

chicago style citation rules

The Chicago Manual of Style is a comprehensive guide for writers, editors, and publishers, and understanding its citation rules is crucial for academic and professional integrity. This article will delve deeply into the intricacies of Chicago style citation, covering its two primary systems: notes and bibliography, and author-date. We will explore the fundamental principles governing both in-text citations and the comprehensive reference lists or bibliographies that accompany them, providing clear examples for various source types. Mastering these Chicago style citation rules ensures proper attribution, avoids plagiarism, and enhances the credibility of your work by allowing readers to easily locate your sources. This guide aims to demystify the process, offering practical advice for navigating different citation scenarios.

Table of Contents

Understanding the Two Chicago Citation Systems

The Notes and Bibliography System Explained

Footnotes and Endnotes in Chicago Style

Crafting a Bibliography in Chicago Style

The Author-Date System Explained

In-Text Citations in the Author-Date System

Creating a Reference List in the Author-Date System

Common Source Types and Their Chicago Style Citation Rules

Citing Books

Citing Articles (Journal and Magazine)

Citing Websites and Online Resources

Citing Other Common Sources

Formatting Considerations for Chicago Style Citations

Consistency and Accuracy in Chicago Style Citation

Understanding the Two Chicago Citation Systems

The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) offers two distinct but equally valid systems for academic and scholarly citation: the Notes and Bibliography system and the Author-Date system. The choice between these systems often depends on the specific discipline or publication venue. The Notes and Bibliography system is traditionally favored in the humanities, such as literature, history, and art history, where it allows for more extensive commentary and elaboration within the footnotes or endnotes. Conversely, the Author-Date system is more commonly found in the social sciences and natural sciences, where it provides a concise and efficient way to link in-text references to a full reference list. Understanding the fundamental differences and applications of each system is the first step toward mastering Chicago style citation rules.

Both systems share the overarching goal of providing clear and accurate attribution for all sources used. They require a consistent format for both the in-text citations and the corresponding bibliography or reference list. The primary distinction lies in how the in-text reference is presented. In the Notes and Bibliography system, brief numbered notes (either footnotes or endnotes) are used to point to the source, while the Author-Date system uses

parenthetical citations within the text itself, typically including the author's last name and the publication year.

The Notes and Bibliography System Explained

The Notes and Bibliography system is characterized by the use of numbered footnotes or endnotes to cite sources directly within the text. Each note corresponds to a superscript number placed immediately after the relevant passage or quote. These notes provide detailed information about the source, including author, title, publication details, and specific page numbers. Following the main body of the text, a comprehensive bibliography lists all sources cited in the notes, typically arranged alphabetically by author's last name.

This system is highly flexible and allows writers to incorporate additional explanations, digressions, or source-specific commentary without disrupting the flow of the main text. The superscript numbers act as signposts, directing the reader to the detailed citation information provided at the bottom of the page (footnotes) or at the end of the document (endnotes). The bibliography, in turn, offers a complete and organized record of all consulted materials, facilitating further research for the reader.

Footnotes and Endnotes in Chicago Style

When using the Notes and Bibliography system, writers have the option of employing either footnotes or endnotes. Footnotes appear at the bottom of the page where the superscript number is located in the text. This proximity allows readers to quickly refer to the source information without having to turn to another section of the document. Endnotes, on the other hand, are compiled at the end of the chapter or the entire work, grouped by page number or simply listed sequentially.

The formatting for footnotes and endnotes is largely identical, with the primary difference being their placement. Both systems require a superscript number in the text, followed by the corresponding note with the same number. The first citation of a source in a note is typically extensive, including all necessary bibliographic details. Subsequent citations of the same source are generally shortened, often using the author's last name, a shortened title, and the page number. This economizes space and reduces redundancy while still providing sufficient information for identification.

Crafting a Bibliography in Chicago Style

The bibliography is an essential component of the Notes and Bibliography system. It serves as a cumulative list of all the sources that have been cited in the footnotes or endnotes. Unlike a works cited page in some other citation styles, a Chicago bibliography may also include sources that were consulted but not directly cited, if the author deems them relevant to the reader's understanding of the topic. However, for most academic papers,

the bibliography should ideally contain only the sources that have been cited in the notes.

Bibliographies in Chicago style are typically arranged in alphabetical order by the author's last name. If a work has no author, it is alphabetized by the first significant word of the title. Each entry in the bibliography follows a standardized format, providing complete bibliographic information for the source. The format for different source types, such as books, articles, and websites, varies slightly but adheres to consistent principles of element order and punctuation. For example, a book entry would generally include the author's name, the full title of the book, publication city, publisher, and year of publication.

The Author-Date System Explained

The Author-Date system, as the name suggests, relies on brief parenthetical citations within the text that include the author's last name and the year of publication. This system is often preferred in scientific and social science fields for its conciseness and ease of use, especially in disciplines with frequent citations. The in-text citation directly links the reader to a corresponding entry in the reference list, which is located at the end of the document.

