

chicago style footnote example dictionary definition

chicago style footnote example dictionary definition is a crucial element for academic and professional writing, ensuring proper attribution and allowing readers to easily trace sources. Understanding how to format footnotes for dictionary entries is particularly important when referencing specific definitions, etymologies, or historical usages found within these authoritative reference works. This article will delve into the intricacies of creating Chicago-style footnotes for dictionary definitions, covering the essential components, variations in citation, and practical examples. We will explore the standard format, discuss common scenarios, and provide clear, actionable guidance to help you master this often-overlooked but vital aspect of scholarly citation. By the end of this comprehensive guide, you will be equipped to confidently cite any dictionary definition using the Chicago Manual of Style.

Table of Contents

- Understanding the Basics of Chicago Style Footnotes
- Essential Components of a Dictionary Definition Footnote
- Standard Chicago Style Footnote for a Dictionary Definition
- Variations and Special Cases in Citing Dictionary Definitions
- Citing Online Dictionaries
- Citing Historical or Specialized Dictionaries
- Citing Multiple Definitions from the Same Entry
- Practical Examples of Chicago Style Footnotes for Dictionary Definitions
- Example 1: Citing a Standard Definition
- Example 2: Citing Etymology
- Example 3: Citing an Online Dictionary Entry
- The Importance of Accuracy and Consistency
- Conclusion

Understanding the Basics of Chicago Style Footnotes

The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) offers two primary citation systems: notes and bibliography, and author-date. This article focuses exclusively on the notes and bibliography system, which utilizes numbered footnotes or endnotes. Footnotes are placed at the bottom of the page where the citation appears, while endnotes are collected at the end of the document. Both serve the purpose of acknowledging sources and providing readers with the necessary information to locate them. The system emphasizes clarity and precision, ensuring that all borrowed material, whether direct quotations, paraphrases, or ideas, is appropriately credited to its original author or source.

In the context of a dictionary definition, a footnote serves to pinpoint the exact source and the specific definition being referenced. This is especially critical when dealing with specialized terminology or when the etymology or historical usage of a word is being

discussed. Proper footnote formatting not only upholds academic integrity but also demonstrates a writer's meticulous attention to detail and respect for intellectual property. Mastery of this system is a hallmark of scholarly writing, enabling a seamless flow of information between the text and its supporting evidence.

Essential Components of a Dictionary Definition Footnote

When crafting a Chicago-style footnote for a dictionary definition, several key pieces of information must be included to ensure the citation is complete and unambiguous. These components work together to guide the reader directly to the referenced source. Without these elements, the footnote would be incomplete and therefore unhelpful. Accuracy in capturing each detail is paramount for effective citation practices.

The core elements typically required are:

- The name of the dictionary.
- The edition of the dictionary, if applicable (especially for print editions).
- The entry word being defined.
- The specific definition number (if multiple definitions exist for the same word).
- The publisher of the dictionary.
- The year of publication.
- A page number (for print dictionaries) or a specific URL (for online dictionaries).

Each of these components plays a distinct role in identifying the source. The entry word tells the reader which term is being discussed, while the definition number isolates the precise meaning. The dictionary title and publication details provide the context for the definition, and the page number or URL allows for direct access to the information.

Standard Chicago Style Footnote for a Dictionary Definition

The standard format for a Chicago-style footnote referencing a dictionary definition in a print edition follows a specific structure. This structure ensures consistency and makes it easy for readers to find the source. Adhering to this format is crucial for maintaining academic rigor and for facilitating research.

The general template for a print dictionary footnote is as follows:

Dictionary Name, edition (if applicable), s.v. "Entry Word," definition number (if applicable): page number.

Let's break down each part of this template. The dictionary name should be italicized. If the dictionary has a specific edition, it should be noted immediately after the title. The abbreviation "s.v." stands for "sub voce," which translates to "under the word," and is used to indicate the entry word. Following the entry word, if there are multiple definitions, you will specify the number of the definition being referenced. Finally, the page number indicates where in the physical dictionary the definition can be found.

