

chicago style footnote example documentation

The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) is a widely respected style guide that provides comprehensive guidelines for writing, editing, and citing sources. One of the most distinctive features of CMOS is its system of footnotes and endnotes for citations. Mastering the nuances of this system is crucial for academic and professional writers seeking to produce clear, credible, and properly documented work. This article delves deep into the intricacies of creating accurate Chicago style footnotes, offering practical examples for various source types and explaining the underlying principles. We will explore the fundamental structure of a footnote, differentiate between the first and subsequent mentions of a source, and provide detailed guidance on citing common resources like books, journal articles, websites, and even less common materials. Understanding the specific formatting requirements for each element within a footnote is key to avoiding common errors and ensuring your documentation adheres to the highest standards of academic integrity.

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Understanding Chicago Style Footnotes

The Chicago Manual of Style offers two primary citation systems: the Notes-Bibliography system and the Author-Date system. This article focuses exclusively on the Notes-Bibliography system, which relies on numbered footnotes or endnotes for referencing sources. This method is favored in disciplines such as history, literature, and the arts, where in-text citations can interrupt the narrative flow. Footnotes appear at the bottom of the page where the reference is made, while endnotes are collected at the end of the document. Both serve the same purpose: to acknowledge the sources of information and to allow readers to locate those sources easily.

The core principle behind Chicago style footnotes is clarity and precision. Each note should provide enough information for a reader to identify and find the source without ambiguity. This is achieved through a consistent format that includes specific elements depending on the type of source being cited. The system is designed to integrate smoothly into the text, allowing for extensive commentary and parenthetical explanations alongside direct citations.

The Anatomy of a Chicago Style Footnote

A Chicago style footnote comprises several key components, each with its own formatting rules. The first time a source is cited in a note, it requires a full citation. Subsequent citations of the same source, particularly those appearing consecutively, can be shortened for conciseness. The order and

punctuation of elements are critical to adhering to CMOS guidelines.

Essential Elements of a Full Footnote Citation

A typical full footnote citation will include the following elements, though not all will be present for every source type:

- Author's first name and last name
- Title of the work (italicized for books and journals, in quotation marks for articles and chapters)
- Publication information (city of publication, publisher, year of publication for books; journal title, volume, issue number, date for articles)
- Page number(s) referenced
- URL or DOI for online sources

Punctuation is also vital. Commas typically separate the author from the title, and the title from the publication information. The publication information itself is usually enclosed in parentheses. The page number follows the publication information and is preceded by a comma.

Shortened Footnote Citations

Once a source has been fully cited, subsequent references can be shortened. This prevents repetition and improves readability. The format for a shortened note typically includes the author's last name, a shortened title (if necessary to distinguish from other works by the same author), and the page number. For example:

- Smith, *History of Chicago*, 45.

If multiple works by the same author are cited, a shortened title is essential. If the subsequent note refers to the immediately preceding source, the term "Ibid." (meaning "in the same place") can be used, followed by a page number if it differs. For example:

- Ibid., 46.
- If it's the exact same page: Ibid.

Citing Books in Chicago Style Footnotes

Citing books is a fundamental aspect of using the Chicago style. The information required for a book citation is generally found on the title page and the copyright page.

First Mention of a Book

The first time a book is cited in a footnote, it requires a complete citation. The author's name is given in the order of first name, then last name. The title of the book is italicized. Publication details include the place of publication, the publisher's name, and the year of publication. Finally, the specific page number(s) being referenced are included.

Here is a standard example:

- First Name Last Name, *Title of Book* (City of Publication: Publisher, Year), Page Number(s).

For instance:

- Jane Doe, *The Art of Citation* (Chicago: University Press, 2022), 112.

Subsequent Mentions of a Book

After the initial full citation, subsequent references to the same book can be shortened. This makes the notes more concise without sacrificing clarity. The shortened format typically includes the author's last name, a shortened version of the book title (italicized), and the specific page number.

Example:

- Doe, *Art of Citation*, 115.

