

chicago manual indirect source citation

Mastering the Chicago Manual Indirect Source Citation: A Comprehensive Guide

chicago manual indirect source citation can seem like a complex hurdle for students and researchers, but understanding its principles is crucial for academic integrity and clear communication. This guide delves deep into the nuances of citing sources indirectly, a common practice when direct access to an original source is unavailable or impractical. We will explore why and when to use indirect citations, the specific formatting requirements according to the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS), and provide practical examples to ensure your scholarly work adheres to these rigorous standards. Mastering this technique will enhance the credibility of your research and demonstrate your commitment to proper attribution.

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Understanding Indirect Citations in Chicago Style

An indirect citation, often referred to as citing a source through another source, occurs when you find information in one publication that references or quotes a different, original publication. Instead of directly consulting the original work, you are relying on a secondary source that has already done the work of referencing it. This is a common scenario in academic research, especially when dealing with older texts, obscure articles, or information that has been widely discussed and summarized by later scholars. The Chicago Manual of Style, a widely respected citation guide, provides clear instructions on how to handle these situations to maintain clarity and prevent misinformation.

The core principle behind any citation, including indirect ones, is to give credit to the original author and to provide enough information for your reader to locate the source themselves. When you use an indirect citation, you are essentially bridging two levels of

attribution. You are acknowledging the author of the secondary source you consulted, but you are also indicating that the information you are presenting originates from a different, primary source. This distinction is vital for academic honesty and for allowing your audience to trace the lineage of ideas.

When to Use an Indirect Citation

There are several legitimate reasons why a researcher might resort to using an indirect citation. The most frequent scenario is when the original source is difficult or impossible to obtain. This could be due to its rarity, being out of print, housed in an archive not accessible to you, or simply not available through standard library channels. In such cases, a reputable secondary source that quotes or discusses the original work becomes your only avenue for incorporating that information into your research.

Another common situation arises when a key piece of information or a compelling quote is found in a widely recognized secondary work that has extensively analyzed or summarized the primary source. For instance, a seminal historical analysis might quote extensively from a contemporary diary that is itself a rare manuscript. Citing the secondary source that provides this access is often more practical and efficient than attempting to locate and transcribe the original document, provided the secondary source is reliable and the quoting is accurate.

Consider these specific instances where an indirect citation is appropriate:

- The original source is no longer in publication and is not available in digital archives.
- The original source is a manuscript or archival material that is not publicly accessible.
- The information is presented in a secondary source in a way that is more concise or easier to understand than in the original, and the secondary source accurately reflects the original content.
- You are referencing a famous quote that is frequently cited in secondary literature, and the secondary source provides convenient access and context.

The Mechanics of Chicago Manual Indirect Source Citation

The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) has specific guidelines for how to format indirect citations. The fundamental rule is to cite the source you actually consulted, while also indicating that the information originates from another source. This dual attribution is crucial for transparency. Both the footnote or endnote and the bibliography entry will reflect this structure, though they do so in slightly different ways.

In the note (footnote or endnote), you will typically include the information for the secondary source you used, followed by a phrase that signifies the indirect nature of the citation. Common phrases include "as quoted in" or "cited in." This phrase connects the reader to the original, albeit indirectly accessed, source. The note should provide the full bibliographic details of the secondary source, including author, title, publication information, and page number(s).

For the bibliography, you will list the secondary source that you consulted. The Chicago style generally does not require you to list the original, unaccessed source in your bibliography unless you are doing extensive research on that particular item and want to provide context. The primary focus for the bibliography is to list the works you actually used to gather your information, making it a record of your direct engagement with texts.

Footnotes and Endnotes for Indirect Sources

When employing the notes-and-bibliography system in Chicago style, indirect citations are handled with specific phrasing within the footnotes or endnotes. The goal is to clearly inform the reader that the information presented comes from a secondary source, which in turn is referencing a primary one. The most common way to achieve this is by using the phrase "as quoted in" or "cited in."

Let's consider an example. Suppose you find a quote from a historical figure in a biography written by John Smith, and the biography itself quotes from a letter written by the historical figure. You did not see the original letter; you saw the quote in Smith's biography. Your note would look something like this:

- 1. Historical Figure, letter to [recipient], [date], as quoted in John Smith, *Biography of Historical Figure* (City: Publisher, Year), 123.

In this example, "Historical Figure, letter to [recipient], [date]" represents the original source, and "as quoted in John Smith, *Biography of Historical Figure* (City: Publisher, Year), 123" indicates the secondary source you consulted and the specific page number where the quote appeared.

It is essential to be as precise as possible with the information for both the original and secondary sources. If the secondary source provides details about the original source (e.g., the date of the letter, the recipient), include them. If the secondary source does not provide these details, you note what is available.

The Bibliography Entry for Indirect Sources

In the Chicago Manual of Style, the bibliography primarily lists the sources you have directly consulted. Therefore, when you use an indirect citation, the bibliography entry will typically be for the secondary source that you read. The original source, which you did not access directly, is usually not included in the bibliography.

Continuing with the previous example, your bibliography entry would focus solely on John Smith's biography. The entry would follow the standard Chicago style format for a book:

- Smith, John. *Biography of Historical Figure*. City: Publisher, Year.

This is because the bibliography is meant to be a record of the works that directly informed your research. While the footnote or endnote clearly indicates the indirect nature of the citation, the bibliography provides the reader with a list of books and articles that you, the author, have read and drawn from.

However, there can be nuances. If your research heavily relies on understanding the relationship between a primary source and its secondary commentary, or if the secondary source provides critical analysis of the primary source that is central to your argument, you might consider including the original source in your bibliography with a note about its indirect use. This is less common but can be employed for thoroughness in specific academic contexts. Always prioritize clarity and directness for your reader.

