

chicago manual of style 17th edition

thesis citation

chicago manual of style 17th edition thesis citation is a crucial element for any academic researcher aiming for clarity, credibility, and adherence to scholarly conventions. Navigating the intricacies of citation for theses and dissertations under this widely respected style guide can seem daunting, but with a systematic approach, it becomes manageable. This comprehensive article delves deep into the essential principles and practices of citing sources within the 17th edition of The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) specifically for thesis and dissertation work. We will explore the fundamental citation systems, detailed formatting requirements for various source types, and best practices for ensuring accuracy and consistency throughout your lengthy academic projects.

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Understanding the Chicago Citation Systems

The Chicago Manual of Style, in its 17th edition, offers two distinct systems for citing sources: the Notes-Bibliography system and the Author-Date system. Both are widely accepted in academia, but their application can vary depending on the discipline and the specific requirements of an institution or advisor. Understanding the fundamental differences and knowing when to use each is the first step toward successful thesis citation.

The Notes-Bibliography system is characterized by the use of numbered footnotes or endnotes, each corresponding to a citation in the text. A comprehensive bibliography of all cited sources is also required at the end of the work. This system is often favored in humanities disciplines like literature, history, and art history, where extensive commentary or elaboration on sources might be necessary alongside the citation itself.

The Author-Date system, on the other hand, relies on brief in-text citations that include the

author's last name and the year of publication, often accompanied by a page number. These in-text citations correspond to a full reference list at the end of the document, which provides complete publication details for every source cited. This system is more commonly found in the social sciences and natural sciences, valuing brevity and immediate access to source information within the text.

Author-Date System for Theses and Dissertations

When employing the Author-Date system for a thesis or dissertation, the primary goal is to provide a clear and concise link between the text and the full bibliographic details of the sources used. This system emphasizes the immediacy of information retrieval for the reader.

In-text citations typically take the form of (Author Last Name Year, Page Number). For example, a direct quote might appear as: "The impact of the policy was profound" (Smith 2021, 45). If paraphrasing or summarizing information, the page number may be optional if the entire work or a significant section is being referenced, but it is generally best practice to include it for precision. If an author has multiple works published in the same year, they are distinguished by adding lowercase letters to the year (e.g., Smith 2021a, 2021b).

The reference list at the end of the thesis or dissertation is crucial. It must contain an alphabetized list of all sources cited in the text. Each entry provides complete information, allowing readers to locate the original works. The formatting for each source type within the reference list adheres to specific CMOS guidelines, ensuring uniformity and professionalism.

Notes-Bibliography System for Theses and Dissertations

The Notes-Bibliography system offers a different approach, focusing on sequential numbering to link the text to explanatory notes and a concluding bibliography. This system allows for more flexibility in elaborating on sources or providing additional context.

Footnotes, typically appearing at the bottom of the page, or endnotes, grouped at the end of chapters or the entire document, are used to cite sources. A superscript number is placed in the text at the point where the citation is needed. The corresponding note then provides the bibliographic information.

The first full citation for a source in the notes will include all relevant details. Subsequent citations for the same source are typically shortened, often using the author's last name, a shortened title, and the page number. The bibliography at the end of the work provides a comprehensive list of all sources consulted and cited, formatted similarly to the reference list in the Author-Date system, but without the in-text parenthetical citations.

Formatting Citations for Common Source Types

Regardless of the chosen citation system, accurately formatting each type of source is paramount. The Chicago Manual of Style provides detailed guidelines for a wide array of materials encountered in thesis research.

Books

Citing books is a foundational skill. For a book with one author, the basic format in a note would be: Author First Name Last Name, Title of Book (Place of Publication: Publisher, Year), Page Number. In the Author-Date system's reference list, it would be: Author Last Name, First Name. Title of Book. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year.

For books with multiple authors, editors, or translators, specific rules apply regarding how names are presented and whether the role (editor, translator) is indicated. For instance, with two authors, both names are typically given in notes and the reference list. For three or more authors, the first author's name is given, followed by "et al." in the notes, but all authors' names may be listed in the reference list if the institution or advisor requires it.

Journal Articles

Citing journal articles requires precision regarding volume, issue number, and page ranges. In a note, the format is generally: Author First Name Last Name, "Title of Article," Title of Journal Volume, no. Issue (Year): Page Number. The Author-Date reference list entry would be: Author Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." Title of Journal Volume, no. Issue (Year): Page Numbers.

