

chicago style paper formatting for art history paper

Chicago Style Paper Formatting for Art History Paper: A Comprehensive Guide

chicago style paper formatting for art history paper demands meticulous attention to detail, ensuring your scholarly work is presented with clarity, authority, and academic integrity. This guide offers a deep dive into the intricacies of Chicago style for art history, covering everything from initial setup to the final citation. Understanding these guidelines is crucial for art historians, students, and researchers aiming to communicate their findings effectively and adhere to established academic conventions. We will explore the essential components of a Chicago-style paper, including manuscript preparation, in-text citations, and the comprehensive bibliography, all tailored specifically for the nuances of art historical research. Mastering this formatting will not only enhance your paper's readability but also bolster its credibility within the academic community.

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Understanding the Core Principles of Chicago Style

Chicago style, officially known as the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS), is a widely adopted citation style, particularly prevalent in the humanities, including art history. It offers two distinct citation systems: the notes-bibliography system and the author-date system. For art history papers, the notes-bibliography system, which utilizes footnotes or endnotes and a bibliography, is overwhelmingly the preferred choice. This system allows for detailed explanations and commentary directly within the text through notes, which is invaluable for the complex and often descriptive nature of art historical analysis. The core principle is to provide readers with all the necessary information to locate and verify your sources without interrupting the flow of your prose. Adhering to these principles ensures your research is both accessible and academically rigorous.

The flexibility of the notes-bibliography system makes it particularly well-suited for art history because it allows for extensive discussion of the visual evidence and secondary scholarship. You can easily add contextual information, discuss alternative interpretations, or provide supplementary details in your notes without cluttering the main body of your paper. This system emphasizes the author's voice and the narrative of the research while still grounding it firmly in established scholarly sources. Familiarizing yourself with the specific requirements of the notes-bibliography system is the first crucial step in mastering Chicago style for your art history research.

Manuscript Preparation: The Foundation of Your Paper

General Formatting Guidelines

Before diving into citations, establishing a consistent and clean manuscript format is paramount. Chicago style generally requires double-spacing throughout the entire document, including block quotations and footnotes/endnotes. Use a standard, legible font such as Times New Roman or Arial, typically in 12-point size. Margins should be uniform, usually 1 inch on all sides. Indent the first line of each paragraph, except for the first paragraph following a section heading or a block quotation. This consistent visual presentation aids readability and professionalism.

Block quotations, which are five or more lines of prose, should be indented 0.5 inches from the left margin and double-spaced, without quotation marks. The citation for a block quotation appears after the final punctuation mark. Consistency in these basic formatting elements creates a polished and professional impression for your art history paper, allowing your research to take center stage.

Title Page Essentials

While not always mandatory for every assignment, a title page is often expected for formal papers and theses. It should include the full title of your paper, your name, the course name and number, the instructor's name, and the date. The title should be centered on the page and typically presented in title case. Your name and the course information should appear below the title, also centered. Ensure all information is accurate and presented clearly.

Abstract: A Concise Summary

An abstract is a brief, comprehensive summary of your paper's main points, findings, and arguments. It typically ranges from 150 to 250 words. The abstract should be placed on a separate page after the title page and before the main body of the text. It should be single-spaced and preceded by the word "Abstract" centered at the top of the page. The abstract is your opportunity to quickly convey the essence of your research to potential readers.

Running Heads and Page Numbers

Chicago style typically requires page numbers in the upper right-hand corner of each page, starting with the first page of the main text. Some instructors may require a running head, which is a shortened version of your title, to appear on each page before the page number. If a running head is required, it is usually placed on the left side of the header. Always check your instructor's specific requirements regarding running heads, as they can vary.

Citations: Giving Credit Where It's Due

Footnotes and Endnotes: The Chicago Approach

The cornerstone of Chicago style for art history is the use of footnotes or endnotes. Footnotes appear at the bottom of each page, while endnotes are collected at the end of the paper, before the bibliography. For art history papers, endnotes are often preferred for their tidiness, but consult your instructor's guidelines. Each note is referenced by a superscript Arabic numeral in the text, placed after the punctuation of the sentence or clause it refers to.

The first time a source is cited, the note should be complete, providing all necessary bibliographic information. Subsequent citations of the same source can be shortened to include the author's last name, a shortened title (if the title is long), and the page number. This distinction between the first and subsequent citations is crucial for proper Chicago style formatting.

Basic Footnote/Endnote Structure

The general structure for the first note of a source is as follows: [First Name Last Name], [Title of Book] ([City of Publication]: [Publisher], [Year of Publication]), [Page Number]. For example: E.H. Gombrich, *The Story of Art* (London: Phaidon Press, 1995), 12. For journal articles, it would be: [First Name Last Name], "[Title of Article]," [Title of Journal] [Volume Number], no. [Issue Number] (Year): [Page Number]. For example: Rosalind Krauss, "The Originality of the Avant-Garde and the Historicization of the Museum," in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 17. Ensure that all details are accurate and consistently formatted.

