

chicago style humanities submission guidelines

Chicago Style Humanities Submission Guidelines: A Comprehensive Guide

chicago style humanities submission guidelines are crucial for anyone seeking to publish scholarly work in the humanities. Adhering to these standards ensures clarity, consistency, and credibility, making your work accessible and understandable to a broad academic audience. This comprehensive guide will delve into the intricacies of the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS), specifically focusing on its application within the humanities. We will cover essential aspects such as manuscript preparation, citation methods, formatting requirements, and common pitfalls to avoid, equipping you with the knowledge necessary to confidently navigate submission processes for journals, edited collections, and monographs. Understanding these submission guidelines is not merely a procedural step; it is an integral part of scholarly communication.

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Understanding the Chicago Manual of Style

The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) is a widely recognized and respected style guide primarily used in the United States. While it offers guidance for various disciplines, its application in the humanities is particularly extensive, influencing how scholars present their research, engage with existing literature, and structure their arguments. CMOS provides detailed instructions on everything from grammar and punctuation to the finer points of bibliographic entries and in-text citations. For humanities scholars, mastering CMOS is essential for demonstrating professionalism and ensuring their work meets the rigorous standards of academic publishing. It fosters a shared language and methodology, allowing readers to focus on the content rather than being distracted by inconsistent or unfamiliar presentation.

The manual is periodically updated to reflect changes in language, technology, and academic conventions. Therefore, it is always advisable to consult the latest edition when preparing a submission. Understanding the core principles behind CMOS, such as clarity, accuracy, and consistency, will serve you well regardless of the specific edition you are referencing. The emphasis on clear and logical presentation makes the humanities submission process more streamlined and effective for both authors and editors.

Manuscript Preparation for Humanities Submissions

Proper manuscript preparation is the bedrock of a successful submission. For humanities disciplines, this involves meticulous attention to detail in structuring your work and presenting your ideas. The goal is to create a polished, professional document that is easy for editors and peer reviewers to read and evaluate.

Structuring Your Manuscript

Humanities manuscripts typically follow a standard academic structure. This usually includes a title page, an abstract, the main body of the text, and a bibliography or works cited list. Depending on the specific publication, there might also be appendices or an index. The main body should be divided into logical sections, often with subheadings, to guide the reader through your argument.

- **Title Page:** This should include the manuscript title, your name, your affiliation, and contact information.
- **Abstract:** A concise summary of your research, typically between 150-250 words, highlighting your main argument, methodology, and key findings.
- **Main Body:** The core of your submission, containing your research, analysis, and arguments, organized into chapters or sections.
- **Bibliography/Works Cited:** A complete list of all sources cited in your manuscript, formatted according to CMOS.
- **Appendices (if applicable):** Supplementary materials that do not fit into the main body but are essential for understanding your research.

Word Count and Length Guidelines

Each journal or publisher will have specific word count limitations for submissions. It is imperative to check these guidelines carefully before submitting. Exceeding the word count can lead to desk rejection, as it indicates a failure to adhere to the publisher's requirements. Conversely, a submission that is significantly shorter than the expected length might suggest a lack of thorough research or development.

Clarity and Conciseness in Writing

The humanities value nuanced and sophisticated argumentation, but this should never come at the

expense of clarity. Ensure your prose is direct, your sentences are well-constructed, and your terminology is used precisely. Avoid jargon where simpler language suffices, and always explain any specialized terms or concepts that might not be familiar to a general academic audience within the humanities.

Citation Styles in Chicago

The Chicago Manual of Style offers two primary systems for citations: the notes-bibliography system and the author-date system. Both are widely accepted in the humanities, but specific journals or publishers will mandate one over the other. Understanding the nuances of each is paramount.

The Notes-Bibliography System

This system is prevalent in history, literature, and the arts. It involves using superscript numbers within the text to refer to endnotes or footnotes, which contain the full bibliographic information for each source. A comprehensive bibliography follows the main text, listing all sources cited.

- **In-Text Citations:** A superscript number is placed at the end of a sentence or clause, or directly after a quotation, corresponding to an endnote or footnote.
- **Endnotes/Footnotes:** The first citation of a source provides full publication details. Subsequent citations of the same source can be shortened.
- **Bibliography:** An alphabetical list of all sources consulted and cited, including authors, titles, publication information, and page numbers where relevant.

The Author-Date System

The author-date system is more common in social sciences but is also used in some humanities fields, particularly those with interdisciplinary approaches. Citations appear in parentheses within the text, typically including the author's last name and the year of publication. A reference list, alphabetized by author's last name, accompanies the manuscript.

- **In-Text Citations:** (Author Last Name Year, Page Number). For example, (Smith 2022, 45).
- **Reference List:** A complete list of all sources cited in the text, alphabetized by author's last name, including full publication details.

Formatting Citations Correctly

Regardless of the chosen system, meticulous accuracy in formatting citations is essential. This includes the correct punctuation, capitalization, and order of elements for books, articles, websites, and other source types. Deviations from the prescribed format can signal a lack of attention to detail and undermine the credibility of your work.

Formatting the Humanities Manuscript

Beyond the citation style, the overall formatting of your manuscript plays a significant role in its presentation. Publishers provide specific guidelines for everything from margins and line spacing to the use of headings and figures. Adhering to these is non-negotiable.

General Formatting Requirements

Most journals and presses require double-spacing for the entire manuscript, including block quotations and notes. This aids readability for editors and reviewers. Standard margins are typically one inch on all sides. Font choices are usually limited to easily readable sans-serif or serif fonts like Times New Roman or Arial, in a 12-point size.