It's essential to correctly identify and format the journal title, volume, issue, and publication year. For online journal articles accessed through databases, inclusion of a DOI (Digital Object Identifier) or a stable URL is often required. The DOI is preferred as it is a permanent link.

Websites and Online Resources

Citing online sources can be challenging due to their dynamic nature. For websites, the key information includes the author (if available), the title of the specific page or document, the website name, the publication or last updated date, and the URL. For notes: Author First Name Last Name, "Title of Page," Website Name, Publication Date, accessed Date of Access, URL. For reference lists: Author Last Name, First Name. "Title of Page." Website Name. Publication Date. Accessed Date of Access. URL.

If no author is listed, the entry begins with the title of the page or document. If no

publication date is available, use "n.d." for "no date." Always aim to provide the most stable and accessible version of the online source.

Dissertations and Theses

Citing your own or other scholars' dissertations and theses follows specific conventions. This is particularly important when referencing previous work in your field. For a note, the format is generally: Author First Name Last Name, "Title of Dissertation" (PhD diss., University Name, Year), Page Number. In the Author-Date reference list: Author Last Name, First Name. "Title of Dissertation." PhD diss., University Name, Year.

Ensure you accurately identify the type of degree (e.g., PhD diss., MA thesis), the university that awarded it, and the year of completion. If the dissertation or thesis is published or available online through a repository like ProQuest, that information should also be included.

Audiovisual Materials

For audiovisual materials such as films, documentaries, or recorded lectures, the citation should include key creators, the title, and publication details. For a note: First Name Last Name of Director, dir., Title of Film, directed by First Name Last Name of Director (Year; Distributor, Year of Release), Medium, Time.

In the Author-Date reference list: Last Name, First Name. Title of Film. Directed by First Name Last Name. Year of Release. Distributor. Medium.

Details like the director, producer, distributor, and format (DVD, Blu-ray, streaming) are important. For specific segments or interviews within a larger work, further detail might be required.

Formatting Footnotes and Endnotes (Notes-Bibliography)

When using the Notes-Bibliography system, the meticulous formatting of footnotes and endnotes is critical for maintaining academic integrity and clarity. Each note must correspond precisely to the superscript number placed in the text, serving as an immediate reference point for the reader.

The first time a source is cited in a note, it should be presented in its full bibliographic form. This includes the author's name (first name first), the title of the work in italics, publication details (place, publisher, year), and the specific page number(s) being referenced. For instance: Jane Doe, *The History of Ideas* (New York: Academic Press,

2020), 75.

Subsequent references to the same source are typically shortened. This shortened form usually includes the author's last name, a concise version of the title (if it's lengthy), and the specific page number. For example: Doe, History of Ideas, 92. If citing a different work by the same author, the title is essential to differentiate between them.

Formatting the Bibliography (Notes-Bibliography)

The bibliography, appearing at the end of the thesis or dissertation when using the Notes-Bibliography system, serves as a comprehensive catalog of all sources that were cited within the document. It is typically arranged in alphabetical order by the author's last name, providing full bibliographic details for each entry.

The formatting of each entry in the bibliography mirrors that of the first full note for that source, with a few key distinctions. Notably, the author's last name precedes their first name, and the first line of each entry is typically flush with the left margin, with subsequent lines indented (a hanging indent). This visual formatting aids in rapid scanning and identification of entries.

For example, a book entry would appear as: Doe, Jane. The History of Ideas. New York: Academic Press, 2020.

Consistency in formatting, including the use of punctuation and italics, is paramount. Ensuring that every cited source is present in the bibliography and that the bibliography contains only cited sources is crucial for academic rigor.

Formatting the Reference List (Author-Date)

The Author-Date system requires a reference list, often titled "References" or "Works Cited," at the end of the thesis or dissertation. This list contains all the sources that have been cited within the text, presented in alphabetical order by the author's last name.

Each entry in the reference list provides the full bibliographic information necessary for readers to locate the original source. The formatting for each entry is consistent and follows specific patterns for different source types, such as books, journal articles, and websites. The primary purpose is to provide a complete, unadorned list of sources that directly support the in-text citations.

For a book entry in the reference list: Doe, Jane. The History of Ideas. New York: Academic Press, 2020. For a journal article: Smith, John. "Theories of Relativity." Journal of Physics 15, no. 2 (2019): 112-130.

The use of hanging indents for entries with multiple lines is standard practice for readability. Accuracy in every detail, from the author's name to the publication year and page numbers, is essential.

