

chicago manual citing indirectly

Understanding Chicago Manual Citing Indirectly: A Comprehensive Guide

chicago manual citing indirectly is a crucial skill for academics, researchers, and writers working with sources that are not directly accessed but are referenced by another author. Navigating the intricacies of the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) when dealing with secondary sources, or indirect citations, can be challenging. This guide aims to demystify the process, providing a thorough understanding of how to properly attribute information that you've encountered through another publication. We will explore the rationale behind indirect citations, the specific formatting requirements for both notes and bibliographies, and common pitfalls to avoid when citing indirectly in Chicago style. Whether you are writing a history paper, a literature review, or any academic work, mastering this aspect of Chicago style will enhance your credibility and ensure accurate scholarly practice.

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Understanding Indirect Citations

Indirect citations, often referred to as secondary sources, occur when an author cites a work that they themselves have not read or consulted directly. Instead, the information is found within a work that is readily available. For instance, you might read a contemporary book that quotes a historical document, and you wish to reference that historical document. If you haven't seen the original document but are relying on the citation within the contemporary book, you are engaging in an indirect citation. This practice requires careful attribution to acknowledge the original source of the information while also recognizing the intermediary source through which you encountered it.

The Chicago Manual of Style, a widely adopted citation style in humanities and social sciences, provides specific guidelines for handling these situations to maintain academic integrity and clarity for the reader. Properly executing indirect citations ensures that readers can trace the origin of the information and assess its context, even if the original source is obscure or difficult to obtain. The goal is to credit both the original

author and the author who made the original work accessible to you.

Why Cite Indirectly?

There are several valid reasons why an author might need to cite indirectly. Often, the primary source might be rare, out of print, or inaccessible due to geographical limitations or language barriers. In such cases, a scholar's secondary citation offers the only practical route to the information. Furthermore, a secondary source might provide a particularly insightful commentary or analysis of a primary source, making it valuable to reference the author's interpretation rather than just the original text, especially if the original text is lengthy or complex.

Another common scenario involves historical research where a later historian has meticulously documented and quoted an earlier, often unpublished, source. Rather than spending considerable effort to locate and verify the original manuscript, citing the secondary source that has already done the work is a pragmatic approach. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that relying on secondary sources can introduce potential for error, as the intermediary author may have misquoted, misinterpreted, or taken information out of context. Therefore, when possible, consulting the original source remains the preferred academic practice.

Chicago Style: The Basics of Indirect Citations

The Chicago Manual of Style, in its most recent edition, advocates for clarity and transparency when citing indirectly. The fundamental principle is to acknowledge the original source of the information while simultaneously indicating that you encountered it through a secondary source. This is typically achieved by using specific phrasing within your citation to signal the indirect nature of the reference. The aim is to guide your reader to the secondary source you used, but also to allow them to pursue the primary source if desired and feasible.

The core of citing indirectly in Chicago style involves mentioning the original author and work, followed by the phrase "as quoted in" or "cited in," and then providing the details of the secondary source where you found the quotation or information. This structure clearly delineates the chain of citation. For example, if you found a quote from Shakespeare in a modern literary analysis, your citation would reflect this pathway.

Footnotes and Endnotes for Indirect Citations

In Chicago style, notes (whether footnotes at the bottom of the page or endnotes at the end of the document) are the primary mechanism for providing citation details. When citing indirectly, the note should include the original author and title, followed by the "as quoted in" or "cited in" phrase, and then the citation for the secondary source. The specific format will vary slightly depending on whether it's a full note or a shortened note in subsequent references.

For a first-time indirect citation in a note, the structure generally follows this pattern: Author of Original Work, Title of Original Work, Year of Original Publication, page number (if applicable), as quoted in Author of Secondary Source, Title of Secondary Source (Place of Publication: Publisher, Year), page number where the quote appears.

For example:

- Albert Einstein, *Relativity: The Special and the General Theory* (1920), 75, as quoted in Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* (New York: Bantam Books, 1988), 50.
- This format is essential for giving credit where it is due and for allowing readers to locate the information themselves. The precise details—such as the year of original publication or specific page numbers of the original—may be omitted if they are not readily available or relevant, but the inclusion of the secondary source is paramount.

Bibliography Entries for Indirect Citations

While the primary method for documenting indirect citations is through notes, the bibliography also plays a role. In Chicago style, the bibliography typically lists all sources consulted and cited in the text. When citing indirectly, the bibliography entry should reflect the source you actually consulted—the secondary source. The primary source is generally not listed in the bibliography unless you have also consulted it independently.

The bibliography entry for an indirect citation will therefore focus on the secondary source. It will include the author's full name, the title of their work, and publication details. The phrase "as quoted in" or "cited in" is not typically included in the main bibliography entry itself. However, some scholars prefer to add a note within the bibliography entry to indicate that the work is being cited indirectly, though this is not a strict

requirement of the CMOS.

A typical bibliography entry for a book would be:

- Hawking, Stephen. *A Brief History of Time*. New York: Bantam Books, 1988.
- If the secondary source is an article, the entry would follow the format for articles, including the journal title, volume, issue, and page numbers. The key is that the bibliography directs the reader to the specific book or article you used.

Common Scenarios and Examples

Understanding common scenarios can help clarify the application of Chicago style for indirect citations. One frequent situation involves referencing classical texts or historical documents that are often quoted in modern scholarly works. For example, if you are writing about Plato and you find a specific passage quoted in a contemporary philosophy journal, you would cite the journal article, not try to locate the original Platonic dialogue if you haven't read it directly.

