

chicago manual of style citing graphics

chicago manual of style citing graphics provides a comprehensive framework for properly attributing visual elements in academic and professional writing. Understanding these guidelines ensures academic integrity, avoids plagiarism, and enhances the credibility of your work. This article delves into the nuances of citing various types of graphics, including figures, tables, charts, and images, according to the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS), 17th edition. We will explore the essential components of a graphic citation, the differences between note-style and bibliography-style citations, and best practices for formatting these references to maintain clarity and professionalism.

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Understanding the Purpose of Citing Graphics

Properly citing graphics is fundamental to scholarly and professional communication. It acknowledges the original creators of visual data, preventing plagiarism and giving credit where it is due. Beyond ethical considerations, citing graphics allows readers to locate the source material for further exploration, verification, or deeper understanding. This practice upholds the integrity of the research process and builds trust between the author and their audience.

The Chicago Manual of Style, a widely respected authority on writing and citation, offers detailed guidance on how to integrate and cite visual elements seamlessly within a text. This ensures that the reader can easily distinguish between original content and borrowed material, whether it's a statistical table, a complex diagram, or a compelling photograph.

Key Components of a Graphic Citation

Regardless of the specific type of graphic, certain core elements are consistently required when citing in Chicago style. These components provide the necessary information for readers to identify and retrieve the original source. A thorough citation builds a bridge between your text and the origin of the visual information.

The essential elements typically include:

- Author or Creator: The individual or organization responsible for creating the graphic.

- Title: The specific title of the graphic, if one exists.
- Date of Publication or Creation: The year the graphic was published or created.
- Publisher or Source: The name of the book, journal, website, or other publication where the graphic appeared.
- Page Number or URL: The specific location of the graphic within the source, or the web address if accessed online.

Citing Figures and Illustrations

Figures, in Chicago style, encompass a broad category of visual elements that are not tables. This includes graphs, charts, diagrams, maps, drawings, and photographs. When incorporating a figure into your text, it is crucial to label it sequentially (e.g., Figure 1, Figure 2) and to provide a caption that clearly describes its content. The citation itself then follows this descriptive information.

When citing a figure that appears in a book or journal, the note will typically include the author's name (if applicable), the title of the work, publication details, and the page number. For online figures, the citation will include a URL and access date. The goal is to provide enough information for the reader to find the exact graphic without ambiguity.

Detailed Note Format for Figures

In the note-style system, a footnote or endnote for a figure will often look something like this: For a graphic within a book, the note might read: Author First Name Last Name, "Title of Article" (if applicable), Title of Book, (City: Publisher, Year), page number where figure appears, ill. [or fig.] [Figure Number]: [Brief Description of Figure]. For an online source, it would be similar but include the URL and accessed date.

Bibliography Entry for Figures

The corresponding bibliography entry condenses this information. It will list the author's last name first, followed by their first name. Then, the title of the work, publication details, and the specific location information, including the figure number and a brief description. Consistency in how you present these elements is key.

Citing Tables

Tables are distinct from figures in that they present data in rows and columns. Like figures, tables are numbered sequentially (Table 1, Table 2) and should have a clear, descriptive title or caption. The citation for a table follows a similar structure to that of a figure, with a focus on accurately identifying the source of the data.

When presenting a table that you have created yourself based on existing data, you should still cite the original source of that data. This is a crucial aspect of academic honesty, as you are not the originator of the underlying information, even if you have reorganized it.

Formatting Table Citations

The note for a table will typically include the source of the table, followed by the page number where it appears. For instance, a note might read: Source: Author Last Name, Title of Work (City: Publisher, Year), page number, tab. [or table] [Table Number]: [Brief Description of Table]. The bibliography entry will mirror this but follow standard bibliography format with the author's last name first.

Citing Images from Various Sources

The origin of an image significantly impacts how it is cited. Images can come from books, journals, websites, databases, personal collections, or archives. Each source type requires a slightly different approach to ensure all necessary attribution is provided.

Images from Books and Journals

For images found within published works, the citation will include the author of the work, the title of the work, publication details, and the page number or figure number. If the image itself has a specific creator credited separately from the author of the text, that information should also be included.

Images from Websites and Online Databases

Citing online images requires accuracy in providing the URL and the date the image was accessed. If the website provides information about the creator or copyright holder, this should also be included in the citation. For images from online databases, the database name and a persistent URL, if available, are important.

Images from Archives and Special Collections

When citing images from physical archives or special collections, you will need to provide the name of the archive, the collection name, and the specific item or file number. This allows researchers to

locate the physical item within the archive.

Note-Style vs. Bibliography-Style for Graphics

Chicago style offers two primary citation systems: the notes-bibliography system and the author-date system. When it comes to citing graphics, both systems require similar information, but the presentation differs significantly. The notes-bibliography system uses footnotes or endnotes for immediate citation and a bibliography at the end of the work for a full list of sources.