For example, if you were citing the first definition of "lexicography" from the second edition of a dictionary, the footnote might look something like this (using a hypothetical dictionary):

The Oxford Companion to the English Language, 2nd ed., s.v. "lexicography," 1: 650.

It is important to note that the first time a source is cited, the footnote should be complete. Subsequent citations of the same source may use a shortened format, typically including the dictionary name and the entry word.

Variations and Special Cases in Citing Dictionary Definitions

While the standard format covers most scenarios, there are variations and special cases that require adjustments to the citation. These often arise when dealing with online resources, historical dictionaries, or when referencing more than one definition from the same entry. Understanding these nuances ensures accuracy and completeness in your citations.

Citing Online Dictionaries

The advent of online dictionaries has introduced new considerations for citation. Because online resources are often updated and may not have fixed page numbers, the citation format differs from print versions. The goal remains to provide enough information for the reader to locate the exact content being referenced.

For online dictionaries, the format typically includes the dictionary name, the entry word, and a URL. The specific definition number is still crucial if multiple definitions exist. Publishers and publication dates for online dictionaries can sometimes be less prominent, but they should be included if readily available.

The general template for an online dictionary footnote is:

Dictionary Name, s.v. "Entry Word," definition number (if applicable), accessed Month

Day, Year, URL.

The "accessed" date is particularly important for online sources as content can change. For instance, citing an entry from Merriam-Webster online would look like this:

Merriam-Webster.com, s.v. "ephemeral," accessed October 26, 2023,
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ephemeral>.

Citing Historical or Specialized Dictionaries

When citing historical dictionaries or highly specialized lexicons, the citation might require additional information to accurately identify the source. These dictionaries often have unique publication histories, editors, or organizational structures that need to be reflected in the footnote.

For older dictionaries, the original publication date and any subsequent scholarly editions or facsimiles should be clearly indicated. If a specialized dictionary has a unique indexing system or an extensive prefatory material that is essential for locating the definition, this should also be considered for inclusion.

For example, a citation for a historical dictionary might include the original publication year alongside the edition year being used for reference:

A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles, ed. James Murray, vol. 3 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897), s.v. "flimsy," def. 2.

Citing Multiple Definitions from the Same Entry

Occasionally, a writer might need to reference more than one definition from the same entry in a dictionary. In such cases, it is often more efficient to cite the entry as a whole in the first instance, and then subsequent references within the same note can simply refer to the specific definitions.

When citing multiple definitions for the first time, you would list each definition number. If you are referencing definitions from the same entry multiple times throughout your work, you might choose to cite the entry once fully in the initial footnote, and then in subsequent notes, simply refer to the specific definition number for clarity.

Alternatively, if you are referencing two distinct definitions in the same footnote, you would list them sequentially:

The Cambridge Dictionary of English, s.v. "run," defs. 1, 5.

This approach prevents redundancy while still providing the necessary specificity for each referenced definition.

Practical Examples of Chicago Style Footnotes for Dictionary Definitions

To solidify understanding, let's examine some practical examples of Chicago-style footnotes for dictionary definitions. These examples demonstrate how to apply the rules discussed previously in various common scenarios encountered by writers.

Example 1: Citing a Standard Definition

Imagine you are writing a paper on the evolution of the English language and you wish to cite the primary definition of the word "paradigm" from a reputable, modern dictionary.

Let's assume you are using the 11th edition of Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary.

The footnote would appear as:

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed., s.v. "paradigm," 1: 930.

This footnote clearly identifies the dictionary, its edition, the entry word, and the specific definition number, along with the page on which it appears. This level of detail ensures that any reader can easily locate the exact definition being referenced.

Example 2: Citing Etymology

Sometimes, the etymological information within a dictionary is the focus of the citation. In such cases, the footnote needs to reflect this specific aspect of the entry.

Suppose you are discussing the Greek roots of the word "philosophy" and are referencing its etymology as provided in a dictionary.

Using the same 11th edition of Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary:

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed., s.v. "philosophy," etymology: 978.

Here, instead of specifying a definition number, we explicitly state "etymology" to indicate that this is the part of the entry being cited. The page number then directs the reader to that specific section of the entry.