Another example could be in literary criticism, where a critic discusses a letter written by a famous author. If you read about this letter and its contents in a biography, your citation would point to the biography, not the original letter itself (unless you have the letter's publication details within the biography).

Here are a few more specific examples:

- **Footnote:** Socrates, *The Apology*, as quoted in Martha Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 350.
- **Bibliography Entry:** Nussbaum, Martha. *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- **Footnote for an article:** John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, bk. 2, chap. 1, sec. 1, as cited in Daniel N. Robinson, "The Mind as an Active Force," *The American Scholar* 55, no. 2 (Spring 1986): 220.

- **Bibliography Entry for an article:** Robinson, Daniel N. "The Mind as an Active Force." *The American Scholar* 55, no. 2 (Spring 1986): 217–228.

When to Avoid Indirect Citations

While indirect citations are sometimes necessary, there are situations where they should be avoided. The primary reason to avoid citing indirectly is when the original source is readily accessible to you. In academic writing, direct engagement with primary sources is highly valued. Consulting the original text allows you to interpret the material yourself, verify the accuracy of the secondary source's representation, and avoid propagating potential errors or misinterpretations.

If you have the means to obtain the original work, whether through a library, an online archive, or another accessible resource, it is always preferable to cite it directly. This demonstrates a deeper level of research and a more thorough understanding of the material. Furthermore, if the secondary source's commentary or quotation is crucial to your argument, you should still strive to locate and cite the primary source to ensure your analysis is grounded in firsthand evidence.

Best Practices for Citing Indirectly

To ensure accuracy and maintain scholarly integrity when citing indirectly in Chicago style, several best practices should be followed. First and foremost, always aim to find the original source if at all possible. If you must rely on a secondary source, take meticulous notes, clearly distinguishing between the original author's words and the secondary author's commentary.

When noting the indirect citation, be precise. Include all relevant publication details for the secondary source. Double-check that you have correctly attributed the information to its original author while clearly indicating that you accessed it through the secondary source. For instance, ensure you use the correct phrasing like "as quoted in" or "cited in."

Finally, consider adding a brief explanatory note in your text or in a footnote if the indirect citation is particularly significant or if there's a potential for confusion. This proactive approach can enhance clarity for your readers and demonstrate your commitment to accurate scholarship. Always consult the latest edition of the Chicago Manual of Style for the most up-to-date guidelines, as citation rules can evolve.

In summary, citing indirectly in Chicago style requires a careful balance between acknowledging the

original author and crediting the intermediary source. By following these guidelines and best practices, you can ensure that your work is both accurate and compliant with academic standards, providing a clear and traceable path for your readers.

Q: What is the primary purpose of citing indirectly in Chicago style?

A: The primary purpose of citing indirectly in Chicago style is to acknowledge the original source of information that you have encountered through another author's work, while also clearly identifying the secondary source through which you accessed that information. This allows readers to trace the information's origin and consult the original material if they choose.

Q: When should I consider citing indirectly?

A: You should consider citing indirectly when the primary source material is inaccessible, rare, out of print, or when a secondary source provides a particularly valuable commentary or quotation from the primary source that is difficult to access otherwise. However, it is always preferable to consult the primary source if it is readily available.

Q: What is the correct phrasing to use for indirect citations in Chicago notes?

A: The correct phrasing to use for indirect citations in Chicago notes is typically "as quoted in" or "cited in." For example, "John Doe, Original Work, page number, as quoted in Jane Smith, Secondary Work (Publisher, Year), page number."

Q: Should the original source be included in my bibliography if I cite it indirectly?

A: Generally, no. Your bibliography should list the sources you actually consulted. Therefore, if you cite indirectly, only the secondary source you used should appear in your bibliography.

Q: Can I cite a quote found in a secondary source without using "as quoted in"?

A: No, you should not cite a quote found in a secondary source without indicating that it is an indirect citation. Omitting phrases like "as quoted in" can be misleading and suggest that you have directly consulted the original work, which is academically inaccurate.

Q: What if the secondary source does not provide the original publication date or details for the primary source?

A: If the secondary source does not provide full details for the primary source, you should include what information is available. However, it is crucial to provide complete citation information for the secondary source you consulted.

Q: Is it acceptable to cite a paraphrase indirectly?

A: Yes, the same principle applies to paraphrased information. If you are paraphrasing an idea or statement that you encountered in a secondary source, you should still note that you accessed it indirectly through that secondary source.

Q: How does citing indirectly impact the credibility of my research?

A: Citing indirectly can sometimes be perceived as less rigorous than direct citation, as it introduces a layer of intermediation. However, when done correctly and when the primary source is genuinely inaccessible, it is an accepted academic practice. Transparency and accuracy in acknowledging the source pathway are key to maintaining credibility.

Q: Are there specific rules for citing indirectly if the original work is very old, like ancient texts?

A: For very old or classical texts, the Chicago Manual of Style might have specific guidelines for how to handle widely available editions or translations. Often, you cite the specific edition you consulted, and if you are referencing it through a secondary analysis, you would still follow the indirect citation protocol, indicating the secondary source.

Q: What is the difference between citing a work that quotes another work and citing indirectly?

A: Citing a work that quotes another work is direct citation of the quote, but the quoted work itself might be a secondary source to the author you are reading. Citing indirectly specifically refers to your own act of referencing a source you have not read directly, but rather found referenced by another author. The former is an author's choice of citation; the latter is your method of referencing.

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