The core principle here is to provide enough information in the text to quickly identify the source without overwhelming the reader. The parenthetical citation typically appears at the end of a sentence or clause, enclosed in parentheses, and followed by the relevant page number if a direct quote is used. This method ensures that readers can readily track the origin of information presented in the text and easily locate the full bibliographic details in the compiled reference list.

In-Text Citations in the Author-Date System

In the Author-Date system, in-text citations are typically integrated directly into the prose. When quoting, paraphrasing, or referencing information from a source, the author's last name and the year of publication are placed in parentheses. For example, a citation might look like (Smith 2020). If the author's name is already mentioned in the sentence, only the year needs to be included in parentheses, such as Smith (2020) argues that...

When a direct quotation is used, the page number must also be included within the parentheses. This is crucial for allowing readers to find the exact location of the quoted material. The format for a direct quote with a page number would be (Smith 2020, 45). If multiple sources by the same author were published in the same year, Chicago style dictates that lowercase letters are appended to the year to distinguish them (e.g., Smith 2020a, Smith 2020b). This ensures precise identification of the source being referenced.

Creating a Reference List in the Author-Date System

The reference list in the Author-Date system is a comprehensive compilation of all sources

cited in the text. It is located at the end of the document, typically under the heading "References." Similar to the bibliography in the Notes and Bibliography system, the reference list is arranged alphabetically by the author's last name. Each entry provides full bibliographic details for the source, allowing readers to locate and consult the original material.

The formatting of entries in the reference list is consistent with the principles of Chicago style for different source types. For instance, a book entry would include the author's name, the year of publication, the title of the book, and publication information. The key difference from the Notes and Bibliography system's bibliography is the placement of the publication year. In the Author-Date reference list, the year of publication immediately follows the author's name, a characteristic feature of this system. This immediate proximity of the year in both the in-text citation and the reference list entry streamlines the process of source verification.

Common Source Types and Their Chicago Style Citation Rules

Understanding the specific citation rules for various types of sources is fundamental to applying Chicago style correctly. Whether you are citing a scholarly book, a magazine article, a website, or a more obscure publication, adhering to the established formats ensures clarity and accuracy.

Citing Books

Books are a foundational source type, and their citation format is relatively straightforward. For the Notes and Bibliography system, a full note for a book would include the author's name (first name first), the full title of the book in italics, the publication information (city, publisher, year), and the specific page number(s) being referenced. For example: 1. Jane Doe, *The History of Citation*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022), 75.

In the Author-Date system, the reference list entry for a book would begin with the author's last name, followed by the year of publication in parentheses, the title of the book in italics, and the publication information. For instance: Doe, Jane. 2022. *The History of Citation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Citing Articles (Journal and Magazine)

Citing articles requires distinguishing between journal articles (often peer-reviewed and academic) and magazine articles (more general audience). For a journal article in a note, you would include the author's name, the article title (in quotation marks), the journal title (in italics), the volume and issue numbers, the year, and the page number(s). Example

note: 2. John Smith, "The Evolution of Academic Writing," *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 15, no. 2 (2021): 112.

In the Author-Date reference list for a journal article, the format would be: Smith, John. 2021. "The Evolution of Academic Writing." *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 15 (2): 112-130.

For magazine articles, the format is similar but usually includes the magazine title in italics and the full date of publication. Example note: 3. Emily Carter, "Digital Humanities Today," *Modern Language Review*, October 15, 2023, 25.

Author-Date reference list entry for a magazine article: Carter, Emily. 2023. "Digital Humanities Today." *Modern Language Review*, October 15, 2023.

Citing Websites and Online Resources

Citing websites and online resources can be more complex due to the dynamic nature of online content. For a note, you would include the author (if available), the title of the specific page or article (in quotation marks), the website name (in italics), the publication or last updated date (if available), and the URL. Example note: 4. "Understanding Citation Styles," Purdue OWL, accessed November 1, 2023, https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/chicago_17th_edition/chicago_manual_of_style_17th_edition.html.

In the Author-Date reference list, the entry would be: "Understanding Citation Styles." Purdue OWL. Accessed November 1, 2023. https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/chicago_17th_edition/chicago_manual_of_style_17th_edition.html.

It's important to note that the CMOS generally discourages citing personal communications or unpublished online content unless absolutely necessary, and even then, specific guidelines apply.

Citing Other Common Sources

Chicago style also provides rules for a wide array of other source types, including book chapters, dissertations, interviews, government documents, and unpublished works. For a chapter in an edited book, the note would include the chapter author, the chapter title, the book editor(s), the book title, publication details, and page numbers. Example note: 5. David Lee, "Perspectives on Chicago Style," in *Academic Citation Practices*, ed. Sarah Chen, (New York: Academic Press, 2020), 88-105.

The corresponding reference list entry would be: Lee, David. "Perspectives on Chicago Style." In *Academic Citation Practices*, edited by Sarah Chen, 88-105. New York: Academic Press, 2020.