Citing Art Objects

Citing art objects requires specific attention to detail, as you are referring to a physical entity rather than a publication. The note should include the artist's name, the title of the work (in italics), the date of creation, the medium, the dimensions (if relevant and available), and the current location (museum or collection). For example: Vincent van Gogh, *Starry Night*, 1889, oil on canvas, 73.7 cm × 92.1 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

If you are referencing the artwork as it is reproduced in a publication, you would cite the publication and include the artwork details within the note. For instance, if referencing Gombrich's mention of *Starry Night*: E.H. Gombrich, *The Story of Art* (London: Phaidon Press, 1995), 464, fig. 239 (referencing Vincent van Gogh, *Starry Night*, 1889, oil on canvas, Museum of Modern Art, New York).

Citing Exhibition Catalogs and Museum Publications

Exhibition catalogs and museum publications are vital sources in art history. The citation format typically includes the author of the essay or entry, the title of the catalog (in italics), the exhibition details (if applicable), the name of the museum or gallery, the city, the year of publication, and the specific page number. For example: Robert Storr, "Jasper Johns: A Retrospective," in *Jasper Johns: A Retrospective* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1996), 25. If there is no author for the catalog itself, begin with the title of the catalog.

Citing Books and Journal Articles

As mentioned in the basic structure, books and journal articles have distinct citation formats. For books: [Author's First Name Last Name], [Title of Book] ([City of Publication]: [Publisher], [Year of Publication]), [Page Number]. For journal articles: [Author's First Name Last Name], "[Title of Article]," [Title of Journal] [Volume Number], no. [Issue Number] (Year): [Page Number]. Always verify author names, titles, publication details, and page numbers for accuracy.

Citing Websites and Digital Resources

In the digital age, citing online resources is common. For websites, include the author (if available), the title of the specific page or document, the name of the website, the publication date (if available), and the URL. Crucially, include an access date. For example: Sarah Miller, "Impressionism and the Poetics of Light," The Art Institute of Chicago Blog, October 27, 2022, <https://www.artic.edu/articles/1234/impressionism-and-the-poetics-of-light>, accessed November 15, 2023. If an author is not listed, start with the title of the page.

The Bibliography: A Comprehensive List of Sources

The bibliography is an alphabetical list of all the sources cited in your paper, appearing at the end, after the endnotes. Unlike footnotes/endnotes, the bibliography uses a hanging indent, meaning the first line of each entry is flush with the left margin, and subsequent lines are indented. It is typically double-spaced, though individual entries might have a single-spaced appearance within them, with a double space between entries.

The bibliography entries provide the full bibliographic information for each source, allowing readers to easily locate them. While the information is similar to the first note, the format differs. For instance, author names are listed last name first. This comprehensive list serves as a testament to the breadth of your research and provides a valuable resource for your readers.

Bibliography Format for Books

The bibliography format for a book is: [Last Name, First Name]. [Title of Book]. [City of Publication]: [Publisher], [Year of Publication]. For example: Gombrich, E.H. *The Story of Art*. London: Phaidon Press, 1995. Notice the last name comes first and is followed by a comma. The publisher is followed by a comma, and the year is the final element before the period.

Bibliography Format for Journal Articles

For journal articles, the bibliography format is: [Last Name, First Name]. "[Title of Article]." [Title of Journal] [Volume Number], no. [Issue Number] ([Year]): [Page Numbers]. For example: Krauss, Rosalind. "The Originality of the Avant-Garde and the Historicization of the Museum." In *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, 11-29. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985. The page range is important here, not just a single page number.

Bibliography Format for Exhibition Catalogs and Museum Publications

The bibliography entry for an exhibition catalog or museum publication is: [Author's Last Name, First Name]. "[Title of Catalog]." [Exhibition Details, if applicable]. [City of Publication]: [Museum or Publisher], [Year of Publication]. For example: Storr, Robert. "Jasper Johns: A Retrospective." In *Jasper Johns: A Retrospective*, 25-50. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1996. Again, ensure all details are precisely reproduced.

Bibliography Format for Websites and Digital Resources

The bibliography entry for a website is: [Author's Last Name, First Name]. "[Title of Page/Document]." [Name of Website]. [Date of Publication, if available]. Accessed [Month Day, Year]. [URL]. For example: Miller, Sarah. "Impressionism and the Poetics of Light." The Art Institute of Chicago Blog. October 27, 2022. Accessed November 15, 2023. <https://www.artic.edu/articles/1234/impressionism-and-the-poetics-of-light>. Including the access date is vital for online sources that may change.