If the next note refers to the exact same source and page, you would use "Ibid." If it refers to the same source but a different page, it would be "Ibid., Page Number."

Citing Journal Articles in Chicago Style Footnotes

Citing scholarly journal articles requires specific details about the publication, including the journal title, volume, issue, and date, in addition to author and article title.

First Mention of a Journal Article

A full citation for a journal article includes the author's name, the article title (in quotation marks), the journal title (italicized), the volume and issue numbers, the publication date, and the page number(s) of the article. If citing a specific passage, include the page number of that passage.

Format:

- Author First Name Last Name, "Title of Article," *Title of Journal* Volume, no. Issue (Year): Page Number(s).

Example:

- John Smith, "The Impact of Technology on Education," *Journal of Modern Studies* 25, no. 3 (2021): 78.

Subsequent Mentions of a Journal Article

Similar to book citations, subsequent references to a journal article can be shortened. This typically involves the author's last name, a shortened article title, and the page number. If the article is from a journal with a distinctive title, a shortened version may not be necessary.

Example:

- Smith, "Impact of Technology," 80.

Citing Websites and Online Resources in Chicago Style Footnotes

Citing online sources requires careful attention to detail, as web pages can change or disappear. Including access dates and stable identifiers like DOIs or URLs is crucial.

Basic Website Citation

For a webpage, include the author (if known), the title of the page or article, the website name, the publication or last updated date (if available), and the URL. It is also recommended to include an access date.

Format:

- Author First Name Last Name, "Title of Web Page," Name of Website, Month Day, Year (or last updated date), URL. Accessed Month Day, Year.

Example:

- Sarah Lee, "Understanding Citation Styles," Academic Writing Hub, October 15, 2023, <https://www.academicwritinghub.com/citations>. Accessed October 26, 2023.

If the author is not listed, begin with the title of the page or article.

Online Articles with DOIs

For articles found online that have a Digital Object Identifier (DOI), it is preferable to use the DOI as it is a persistent link.

Format:

- Author First Name Last Name, "Title of Article," *Title of Journal* Volume, no. Issue (Year): Page Number(s), DOI.

Example:

- Jane Doe, "The Evolution of Digital Media," *Communication Studies Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (2023): 15-30, doi:10.1080/00971472.2023.2168700.

Citing Other Source Types

Chicago style is comprehensive and provides guidance for a wide array of source materials beyond books and journals. Properly citing these sources ensures that all information is attributable and verifiable.

Newspaper Articles

For newspaper articles, include the author, article title, newspaper title (italicized), date of publication, and page number. For online newspaper articles, a URL and access date are also necessary.

- Author First Name Last Name, "Article Title," *Newspaper Title*, Month Day, Year, Page Number(s).

Example:

- Michael Brown, "City Council Debates New Zoning Laws," *Chicago Tribune*, October 25, 2023, A1.

Chapters in Edited Books

When citing a chapter within an edited collection, you need to cite both the chapter author and the editors of the book.

- Chapter Author First Name Last Name, "Chapter Title," in *Title of Book*, ed. Editor First Name Last Name, Page Number(s). City of Publication: Publisher, Year.

Example:

- Sarah Miller, "Historical Context of the Civil War," in *American History Essays*, ed. John Davis, 75-98. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Audiovisual Materials

Citing films, television episodes, or music involves details like the director or creator, title, producers, production company, and year. For specific segments, include time references.

- Director First Name Last Name, dir. *Title of Film*. City of Production: Production Company, Year.

Example:

- Christopher Nolan, dir. *Inception*. Burbank, CA: Warner Bros., 2010.

When to Use Notes vs. Bibliography

The Chicago Manual of Style's Notes-Bibliography system requires both footnotes (or endnotes) and a bibliography. These serve complementary purposes.

Footnotes are used for direct citations of sources. They are placed at the bottom of the page (or at the end of the document if using endnotes) and are numbered sequentially corresponding to superscripts in the text. They provide the immediate evidence for claims made in the writing.

