

chicago style in-text citations for multilingual sources

The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) provides a robust framework for academic and professional writing, and mastering its intricacies is crucial for any scholar or researcher. This article delves specifically into the nuanced area of chicago style in-text citations for multilingual sources, a topic that often presents unique challenges. We will explore how to accurately and consistently attribute information borrowed from materials not originally written in English, covering various scenarios and best practices. Understanding these guidelines ensures academic integrity and enhances the credibility of your work by demonstrating a thorough engagement with diverse scholarly resources. This comprehensive guide will equip you with the knowledge to navigate these complexities, from basic citation principles to handling specific issues like translation and original language presentation.

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Understanding the Core Principles of Chicago Style Citations

The Chicago Manual of Style offers two primary systems for referencing sources: the notes-bibliography system and the author-date system. While this article primarily focuses on in-text citations, it's essential to grasp the underlying philosophy of both. The fundamental goal of any citation system, including Chicago's, is to provide readers with enough information to locate the original source material. This involves clearly identifying what information comes from where and how to find it. For multilingual sources, this core principle remains unchanged, but the execution requires additional layers of precision.

In the notes-bibliography system, in-text citations appear as superscript numbers that correspond to footnotes or endnotes. These notes then contain the full bibliographic details. The author-date system, more common in social sciences, uses parenthetical citations in the text (Author Last Name Year, Page Number) which correspond to a reference list at the end of the work. Regardless of the system chosen, consistency is paramount. The challenge with multilingual sources often lies in presenting author names, titles, and publication details accurately and in a way that is both informative for the reader and compliant with Chicago's style guidelines.

Identifying Multilingual Sources

Before you can cite a multilingual source, you must first recognize that it is one. This might seem obvious, but it's important to be deliberate in this identification process. A multilingual source is any published or unpublished work, or part of a work, that is written in a language other than the primary language of your own writing. This includes books, articles, websites, films, oral histories, and any other form of recorded information.

The implications of a source being multilingual extend beyond just its language. You need to consider the original language of the text, whether a translation is available and used, and how to represent foreign titles and author names appropriately. For instance, citing a German philosophical treatise will require different considerations than citing a Spanish-language poem or a Japanese historical document. Paying close attention to the language of origin is the first step in correctly applying Chicago style in-text citations for these materials.

Citing Original Language and Translated Versions

One of the most frequent dilemmas when dealing with multilingual sources is deciding how to present them, particularly when both the original and a translated version are accessible or relevant. The Chicago Manual of Style advises that you should cite the version you actually consulted. If you are using an English translation of a French novel, for example, your citation should primarily refer to that English translation.

However, it is often good practice, and sometimes necessary for scholarly rigor, to acknowledge the original language work. This can be achieved in several ways. You might include the original title in your bibliography or in a footnote/endnote. For in-text citations, if you are discussing a specific concept or passage that is particularly nuanced in the original language, you might offer the original phrasing. The key is to be transparent about which version you are engaging with and to provide enough information for your reader to trace your source.

Presenting Foreign Titles

When citing multilingual sources, correctly presenting titles in their original language is essential. Chicago style generally recommends italicizing foreign titles of books, journals, and other major works. For shorter works, such as articles or chapters, the titles are typically enclosed in quotation marks. If a widely accepted English translation exists and you are primarily using that translation, you may present the English title first, followed by the original title in parentheses. However, if the original title is more significant to your argument or if no standard translation exists, prioritize the original title.

For example, when citing an English translation of a French book, you might see a bibliography entry like this: Proust, Marcel. *In Search of Lost Time*.

Translated by C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin. New York: Modern Library, 1992. (Original French title: *À la recherche du temps perdu*).

Including Original Language Information in Notes

In the notes-bibliography system, you have more flexibility to provide additional context. When citing a translated work, the footnote or endnote can include the original title and publication information. This is particularly important if you are making a point about the nuances of the original language or if the translation itself is a significant factor in your analysis. For instance, a note might read: 1. Marcel Proust, *À la recherche du temps perdu* (Paris: Gallimard, 1913-1927), vol. 1, 25. Cited in English as Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*, trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin (New York: Modern Library, 1992), 30.

This level of detail ensures that readers can verify your interpretation against the original text if they possess the linguistic capabilities. It also acknowledges the potential for differences introduced by the translation process.

Handling In-Text Citations for Non-English Works

When using the author-date system for multilingual sources, the parenthetical citation itself remains straightforward, following the pattern (Author Last Name Year, Page Number). However, the challenge arises in how to integrate these citations smoothly within your English prose and how to handle the bibliographic information in your reference list. The core principle is to cite the source you used. If you used an English translation, your in-text citation will refer to the author and publication details of that translation.