Common Pitfalls and Best Practices

Navigating indirect citations can lead to several common errors. One of the most frequent mistakes is failing to clearly indicate that a source is indirect. This can mislead readers into believing you have consulted the original material, which can be problematic if there are any inaccuracies in the secondary source's quotation or interpretation of the original.

Another pitfall is providing insufficient information about either the original or the secondary source. Vague references make it difficult for your reader to verify the information or to track down the source themselves. Always aim for completeness in your citations, whether in notes or the bibliography.

To avoid these issues, adhere to the following best practices:

- **Always Verify (If Possible):** If you can access the original source after finding a quote in a secondary source, do so. Direct citation is always preferable.
- **Be Explicit:** Clearly use phrases like "as quoted in" or "cited in" in your notes.
- **Provide Full Details:** Include all available publication information for the secondary source.
- **Document Accurately:** Ensure the page numbers you cite in your notes correspond to where the quote or information appears in the secondary source.
- **Consult the CMOS:** When in doubt, refer to the latest edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style* for definitive guidance.
- **Prioritize Originality:** Make indirect citations the exception, not the rule, in your research.

Examples of Chicago Manual Indirect Source Citation

To solidify your understanding, let's look at a few more practical examples of Chicago manual indirect source citation. These examples cover different types of materials to illustrate the flexibility of the system.

Example 1: Indirect Citation of a Journal Article Quoted in a Book

Suppose you are reading a book by Sarah Lee and it quotes a passage from a journal article by David Chen. You did not read Chen's article directly.

- **Note:** David Chen, "The Impact of Industrialization," *Journal of Economic History* 45, no. 2 (1985): 210, as quoted in Sarah Lee, *Modern Economies: A Retrospective* (New York: Academic Press, 2010), 75.
- **Bibliography Entry:** Lee, Sarah. *Modern Economies: A Retrospective*. New York: Academic Press, 2010.

Here, the note correctly identifies Chen's article as the original source and Lee's book as the secondary source you consulted, including the specific page numbers for each. The bibliography only lists Lee's book, the source you directly used.

Example 2: Indirect Citation of a Speech Quoted in a Biography

Imagine you are researching a historical figure and find a quote from one of their speeches in a biography written by Emily Carter. You do not have access to the original transcript of the speech.

- **Note:** [Name of Historical Figure], speech at [Event], [Date], as quoted in Emily Carter, *The Life of [Historical Figure]* (London: Biographies Ltd., 2015), 150.
- **Bibliography Entry:** Carter, Emily. *The Life of [Historical Figure]*. London: Biographies Ltd., 2015.

This example shows how to cite a speech indirectly. If the biography provides details about the speech (like the event and date), include them. The bibliography remains focused on the biography.

Example 3: Indirect Citation of a Primary Source Quoted in a Review Article

You find a description of a painting in a review article that discusses the artist's original artist statement. You did not see the artist statement directly.

- **Note:** [Artist Name], artist statement, [Date or context], as quoted in Mark Johnson, "Review of [Exhibition Title]," *Art Monthly*, no. 350 (October 2011): 45.
- **Bibliography Entry:** Johnson, Mark. "Review of [Exhibition Title]." *Art Monthly*, no. 350 (October 2011): 42–47.

This instance demonstrates how to handle an artist's statement indirectly. The note credits the artist while clearly citing the review article as the source of that information. The bibliography lists the review article, which is the material you engaged with.

FAQ: Chicago Manual Indirect Source Citation

Q: What is the primary difference between a direct and an indirect citation in Chicago style?

A: A direct citation refers to information you have found by consulting the original source itself. An indirect citation, on the other hand, involves referencing information that you found in a secondary source, where that secondary source is quoting or discussing a primary source that you have not accessed directly.

Q: When is it acceptable to use an indirect citation according to Chicago style?

A: It is acceptable to use an indirect citation when the original source is unavailable, inaccessible, or impractical to obtain. This often occurs with rare books, archival materials, or when a reputable secondary source provides clear and accurate quotation or summary of the original work.

Q: How should an indirect citation be formatted in a Chicago style footnote or endnote?

A: In a footnote or endnote, you cite the secondary source you consulted and indicate the original source with a phrase like "as quoted in" or "cited in." For example: Original Author, Title of Original Work, as quoted in Secondary Author, Title of Secondary Work (Publisher, Year), page number.

Q: What information should be included in the bibliography for an indirect citation?

A: Typically, the bibliography entry should only include the secondary source that you directly consulted. The original source, which you did not access, is generally not included in the bibliography.

Q: Can I use an indirect citation if I have the original source available, but it's easier to find the quote in a secondary source?

A: While it is technically possible, Chicago style generally prefers direct citation whenever the original source is accessible. Using an indirect citation when a direct one is possible can raise questions about your research methodology and may be seen as less thorough.

Q: What are some common mistakes to avoid when using indirect Chicago style citations?

A: Common mistakes include failing to clearly indicate the indirect nature of the citation, not providing enough bibliographic detail for the secondary source, and omitting the "as quoted in" or similar phrase that signals the indirect sourcing. It's also important to ensure the page number cited in the note refers to the location in the secondary source.

Q: Is there a specific phrase required by Chicago style for indirect citations?

A: Chicago style suggests phrases like "as quoted in" or "cited in." The key is to use clear language that alerts the reader that you are referencing a source through another source.

Q: How do I handle citing an indirect source if the secondary source doesn't provide full details about the original source?

A: In such cases, include all the details about the original source that are available in the secondary source, and then proceed with the citation of the secondary source as usual. Be as precise as possible with the information you do have.

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