Common Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them

Despite careful attention, several common pitfalls can arise when applying the Chicago Manual of Style 17th edition for thesis citation. One of the most frequent errors is inconsistency in formatting. This can manifest as variations in punctuation, capitalization, or the inclusion of specific bibliographic details across different citations of the same source type.

Another common issue is the incorrect or incomplete citation of online resources. Websites can change, authors may be uncredited, and publication dates can be elusive. Over-reliance on secondary sources without consulting primary material can also lead to citation errors, as the details of the secondary source might not accurately reflect the original.

To avoid these pitfalls, it is essential to develop a thorough understanding of the specific CMOS guidelines relevant to your research materials. Utilizing citation management software can significantly help in maintaining consistency, but it should not replace careful proofreading and verification. Always cross-reference your citations against the manual and your advisor's specific instructions.

Furthermore, ensuring that every in-text citation has a corresponding entry in the reference list or bibliography, and vice versa, is critical. Missing citations or extraneous entries can undermine the credibility of your work. A meticulous review process, involving multiple readings focused solely on citation accuracy, is highly recommended.

Maintaining Consistency and Accuracy

Maintaining consistency and accuracy in all Chicago-style citations within a thesis or dissertation is not merely a matter of adhering to a style guide; it is fundamental to the integrity and scholarly value of your research. Inconsistent or inaccurate citations can lead to confusion, diminish your credibility, and even raise suspicions of plagiarism.

To ensure consistency, it is advisable to create a master citation template for each type of source you will be using. This template should be based directly on the 17th edition of the CMOS and should be applied uniformly throughout your document. Regular review of your work against this template, and against the manual itself, is indispensable.

Accuracy requires a commitment to verifying every piece of bibliographic information. Double-check author names, titles, publication dates, volume and issue numbers, page ranges, and URLs or DOIs. If a source is available in multiple formats (e.g., print and

online), cite the version you actually consulted.

Developing a system for tracking your sources as you research is also beneficial. This could involve detailed note-taking, using citation management software, or maintaining a research log. Proactive attention to citation details from the outset of your research process will save considerable time and effort during the final stages of thesis preparation.

Q: What is the difference between the Notes-Bibliography and Author-Date systems in the Chicago Manual of Style 17th Edition for theses?

A: The Notes-Bibliography system uses numbered footnotes or endnotes for in-text citations and a comprehensive bibliography at the end. The Author-Date system uses brief parenthetical in-text citations (Author Year, Page) and a reference list at the end.

Q: How do I cite a book with multiple authors using Chicago style for my thesis?

A: For a book with two authors, list both names in notes and reference list. For three or more authors, in the notes, list the first author followed by "et al." In the reference list, you may list all authors or use the "et al." convention, depending on advisor preference and the nature of the thesis.

Q: What is the correct format for citing a website in my thesis according to Chicago Manual of Style 17th Edition?

A: For notes, use: Author (if available), "Title of Page," Website Name, publication date, accessed date, URL. For reference lists: Author (Last, First). "Title of Page." Website Name. Publication date. Accessed date. URL. Use "n.d." if no date is available.

Q: How should I format the bibliography for my thesis if I am using the Notes-Bibliography system in Chicago style?

A: The bibliography should be alphabetized by author's last name. Each entry includes full bibliographic details, with the first line flush left and subsequent lines indented (hanging indent). The author's last name precedes their first name.

Q: What information is required when citing a

dissertation or thesis from another university in my Chicago-style thesis?

A: You need to include the author's name, the title of the dissertation/thesis, the type of degree (e.g., PhD diss., MA thesis), the university that awarded it, and the year of completion. If available, include publication information or a stable URL.

Q: Can I use page numbers in my in-text citations for the Author-Date system if I am referencing an entire work or a significant section?

A: While page numbers are mandatory for direct quotes, they are generally optional for paraphrased or summarized information. However, it is best practice to include page numbers in author-date citations whenever possible to enhance precision and allow readers to pinpoint the exact location of the information.

Q: What is a DOI, and why is it important when citing online journal articles in my thesis using Chicago style?

A: A DOI (Digital Object Identifier) is a unique, persistent identifier for digital objects. It is important because it provides a stable, permanent link to an online article, even if the website or URL changes. It is preferred over a URL whenever available.

Q: How do I handle citations for sources with no author in my thesis according to the Chicago Manual of Style 17th Edition?

A: If no author is listed for a source, begin the citation with the title of the work. For websites, this means the title of the page or document. For books, it would be the book title. The rest of the citation follows the standard format for that source type.

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