The bibliography, on the other hand, is an alphabetical list of all the sources consulted and cited in the work. It appears at the end of the document and provides a comprehensive overview of the research. While similar to the notes in content, the bibliography's formatting differs slightly (e.g., author's last name first, no page numbers for the citation itself unless it's a specific reference within a larger work).

Common Pitfalls and Best Practices

Navigating the Chicago style footnote system can present challenges. Awareness of common errors can help writers produce accurate and compliant citations.

- **Inconsistent Formatting:** Ensure that all citations for the same type of source follow the same format. Pay close attention to commas, periods, italics, and quotation marks.
- **Incorrect Order of Elements:** The order of author, title, publication information, and page number is fixed. Deviating from this order can lead to confusion.
- **Missing Information:** Double-check that all necessary elements for a particular source type

are included. For online sources, this often means missing URLs or access dates.

- **Over-reliance on "Ibid.":** While useful for consecutive notes, overuse of "Ibid." can be confusing if the preceding note refers to multiple sources or if the reader skips pages.
- **Failure to Distinguish First and Subsequent Mentions:** Always use the full citation for the first mention of a source. Ensure shortened notes are clear and unambiguous.

Best practices include using citation management software to help track sources and generate notes, but always proofreading the output for accuracy. Referencing a recent edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style* or its online counterpart is the most reliable way to ensure adherence to current guidelines.

FAQ

Q: What is the primary difference between Chicago style footnotes and endnotes?

A: The primary difference lies in their placement. Footnotes appear at the bottom of the page where the reference is made, while endnotes are collected in a list at the end of the document, preceding the bibliography. Both systems use numbered superscripts in the text to link to the corresponding note.

Q: When should I use "Ibid." in my Chicago style footnotes?

A: "Ibid." (Latin for "in the same place") is used to refer to the immediately preceding footnote. If the reference is to the exact same source and page, simply write "Ibid." If it's to the same source but a different page, write "Ibid., page number." It is most effective when citing multiple consecutive notes from the same source.

Q: How do I cite a book that has been translated?

A: When citing a translated book for the first time, you should include the original author, the title of the translated work, the translator's name, and the publication details of the translated edition. For example: Original Author, *Title of Translated Work*, trans. Translator First Name Last Name (City of Publication: Publisher, Year).

Q: What is the importance of the DOI for online sources in Chicago style?

A: The Digital Object Identifier (DOI) is a persistent, unique identifier for digital objects. When citing online articles or resources that have a DOI, it is considered the most stable and preferred form of linking, as it is less likely to break than a standard URL.

Q: How do I cite a source that has no author?

A: If a source has no author, you begin the citation with the title of the work. For books, italicize the title. For articles or chapters, place the title in quotation marks. The rest of the citation follows the standard format for that source type.

Q: Can I use a shortened title for a work by the same author when using "Ibid."?

A: No, "Ibid." refers to the immediately preceding note. If you are citing a different work by the same author as the preceding note, you must use a shortened note format, which includes the author's last name and a shortened title, not "Ibid."

Q: What if a website does not have a publication date?

A: If a website lacks a specific publication or last updated date, you can often use the copyright date found in the footer. If no date is available at all, you may omit the date and instead use "n.d." (no date) in place of the publication date, and ensure you include the access date.

Q: How do I cite a personal communication, like an email or interview?

A: Personal communications, such as emails, personal interviews, or phone conversations, are typically cited only in the notes, not in the bibliography. Include the type of communication, the names of the communicator and recipient, and the date. For example: John Smith to Jane Doe, email, October 26, 2023.

Q: Is it acceptable to cite a source more than once in a note?

A: Yes, it is permissible and often necessary to cite multiple sources within a single note, especially if you are synthesizing information from various places to support a single point. Separate each citation with a semicolon.

Q: How does the Chicago Manual of Style handle legal citations?

A: The Chicago Manual of Style provides a separate system for legal citations, which is distinct from its standard note-bibliography system. Legal citations have their own specific formats and requirements that must be followed when citing legal documents, statutes, and cases.

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