For interviews, whether published or unpublished, the format will vary. For unpublished interviews, the note would typically include the interviewee's name, the type of interview

(e.g., personal interview, email interview), and the date. Example note: 6. Maria Garcia, personal interview by author, October 26, 2023.

The reference list entry for this would be: Garcia, Maria. Personal interview by author. October 26, 2023.

Formatting Considerations for Chicago Style Citations

Beyond the specific elements of each citation, the overall formatting of Chicago style citations plays a significant role in maintaining professionalism and readability. Consistency in punctuation, capitalization, and the use of italics or quotation marks is paramount. For instance, titles of books and journals are italicized, while titles of articles and chapters are placed in quotation marks. Commas and periods are used strategically to separate different elements of a citation.

Indentation and line spacing are also important. In the Notes and Bibliography system, the first line of a footnote is typically indented, while subsequent lines are flush with the left margin. In the bibliography, hanging indents are commonly used, where the first line of each entry is flush with the left margin, and subsequent lines are indented. The Author-Date system's reference list often uses similar indentation practices for clarity. Adhering to these formatting conventions enhances the visual appeal and navigability of your citations.

Capitalization within titles is another crucial aspect. Chicago style generally follows sentence case for article and chapter titles (capitalizing only the first word and proper nouns) but title case for book and journal titles (capitalizing most words). However, the specific edition of the Chicago Manual of Style being followed should always be consulted for definitive guidance on capitalization rules, as minor variations can exist.

Consistency and Accuracy in Chicago Style Citation

The most critical principle in applying Chicago style citation rules is unwavering consistency and accuracy. Once you have chosen a system (Notes and Bibliography or Author-Date), you must apply it uniformly throughout your document. Inconsistent application of formatting, punctuation, or element order can detract from the credibility of your work and confuse readers.

Accuracy means ensuring that all bibliographic details are correct. This includes the author's name spelled correctly, the exact title of the work, the correct publication year, and precise page numbers for all references. Double-checking every citation against the original source is a non-negotiable step in producing high-quality academic work. Errors in citation can lead to accusations of sloppiness or even plagiarism, even if unintentional.

Regularly consulting the latest edition of The Chicago Manual of Style is essential, as citation rules can evolve. Furthermore, specific instructors or publications may have their own slight variations or preferences within Chicago style. Always clarify these requirements before you begin citing to ensure full compliance.

By diligently following these detailed Chicago style citation rules, you can ensure that your work is properly attributed, your sources are easily verifiable, and your scholarship is presented with the utmost professionalism and integrity. The commitment to accurate and consistent citation is a hallmark of rigorous academic and professional practice.

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

A: The main difference lies in how sources are cited within the text. The Notes and Bibliography system uses numbered footnotes or endnotes, while the Author-Date system uses parenthetical citations in the text with the author's last name and publication year.

Q: When should I use the Notes and Bibliography system for Chicago style?

A: The Notes and Bibliography system is generally preferred in the humanities, such as history, literature, and art history, as it allows for more explanatory notes.

Q: When should I use the Author-Date system for Chicago style?

A: The Author-Date system is commonly used in the social sciences and natural sciences, where conciseness and direct linkage to the reference list are prioritized.

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

A: In a footnote or endnote, you would typically list the author's name (first name first), the book title in italics, publication city, publisher, year, and page number. In the bibliography, the author's last name comes first, followed by the year, title, and publication details.

Q: What is the purpose of a bibliography in the Notes and Bibliography system?

A: The bibliography lists all sources cited in the notes, providing complete bibliographic information for each source in alphabetical order.

Q: How do I format an in-text citation for a direct quote in the Chicago Author-Date system?

A: For a direct quote in the Author-Date system, you would include the author's last name, the year of publication, and the specific page number in parentheses, like (Smith 2020, 45).

Q: What is a reference list in the Author-Date system?

A: A reference list, located at the end of the document, contains full bibliographic details for all sources cited in the text, arranged alphabetically by author's last name. The year of publication immediately follows the author's name.

Q: How do I cite a website in Chicago style?

A: For websites, include the author (if known), the title of the page or article in quotation marks, the website name in italics, a publication or access date, and the URL. The format varies slightly between the notes and the reference list/bibliography.

Q: What is hanging indentation in Chicago style?

A: Hanging indentation is a formatting style where the first line of a citation entry is flush with the left margin, and all subsequent lines are indented. This is commonly used in bibliographies and reference lists.

Q: Is it important to be consistent with my Chicago style citations?

A: Yes, consistency in applying the chosen Chicago style system, formatting, and punctuation is crucial for clarity, professionalism, and academic integrity.

[Chicago Style Citation Rules](#)

Chicago Style Citation Rules

Related Articles

- [chicago style citation examples for government documents](#)
- [chicago style citation generator for academic](#)
- [chicago style bibliography software](#)

[Back to Home](#)