For example, if you are citing a passage from an English translation of Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, your in-text citation would look like this: (Dostoevsky 1993, 155). The corresponding reference list entry would then detail the specific English edition you consulted. The goal is to provide clear and unambiguous reference points for your readers.

Citing Works in Their Original Language

If you are proficient in the original language and choose to cite the work in its original form, even while writing in English, your citations should reflect this. In such cases, your in-text citations will use the original publication details. For example, if you are citing a German edition of Goethe's *Faust*, the citation might be (Goethe 1998, 78). Your reference list entry would then provide the full bibliographic details for that German edition. This approach is valuable when specific linguistic features or cultural contexts of the original are crucial to your analysis.

It is also good practice to note in your text or in a footnote that you are citing the original language version, especially if it's uncommon or if your audience may not be familiar with it. This preempts potential confusion and demonstrates your academic diligence.

Citing Foreign Language Periodicals and Newspapers

Citing foreign language articles from journals or newspapers follows the same fundamental principles as citing books. The crucial aspect is ensuring that all publication details are accurately represented, including the original language title of the periodical and the article, and any relevant volume, issue, and page numbers. When citing an article from a foreign language journal, you should provide the original title of the article and the journal, italicizing the journal title and using quotation marks for the article title.

For example, in the notes-bibliography system, a footnote might look like this: 1. Akira Kurosawa, "The Way of the Samurai," *Eiga Hihyō*, March 1952, 15-19. If you consulted an English translation or a secondary source that discussed this article in English, you would cite that source accordingly. Consistency in how you present these foreign titles and publication details is key.

Handling Translations of Articles

If you are using an English translation of a foreign language article, you should cite the translation. This means that the author, title of the article (in English), name of the translator (if known and significant), publication details of the translated journal or collection, and page numbers will form the basis of your citation. In the notes-bibliography system, you can still include the original title and publication information in your note for completeness, similar to how you would handle translated books.

For the author-date system, the reference list entry will correspond to the translated version. The in-text citation will refer to the author of the original work and the publication year of the translation. For instance: (Kurosawa 1952, 15-19), with the reference list entry detailing the translated version that was consulted. Clarity on which version is being used is paramount for reader comprehension.

Addressing Archival and Unpublished Multilingual Materials

Working with archival materials or unpublished documents in languages other than English introduces further complexities. These sources often lack standardized publication information, making clear and thorough citation even more critical. When citing multilingual archival materials, you must identify the repository, collection name, and any specific folder or item numbers that

allow for precise retrieval.

The language of the document should be clearly indicated, either within the description of the item or through a parenthetical note. For example, a description might read: "Letter from Giuseppe Garibaldi to Anita Garibaldi, June 10, 1860 (Italian), Garibaldi Papers, Box 5, Folder 3, Library of Congress." This provides essential context for the reader regarding the source's origin and language.

Citing Original and Translated Descriptions of Archives

If archival finding aids or descriptions of the materials are available in multiple languages, or if you are providing a summary or analysis of a multilingual document, Chicago style advises citing the specific finding aid or description you consulted. If the finding aid is in a foreign language, you may need to translate key terms or provide the original language title of the finding aid within your citation.

When you are translating portions of an unpublished multilingual source for your own work, it is standard practice to indicate that the translation is your own. This can be done parenthetically after the quote or in a footnote. For example: "The document states, 'La libertà è un diritto inalienabile' (my translation), indicating that freedom is an inalienable right." This transparency is crucial for maintaining academic honesty and allowing readers to assess the accuracy of your interpretations.

Special Considerations for Multilingual Digital Resources

The digital age has vastly increased the availability of multilingual resources, but it also presents unique citation challenges. When citing a multilingual website, blog post, or online document, ensure you capture all relevant information: author (if identifiable), title of the specific content, name of the website (often italicized), publication or last updated date, and the URL. If the content is in a language other than English, this must be clearly stated.

For instance, a citation for a Spanish-language article on a French website might look like: Jean Dubois, "L'avenir de l'intelligence artificielle," *Le Monde Numérique*, October 26, 2023, <https://www.lemonde numerique.fr/ia-avenir>. (Article in French). The parenthetical note at the end clarifies the original language of the content.

