreviations like "p." for page and "pp." for pages—must be followed consistently according to the Chicago manual citation guidelines.

Common Source Types in Chicago Style

Effectively citing various types of sources is a fundamental aspect of mastering Chicago manual citation. The style guide provides detailed instructions for a wide range of materials, from traditional books and journal articles to newer digital formats. Each source type requires specific formatting to ensure clarity and accuracy, allowing readers to easily locate the original information.

Understanding the nuances of citing different sources is essential for academic integrity and professional presentation. Below are some of the most commonly encountered source types and their general citation principles in Chicago style.

Books

Citing books is a frequent task for writers. For a single-author book, a full note in the NB system would typically include: Author First Name Last Name, Title of Book (Place of Publication: Publisher, Year), page number. For example: Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (New York: Penguin Classics, 2003), 55.

In the AD system, the reference list entry for the same book would be: Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice*. New York: Penguin Classics, 2003. The in-text citation would be (Austen 2003, 55). For edited volumes, the editor(s) are cited, and for multi-volume works, the specific volume is indicated.

Journal Articles

Journal articles are a vital source of current research. In the NB system, a full note for a journal article would generally look like this: Author First Name Last Name, "Title of Article," Title of Journal Volume, no. Issue (Year): page numbers. For example: John Smith, "The Evolution of Citation Styles," *Journal of Academic Writing* 25, no. 2 (2022): 112-130.

In the AD system's reference list: Smith, John. "The Evolution of Citation Styles." *Journal of Academic Writing* 25, no. 2 (2022): 112-130. The in-text citation would be (Smith 2022, 115).

Websites and Online Sources

Citing online sources, including websites and web pages, requires careful attention to

available information. For a webpage, a full note in the NB system might include: Author First Name Last Name (if available), "Title of Page," Name of Website, publication or last modified date (if available), accessed Month Day, Year, URL. For example: John Doe, "Understanding Chicago Style," Academia Hub, updated October 15, 2023, accessed November 10, 2023, <https://www.academiahub.com/chicago-style>.

In the AD system's reference list: Doe, John. "Understanding Chicago Style." Academia Hub. Updated October 15, 2023. Accessed November 10, 2023. <https://www.academiahub.com/chicago-style>. The in-text citation would be (Doe 2023).

Footnotes and Endnotes in Chicago Style

Footnotes and endnotes are the primary method of citation within the Notes-Bibliography (NB) system of the Chicago Manual of Style. They serve a dual purpose: to provide the reader with immediate access to source information and to allow for supplementary commentary or elaboration without disrupting the flow of the main text. The choice between footnotes and endnotes is largely a matter of preference and publisher guidelines, with footnotes appearing at the bottom of the page and endnotes collected at the end of the document.

Both systems rely on superscript numbers placed sequentially within the text to indicate the presence of a note. These numbers correspond directly to the numbered entries in the footnote or endnote section. The accuracy and completeness of these notes are paramount for upholding scholarly standards and giving credit to original authors.

Formatting Footnotes

When formatting footnotes, the superscript number is placed at the end of a sentence or clause, after any punctuation. The corresponding footnote entry at the bottom of the page begins with the same number, followed by a period, and then the citation details. The first time a source is cited in a footnote, the entry should be complete, providing all necessary bibliographic information.

For example, a full footnote for a book would be: 1. Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (New York: Penguin Classics, 2003), 55. Subsequent citations of the same work are typically shortened to include only the author's last name, a shortened title, and the page number, such as: 2. Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 102. This "short-form" citation is essential for conciseness in extensive notes.

Formatting Endnotes

Endnotes function identically to footnotes in terms of the information they convey and the citation conventions they follow. The primary difference is their placement: endnotes are collected in a section at the end of the main text, before the bibliography. Each note is numbered sequentially, corresponding to the superscript numbers in the body of the work.

The formatting of an individual endnote is the same as its footnote counterpart. The first mention of a source provides a full bibliographic citation, while subsequent mentions use the short-form citation. The collection of endnotes serves the same function as

footnotes—to provide source attribution and supplementary material—but presents it in a consolidated location, which some writers and readers find less intrusive to the reading experience.

In-Text Citations in Chicago Style

In-text citations are brief references embedded directly within the body of a written work, serving to acknowledge the sources of borrowed ideas, quotations, or paraphrased information. Chicago style offers two distinct methods for in-text citations, corresponding to its two main citation systems: the Notes-Bibliography (NB) system and the Author-Date (AD) system. The choice of method is dictated by the overall citation style being employed.