Headings and Subheadings

The clear and consistent use of headings and subheadings helps to break up text and guide the reader through complex arguments. CMOS provides guidance on formatting different levels of headings, ensuring a hierarchical structure that is easy to follow. Typically, main headings are centered or flush left, with subheadings indented.

- First-level headings should clearly delineate major sections of your argument.
- Second-level headings can further subdivide these sections.
- Ensure a logical progression and consistent styling for all headings.

Tables, Figures, and Illustrations

If your humanities research involves visual elements, such as tables, charts, maps, or images, ensure they are properly prepared and captioned. Tables and figures should be numbered sequentially and referred to in the text. CMOS provides detailed instructions on formatting tables and figures,

including the placement of captions and source information. High-resolution images are usually required for publication.

Common Submission Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them

Even the most brilliant scholarship can be hindered by avoidable submission errors. Awareness of common mistakes is the first step towards preventing them and ensuring your work receives the consideration it deserves.

Failing to Read Submission Guidelines

This is arguably the most common and most damaging error. Each journal, press, or conference has its own specific requirements. Not reading these thoroughly demonstrates a lack of professionalism and can lead to immediate rejection. Always download and meticulously review the latest submission guidelines from the intended publisher.

Inconsistent Citation and Formatting

As discussed, inconsistencies in citation style, formatting, or bibliographic entries are red flags for editors. This can range from minor punctuation errors to entirely incorrect citation formats. Proofread your citations multiple times, and consider using citation management software, but always double-check its output against CMOS standards.

Grammar, Spelling, and Punctuation Errors

While editors do perform copyediting, the initial submission should be as error-free as possible. Numerous grammatical mistakes, typos, and punctuation errors suggest carelessness. Thorough proofreading by the author, and ideally by others, is essential. A clean manuscript allows editors to focus on the intellectual merit of your work.

Plagiarism and Improper Attribution

This is a cardinal sin in academia. Always ensure that all sources of information and ideas are properly cited. When in doubt, cite. CMOS provides extensive guidance on avoiding plagiarism. Ignorance is not an excuse; failure to attribute correctly can have severe consequences.

Finalizing Your Chicago Style Submission

The final stages of preparing your manuscript for submission are as critical as the initial drafting. This involves a thorough review process that ensures all elements of your work meet the required standards and present your research in the best possible light. The goal is to submit a document that is not only intellectually sound but also polished and professional.

Before submitting, take the time to review your manuscript one last time against the publisher's specific guidelines. Pay close attention to any requirements regarding file formats, submission portals, and accompanying documents. A well-prepared manuscript that adheres strictly to Chicago style humanities submission guidelines significantly increases its chances of a positive reception and successful publication. This meticulous approach to preparation reflects your commitment to scholarly integrity and your respect for the publication process.

Proofreading and Editing

A final, exhaustive proofread is non-negotiable. Read your manuscript aloud to catch awkward phrasing or errors your eyes might skim over. If possible, have a colleague or a professional editor review your work for clarity, coherence, and any remaining errors. This stage is crucial for catching typos, grammatical mistakes, and formatting inconsistencies that could detract from your argument.

Checking Against Submission Requirements

Go through the submission guidelines point by point and verify that your manuscript meets every single criterion. This includes checking word counts, margin sizes, font styles, citation format, and the inclusion of all required supplementary materials. Ensure your manuscript is saved in the correct file format, such as .doc, .docx, or .pdf, as specified by the publisher.

Understanding the Review Process

Familiarize yourself with the typical peer-review process for the type of publication you are targeting. Knowing what to expect – the timeline, the types of feedback you might receive, and the decision-making process – can help manage expectations and prepare you for the next steps, whether that involves revisions or the eventual acceptance or rejection of your work. Patience and professionalism are key throughout this process.

FAQ

Q: What is the primary difference between the notes-bibliography and author-date systems in Chicago style?

A: The notes-bibliography system uses footnotes or endnotes for citations and is common in history and literature, while the author-date system uses parenthetical in-text citations (Author Year, Page) and is more prevalent in social sciences but also used in some humanities fields.

Q: Can I use a different citation style if my field commonly uses it, even if the journal specifies Chicago style?

A: No, you must strictly adhere to the Chicago style as specified by the journal or publisher. Deviating from the requested style is a common reason for immediate rejection. Always prioritize the submission guidelines.

Q: How do I format block quotations in a Chicago style humanities submission?

A: Block quotations (typically for passages of more than five lines) should be indented from the left margin, single-spaced, and usually do not use quotation marks. The citation number follows the punctuation at the end of the quotation.

Q: Is it acceptable to submit a manuscript that has already been published elsewhere in a slightly different form?

A: Generally, no. Most academic publishers require original work. If you have a prior publication, you must disclose it and seek explicit permission or guidance from the publisher regarding adaptation or republication.

Q: What are the essential components of a Chicago style humanities abstract?

A: A Chicago style abstract for humanities submissions should concisely summarize the research topic, the main argument or thesis, the methodology used, and the key findings or contributions of the work. It should be informative and engaging, typically between 150-250 words.

Q: How should I handle the bibliography or works cited page in a Chicago style manuscript?

A: The bibliography or works cited page should be alphabetized by the author's last name. Entries should be formatted precisely according to the chosen Chicago style (notes-bibliography or author-date), with specific rules for books, articles, and other source types.

Q: When should I use italics versus quotation marks for titles in Chicago style?

A: In Chicago style, titles of major works like books, journals, and films are italicized. Titles of shorter works, such as articles, book chapters, essays, and poems, are enclosed in quotation marks.

Q: What is the recommended font and font size for a Chicago style manuscript submission?

A: The Chicago Manual of Style recommends using a readily readable typeface, such as Times New Roman or Garamond, in 12-point size. The text should generally be double-spaced.

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