Accessibility and User Experience

When citing a multilingual digital resource, consider the accessibility for your reader. If a translated version of the resource is available at a different URL, it can be beneficial to mention this. However, always

prioritize citing the specific version you accessed. The goal is to provide a stable and verifiable link. If the website automatically translates content, be cautious, and if possible, locate the original language version to cite.

For multilingual videos or audio recordings, citing the platform (e.g., YouTube, Vimeo) where you accessed it is important. Include the title of the video, the uploader, the date it was posted, and the URL. If the content is in a foreign language, note this. If subtitles or transcripts are available and used, mention them. For example: "Director Bong Joon-ho discusses the filmmaking process, interview by Lee Ji-eun, uploaded by CineAsia on November 15, 2022, YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=example> (interview in Korean with English subtitles)."

Common Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them

One of the most common errors when citing multilingual sources is inconsistency. Whether it's mixing English and original language titles without a clear rule, or failing to italicize foreign titles correctly, a lack of uniformity can confuse readers and detract from your credibility. Always establish a consistent approach from the outset of your research and adhere to it throughout your paper.

Another frequent mistake is assuming that all readers will understand foreign language titles or author names. Chicago style encourages clarity and consideration for your audience. Therefore, providing translations or brief explanations when necessary is not just good practice but often essential for effective scholarship. Double-check author names for correct spelling and diacritics, and ensure all publication details are accurate and complete.

Ensuring Accuracy and Transparency

To avoid errors, meticulously record all bibliographic information as you encounter it. When dealing with foreign language sources, take note of the original title, author's name as it appears in print, publication details, and the language of the source. If you are using a translation, record its full bibliographic information as well.

Transparency is your best defense against citation errors. Be explicit about the sources you consulted and how you are presenting them. If you are quoting a translation, state that it is a translation. If you are discussing a concept that is particularly sensitive to its original language, provide the original text. By being thorough and honest about your sources, you uphold the principles of academic integrity and ensure your work is both accurate and accessible.

Q: How do I cite a book that has both an original

French title and an English translation in Chicago style?

A: When citing a book with both original and translated titles in Chicago style, you should primarily cite the version you consulted. If you used the English translation, your in-text citation and bibliography entry will refer to the translator and the English publication details. It is good practice to include the original title in italics, either in parentheses in the bibliography or within a footnote/endnote, along with its original publication information.

Q: What is the proper way to handle foreign language author names in Chicago style in-text citations?

A: Foreign language author names should be presented as they appear on the title page of the work you are citing. This means using their full names and any diacritical marks they may use. In the bibliography, the last name typically comes first, followed by the first name. In footnotes/endnotes and parenthetical citations, the order is usually first name then last name. Consistency is key.

Q: Do I need to translate foreign language titles in my Chicago style citations?

A: No, you do not need to translate foreign language titles in your Chicago style citations. You should present the title as it appears on the source. However, if you are quoting or paraphrasing the content and the title is crucial to your argument, you may provide an English translation in parentheses following the original title, especially in footnotes or endnotes.

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

A: When citing a multilingual website in Chicago style, include the author (if available), the title of the specific page or article, the name of the website (italicized), the publication or last updated date, and the URL. Crucially, clearly indicate the language of the content in your citation, for example, by adding "(Article in Spanish)" at the end of the entry.

Q: Is it acceptable to use the original language of a source even if I'm writing my paper in English, and how should I cite it?

A: Yes, it is acceptable and often academically valuable to cite a source in its original language even if your paper is in English, especially if linguistic nuances are important to your argument. When doing so, your in-text citations and bibliography entries should reflect the publication details of that original language edition. You may also want to explicitly state in your text or a note that you are citing the original language version.

Q: What are the rules for italicizing foreign titles in Chicago style citations?

A: In Chicago style, titles of major works like books, journals, magazines, and newspapers are generally italicized. Titles of shorter works, such as articles, chapters, and essays, are typically enclosed in quotation marks. This rule applies regardless of whether the title is in English or another language. When citing a foreign language book, italicize its original title.

Q: How do I handle multiple translations of the same foreign work in my Chicago style citations?

A: If you are referencing multiple translations of the same work, cite the specific translation you are using for each reference. In your bibliography, you should list each translated edition you consulted separately. In your in-text citations, refer to the author and publication details of the specific translation you are quoting or paraphrasing from.

Q: What is the best practice for citing a multilingual documentary or film in Chicago style?

A: For multilingual documentaries or films, cite the title (italicized), director, producer(s), production company, release year, and distributor or platform where it was accessed (e.g., DVD, streaming service, URL). Clearly note the original language(s) of the film and if English subtitles or dubbing were used. For online films, include the URL.

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