Whether using notes or parenthetical citations, the fundamental purpose remains the same: to provide immediate attribution to the original source and guide the reader to more detailed bibliographic information. Accuracy and consistency in these in-text references are crucial for maintaining academic integrity and avoiding plagiarism.

Notes as In-Text Citations (NB System)

In the Notes-Bibliography system, the in-text citation is represented by a superscript Arabic numeral that is placed within the text, usually at the end of a sentence or clause, and immediately following any punctuation. This numeral directs the reader to a corresponding note, either a footnote at the bottom of the page or an endnote at the end of the document. The note itself contains the bibliographic information for the source.

As discussed earlier, the first note for a source provides a full citation, while subsequent notes use a shortened format. This system allows for detailed notes and commentary to be included, but it requires readers to look away from the main text to consult the notes. The use of superscript numbers is the universal indicator of an in-text citation within this Chicago style system.

Parenthetical Citations (AD System)

The Author-Date system employs parenthetical in-text citations, which are brief notations placed directly within the text, usually at the end of a sentence or clause. These citations typically consist of the author's last name and the year of publication. If a specific passage is being referenced, the page number is also included. For example: (Smith 2020) or (Smith 2020, 45).

These parenthetical citations are designed to be unobtrusive yet informative, allowing readers to quickly identify the source and publication date of the information. If the author's name is mentioned in the sentence, only the year needs to be included in parentheses: Smith (2020) argues that... . These brief citations correspond to full entries in the reference list at the end of the paper.

Bibliographies and Reference Lists

At the conclusion of any work that uses Chicago style, a comprehensive list of all sources consulted or cited is provided. This list serves as an invaluable resource for readers, enabling them to verify information, explore topics further, and understand the basis of the writer's research. Chicago style distinguishes between a "bibliography" (used with the Notes-Bibliography system) and a "reference list" (used with the Author-Date system), though their fundamental purpose is the same: to provide full bibliographic details for cited sources.

The organization and formatting of these concluding lists are crucial for adherence to Chicago manual citation standards. They allow for a systematic and accessible overview of the material that informs the writer's work.

The Bibliography (NB System)

In the Notes-Bibliography system, the bibliography is an alphabetical list of all sources that have been cited in the footnotes or endnotes. It is typically arranged alphabetically by the author's last name. Each entry in the bibliography provides a complete bibliographic description of the source, ensuring that readers have all the necessary information to locate it.

While the content of a bibliography entry is similar to a full note, there are key differences in formatting. For instance, in the bibliography, the author's last name is usually listed first, followed by a comma, then the author's first name. The title of the book is italicized, and publication information follows. The bibliography acts as a consolidated record of all referenced works, offering a convenient and thorough reference for the reader.

The Reference List (AD System)

The reference list, used in conjunction with the Author-Date system, is also an alphabetical compilation of all sources cited within the text. Like the bibliography, it is organized alphabetically by author's last name. Each entry in the reference list provides complete publication details for the source, matching the information used in the parenthetical in-text citations.

A typical reference list entry for a book includes the author's last name, first name, the year of publication (often placed prominently after the author's name), the full title of the book, and publication information. For articles, it includes journal details, volume, issue, and page numbers. The reference list is crucial because it directly corresponds to the brief parenthetical citations in the text, allowing readers to easily connect the in-text reference to the full bibliographic details.

Special Considerations for Chicago Style Citation

While the core principles of Chicago manual citation are well-defined, writers often encounter unique situations that require special attention. These can include citing sources with no author, citing indirect sources, or dealing with the complexities of citing

multimedia content. Adhering to specific guidelines for these less common scenarios ensures thoroughness and accuracy in your citations.

The Chicago Manual of Style provides guidance for a wide array of publishing and research scenarios. Understanding these special considerations can help you navigate challenging citation tasks with confidence and precision.

Citing Sources with No Author

When a source lacks a listed author, Chicago style dictates that the citation should begin with the title of the work. In the NB system, this means the footnote or endnote would start with the title, followed by publication information. In the AD system, the reference list entry would also begin with the title, and the in-text citation would use a shortened version of the title instead of an author's name.

For example, an anonymous book might be cited in a note as: *The Universal Guide to Gardening* (London: Green Thumb Press, 1998), 25. In an AD reference list, it would appear as: *The Universal Guide to Gardening*. London: Green Thumb Press, 1998. The in-text citation would then use the shortened title: (Universal Guide to Gardening, 25).