Example 3: Citing an Online Dictionary Entry

Now, consider citing a definition from an online dictionary, such as the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) online.

If you are referencing the definition of "serendipity" from the OED online:

Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "serendipity," accessed October 26, 2023,
<https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/178838>.

This example highlights the inclusion of the access date and the full URL. It's important to use the most current URL available for the specific entry. The OED is a comprehensive resource, and its online format requires this modern citation approach.

The Importance of Accuracy and Consistency

Regardless of the type of dictionary or the specific information being cited, accuracy and consistency in footnote formatting are paramount. Inaccurate citations can lead to confusion, misattribution, and can undermine the credibility of your work. Consistency ensures that your readers can navigate your citations with ease and that your work adheres to the established standards of academic discourse.

When compiling your bibliography or works cited list at the end of your document, remember that the format for dictionary entries in a bibliography differs slightly from the footnote format. Bibliographical entries generally omit page numbers (unless referencing specific sections of a longer entry) and do not use "s.v." Instead, they often begin with the dictionary title and then list the entry word.

For example, a bibliography entry for the print dictionary example might look like:

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary. 11th ed. Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 2003.

This distinction between footnote and bibliography formatting is a critical aspect of Chicago style. Maintaining a consistent approach throughout your document is key to producing polished and professional writing.

Ultimately, the goal of any citation system, including the Chicago style for dictionary definition footnotes, is to provide clear, precise, and accessible information. By diligently applying these guidelines, writers can ensure their work is both scholarly sound and easily verifiable, contributing to the broader academic conversation with integrity and clarity.

FAQ

Q: What is the primary purpose of a Chicago style footnote when citing a dictionary definition?

A: The primary purpose is to accurately attribute the specific definition or information being used to its source, the dictionary, and to provide readers with the necessary details to locate that exact piece of information. This upholds academic integrity and allows for verification.

Q: How do I cite the etymology of a word from a

dictionary in Chicago style?

A: To cite the etymology, you would typically use the dictionary name, followed by "s.v." and the entry word, then specify "etymology" instead of a definition number, followed by the page number (for print dictionaries). For example: "*The Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. 'anecdote,' etymology: 301."

Q: Is it necessary to include the edition of a dictionary in a Chicago style footnote?

A: Yes, it is generally necessary to include the edition of a dictionary in a Chicago style footnote, especially for print editions. This is because different editions can have updated definitions, word usages, or even different organizations of entries.

Q: What is the correct way to cite an online dictionary in Chicago style, and what are the key differences from citing a print dictionary?

A: When citing an online dictionary, you include the dictionary name, the entry word (often with a definition number if applicable), the access date, and the full URL. Unlike print dictionaries, there are typically no page numbers, and the access date is crucial because online content can be updated. For example: "Dictionary.com, s.v. 'ubiquitous,' accessed October 26, 2023, <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/ubiquitous>."

Q: How should I format a footnote if I am referencing multiple definitions from the same dictionary entry?

A: If you are referencing multiple definitions from the same entry in a single footnote, you can list them using "defs." followed by the numbers of the definitions. For instance: "*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed., s.v. 'run,' defs. 1, 4, 7: 1102."

Q: What does "s.v." mean in a Chicago style footnote for a dictionary definition?

A: "s.v." is an abbreviation for the Latin phrase "sub voce," which translates to "under the word." In Chicago style footnotes, it is used to indicate the specific entry word within the dictionary that is being referenced.

Q: When is it appropriate to use a shortened footnote format for a dictionary definition?

A: The shortened footnote format is used for subsequent citations of the same dictionary entry. After the first full citation, you can use a shorter version that typically includes the dictionary name and the entry word, or just the dictionary name and page number if the

entry word is obvious from the context.

Q: Should I include the publisher of a dictionary when creating a footnote?

A: For print dictionaries, the publisher is typically included in the bibliography entry but not in the footnote itself, unless it is crucial for distinguishing between similar editions or dictionaries. The footnote focuses on direct access to the definition. For online dictionaries, the publisher might be included if it is clearly stated and aids in identification.

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