In the notes-bibliography system, each graphic cited in the text will have a corresponding note, providing a full or shortened citation depending on whether it's the first mention. The bibliography will then list all cited sources alphabetically by author's last name. This system is common in history, literature, and the arts.

Applying Note-Style to Graphics

For a note-style citation of a graphic, the first note will be relatively detailed. For subsequent mentions of the same graphic, a shortened note format can be used. For example, a first note might include the creator, title, source, and location. A shortened note might just include the creator and a shortened title or description, along with the page number.

Applying Bibliography-Style to Graphics

In the bibliography, the entry for a graphic will be presented in a standardized format, usually starting with the creator's last name. The specific format will depend on whether the graphic is from a book, journal, website, or other source. The bibliography provides a comprehensive, alphabetized list for readers to consult.

Best Practices for Chicago Manual of Style Citing Graphics

Adhering to best practices ensures that your citations are clear, accurate, and consistently applied. This enhances the reader's experience and strengthens the credibility of your work. Consistency is paramount; once you choose a citation style (e.g., note-style or author-date), stick with it throughout your document.

Key best practices include:

- Numbering graphics sequentially and consecutively.

- Providing clear, concise captions for each graphic.
- Ensuring that every graphic is mentioned in the text.
- Placing citations immediately after the graphic or within the caption.
- Verifying the accuracy of all bibliographic details.
- Consulting the latest edition of the Chicago Manual of Style for definitive guidance.

Common Pitfalls to Avoid

Even with careful attention, writers can fall into common traps when citing graphics. Being aware of these potential issues can help you avoid them. One of the most frequent mistakes is the omission of crucial citation details, leaving readers unable to trace the source.

Other common errors include:

- Failing to cite graphics that are not your own original creation.
- Inconsistent formatting of citations throughout the document.
- Incorrectly identifying the author or creator of a graphic.
- Providing incomplete URLs or outdated access dates for online sources.
- Not distinguishing between figures and tables in numbering and captions.

By understanding and diligently applying the Chicago Manual of Style's guidelines for citing graphics, you can ensure that your work is both ethically sound and professionally presented. This attention to detail contributes significantly to the overall quality and trustworthiness of your academic or professional output, allowing readers to engage more deeply with the visual information you present.

FAQ

Q: How do I cite a graphic I found online that doesn't have a clear author listed?

A: If no author or creator is listed for an online graphic, you should begin the citation with the title of the graphic. If there is no title, use a descriptive phrase in brackets, such as [Uncaptioned Image]. Always include the name of the website, the publication date (if available), and the full URL, along with the date you accessed the image.

Q: What is the difference between a figure and a table citation in Chicago style?

A: In Chicago style, both figures and tables are numbered sequentially (e.g., Figure 1, Table 1) and require a caption. However, tables are specifically defined as presenting data in rows and columns, while figures encompass all other types of illustrations, including graphs, charts, maps, and photographs. The citation format itself is similar, but the designation "Figure" or "Table" in the caption and note is crucial for distinction.

Q: Should I cite a graphic if I have modified it?

A: Yes, even if you have modified a graphic (e.g., changed colors, added annotations), you must still cite the original source. In your citation or caption, you should indicate that the graphic has been modified. For example, you might add a note such as "Adapted from [Original Source Information]" or "Modified by author based on [Original Source Information]."

Q: How do I cite a graphic that appears on multiple pages within a single source?

A: When a graphic appears on multiple pages, you should cite the page number where the graphic is first introduced or most prominently displayed. If the graphic is referenced throughout a chapter or section, you can cite the range of pages. However, for clarity, it's often best to cite the specific page number where the graphic itself is located, or where it is initially presented.

Q: What if the graphic is a photograph I took myself?

A: If you are the sole creator of a photograph used in your work, you do not need to cite it as a borrowed source in the traditional sense. However, you should still label it as a Figure (e.g., Figure 1) and provide a descriptive caption. If you are using a photograph that you have the copyright to, but it was taken by someone else under your direction, you may need to attribute it accordingly based on your agreement.

Q: How do I cite a graphic from a PowerPoint presentation?

A: Citing a graphic from a PowerPoint presentation follows similar principles to citing online materials. You will need to identify the creator of the presentation, the title of the presentation, the date it was created or presented, and the platform where it was accessed (e.g., university website, SlideShare). If you have a direct link to the presentation or a specific slide, include that URL and the access date.

Q: When is a shortened note used for citing a graphic in Chicago style?

A: In the notes-bibliography system, a shortened note is used for subsequent references to a graphic that has already been fully cited in a previous note. The shortened note typically includes the creator's last name, a shortened title of the work, and the page number where the graphic appears.

This avoids repetition and keeps your notes concise.

Q: What does "Source: [Author], [Title], [Page]" mean in a Chicago style graphic citation?

A: This phrase indicates that the graphic (whether a figure or a table) is being attributed to the specified author and work, and that it can be found on that particular page number within that source. It's a concise way to provide attribution within the text or a caption, especially when a full note is not immediately required or when following specific publisher guidelines.

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