Indirect Sources

An indirect source refers to a work that is cited in another work, where the original source is not directly consulted by the writer. In Chicago style, it is always preferable to consult the original source directly. However, when this is not possible, you should cite the secondary source that you did consult, making it clear that it is an indirect citation.

In a note (NB system), you would typically cite the secondary source and include information indicating that the material was from a source mentioned within it. For example: John Doe, *Research Methods* (New York: Academic Publishers, 2019), 78, quoted in Jane Smith, *Academic Integrity* (Chicago: University Press, 2022), 45. The in-text citation in the AD system would follow a similar pattern, indicating the original source and the secondary source consulted.

Citing Multimedia and Digital Content

The digital age has introduced a vast array of multimedia content, from podcasts and videos to social media posts and interactive websites. Chicago style offers guidance for citing these evolving forms of media. The principles remain consistent: provide enough information for the reader to locate and access the content.

For a podcast episode, for instance, a note might include the host(s), episode title, podcast series title, date of publication, and URL. A video citation might include the creator, title, platform, date of upload, and URL. The key is to be as specific as possible, including details like timestamps for video or audio segments to pinpoint the exact location of the referenced material.

Mastering Chicago Manual Citation for Academic Success

Mastering the Chicago Manual of Style citation is an investment in academic and professional credibility. While it may seem daunting at first, a thorough understanding of its principles, coupled with consistent practice, leads to clear, precise, and authoritative scholarly work. Both the Notes-Bibliography and Author-Date systems, when applied correctly, serve the essential function of attributing sources and enabling further research.

By paying close attention to the details of formatting, punctuation, and the specific requirements for different source types, writers can confidently navigate the complexities of Chicago style. The goal is not merely to follow a set of rules, but to engage in the ethical practice of scholarship, giving due credit to the intellectual contributions of others and building a robust foundation for your own arguments and discoveries. Consistent application and occasional reference to the Manual itself will solidify your proficiency in Chicago manual citation.

FAQ on Chicago Manual Citation

Q: What is the main difference between the Notes-Bibliography system and the Author-Date system in Chicago style?

A: The primary difference lies in how sources are cited within the text. The Notes-Bibliography (NB) system uses footnotes or endnotes, while the Author-Date (AD) system uses parenthetical in-text citations consisting of the author's last name and the year of publication. The NB system is more common in the humanities, and the AD system is more prevalent in the sciences and social sciences.

Q: When should I use footnotes versus endnotes in the Notes-Bibliography system?

A: The choice between footnotes and endnotes is largely a matter of editorial preference or institutional guidelines. Footnotes appear at the bottom of the page where the reference is made, providing immediate context for the reader. Endnotes are collected at the end of the document, which can sometimes make the main text appear cleaner. Both systems are considered equally valid within Chicago style.

Q: How do I cite a source when there are three or more authors in Chicago style?

A: For sources with three or more authors, Chicago style generally dictates listing only the first author's name followed by "et al." (an abbreviation for et alia, meaning "and others")

in both the in-text citations (for the AD system) and in the notes (for the NB system). In the bibliography or reference list, it is often recommended to list all authors, though some publishers may allow the "et al." convention.

Q: What is the correct way to format a URL in Chicago style?

A: In Chicago style, URLs are typically presented as live links if the document is intended for online viewing. They are generally placed at the end of the citation and are not enclosed in angle brackets or preceded by "Accessed on" unless specifically required by the Manual for certain online source types or when an access date is crucial. The Manual advises against including "http://" or "https://" if the URL is already clearly a web address.

Q: How do I cite a quotation from a book in Chicago style using the Notes-Bibliography system?

A: To cite a quotation from a book using the Notes-Bibliography system, you would use a superscript number in your text at the end of the quoted material. The corresponding footnote or endnote would then provide the author's name (first name first for the first citation), the italicized title of the book, the place of publication, publisher, year, and the specific page number(s) of the quotation. For subsequent citations of the same work, a shortened note format (author's last name, shortened title, page number) is used.

Q: What information should be included in a Chicago style reference list entry for a journal article?

A: A Chicago style reference list entry for a journal article typically includes the author's full name, the year of publication, the title of the article (in quotation marks), the title of the journal (italicized), the volume number, the issue number, and the page range of the article. For online articles, a DOI or URL may also be included.

Q: Can I use Chicago style for my thesis or dissertation?

A: Yes, Chicago style is widely accepted for theses and dissertations, particularly in disciplines that favor the Notes-Bibliography system. However, it is crucial to consult your specific university or department's guidelines, as they may have preferred citation styles or specific modifications to Chicago style they require you to follow.

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