Tables and Figures: Visualizing Your Research

Formatting Tables

Tables are used to present data or information in a structured, columnar format. Each table should be numbered consecutively (Table 1, Table 2, etc.) and given a clear, descriptive title above it. All tables should be double-spaced, and any explanatory notes should appear below the table. Avoid using vertical lines in tables; horizontal lines are generally acceptable for separating rows and columns.

Formatting Figures (Images)

Figures in an art history paper primarily refer to images of artworks, photographs, or illustrations. Each figure should be numbered consecutively (Figure 1, Figure 2, etc.). The figure number and title should appear below the image. It is crucial to ensure that your images are of high quality and clearly presented.

Captions and Credits

Captions are essential for figures and provide key information about the image. For an artwork, the caption should include the artist's name, the title of the work (in italics), the date of creation, the medium, the dimensions, and the current location. The credit line, indicating the source of the image and any necessary permissions, should also be included. For example:

- Figure 1. Vincent van Gogh, *Starry Night*, 1889, oil on canvas, 73.7 cm × 92.1 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York. © 2023 Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA/Art Resource, New York.

For other types of figures, the caption should provide a clear description and the source.

The meticulous formatting of tables and figures, including clear numbering, descriptive titles, and accurate captions, enhances the visual literacy of your art history paper. It ensures that your audience can fully understand and appreciate the visual evidence you are presenting. Paying close attention to these details, especially the credit lines for artworks, is vital for academic integrity and for respecting the intellectual property of artists and institutions.

Final Review and Proofreading

Before submitting your art history paper, a thorough review and meticulous proofreading process are indispensable. This stage involves checking for adherence to all Chicago style guidelines, including citation accuracy, bibliography formatting, and general manuscript presentation. Read your paper aloud to catch awkward phrasing and grammatical errors. Ensure consistency in your note-taking style and bibliography entries. Verify that all figures and tables are correctly numbered and captioned. A final sweep for typos, punctuation errors, and grammatical mistakes will significantly elevate the quality and professionalism of your work. Remember, even the most brilliant scholarship can be undermined by careless presentation.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q: What is the primary difference between footnotes and endnotes in Chicago style for art history?

A: The primary difference lies in their placement. Footnotes appear at the bottom of the page where the reference occurs, while endnotes are compiled at the end of the paper, before the bibliography. For art history, endnotes are often preferred for aesthetic reasons, but it's crucial to confirm your instructor's preference.

Q: How do I cite an artwork that I am viewing in person at a museum?

A: When citing an artwork you've seen in person, your footnote or endnote should include the artist's name, the title of the work (italicized), the date of creation, the medium, dimensions (if known), and the museum or collection where it is housed. For example: Frida Kahlo, *The Two Fridas*, 1939, oil on canvas, 173.5 cm × 173 cm, Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City.

Q: What is the difference in formatting for a book citation in a footnote versus the bibliography?

A: The main differences are the order of the author's name and the use of punctuation. In a footnote, the author's name is typically [First Name Last Name], and the citation ends with the page number. In the bibliography, the author's name is [Last Name, First Name], and the entry includes the full page range of the source if applicable, not just a single page.

Q: How do I cite a work of art that is reproduced in a book or catalog?

A: When citing a reproduction, you primarily cite the publication where you found the image. In the footnote or endnote, you would list the publication details and then, within the note or after it, provide the artwork details. For example: Meyer Schapiro, "The Still Life as Object and Symbol in Cézanne," in *Modern Art: 19th and 20th Centuries* (New York: George Braziller, 1978), 31, repr. Paul Cézanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire*, 1902–04, oil on canvas, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia.

Q: Can I use the author-date system for an art history paper in Chicago style?

A: While Chicago style offers the author-date system, the notes-bibliography system (footnotes/endnotes and bibliography) is almost universally preferred and expected for art history papers. This system better accommodates the detailed commentary and citation needs of art historical research. Always confirm with your instructor.

Q: What are the key elements of a good bibliography entry for an exhibition catalog?

A: A strong bibliography entry for an exhibition catalog includes the author of the essay or entry, the title of the catalog (*italicized*), the exhibition's location and dates (if applicable), the publisher or museum, the city of publication, and the year.

Q: How should I handle multiple authors in a Chicago style citation?

A: For footnotes/endnotes, if there are two authors, list both names as they appear on the title page. For three or more authors, list the first author's name followed by "et al." (meaning "and others"). In the bibliography, for two or three authors, list all names. For four or more authors, list the first author followed by "et al."

Q: What is a "hanging indent" and why is it used in the bibliography?

A: A hanging indent means the first line of each bibliography entry is flush with the left margin, and all subsequent lines are indented. This formatting makes it easier for readers to scan the bibliography and locate specific entries by author's last name.

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