

chicago manual of style citing geographic atlases

chicago manual of style citing geographic atlases is a crucial skill for researchers, academics, and anyone aiming for precision in their written work. Accurately referencing sources, especially multifaceted ones like atlases, ensures academic integrity and allows readers to verify information. This comprehensive guide delves into the intricacies of citing geographic atlases according to the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS), covering both notes-bibliography and author-date systems. We will explore the essential elements required for a complete citation, discuss variations for different types of atlases, and provide practical examples to illustrate best practices for citing atlases in footnotes, endnotes, and bibliographies. Understanding these nuances is vital for producing scholarly work that adheres to established citation standards, making your research accessible and credible.

Table of Contents

Understanding the Chicago Manual of Style for Atlases

Essential Elements of Citing Geographic Atlases

Citing Atlases in the Notes-Bibliography System

Citing Atlases in the Author-Date System

Variations in Atlas Citation

Digital and Online Atlases

Case Studies and Examples

Conclusion: Mastering Atlas Citations

Understanding the Chicago Manual of Style for Atlases

The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) provides a detailed framework for scholarly citation, and its guidelines for citing geographic atlases are designed for clarity and completeness. Whether you are using the notes-bibliography system or the author-date system, the core principle remains the same: to provide sufficient information for your reader to locate and consult the original source. Atlases, being compilations of maps and often extensive geographic data, require careful attention to detail in their citation to accurately reflect the specific information being referenced.

CMOS recognizes that different source types necessitate different citation formats. For geographic atlases, this means accounting for elements such as the title, publisher, publication date, and importantly, the specific map or page being referenced. The goal is to move beyond a general citation of the atlas as a whole to pinpointing the exact location of the information utilized. This meticulous approach is what distinguishes rigorous academic writing.

Essential Elements of Citing Geographic Atlases

To effectively cite a geographic atlas in any Chicago style, certain key pieces of information are indispensable. These elements ensure that your citation is both informative and searchable for your audience. Failing to include any of these can hinder a reader's ability to find the source material, thereby undermining the transparency of your research.

Core Bibliographic Information

The foundational components of an atlas citation include the author(s) or editor(s) (if applicable), the full title of the atlas, the place of publication, the publisher, and the year of publication. For atlases, the title is particularly important as it often contains descriptive information about the scope and focus of the maps within. Pay close attention to subtitles, as they can be crucial for distinguishing between different editions or thematic atlases.

Specific Location of Information

Beyond the general bibliographic data, citing an atlas effectively requires specifying the precise location of the information you have used. This typically involves citing the map title, if it has one, the page number(s) where the map appears, and potentially the plate number or grid reference if the atlas employs such systems. This level of detail is paramount when referencing specific geographic features, boundaries, or statistical data presented on a particular map.

Edition and Print Information

If the atlas is not the first edition, it is important to indicate the edition number. Atlases are frequently updated to reflect changing political boundaries, geographic discoveries, or cartographic improvements. Specifying the edition helps the reader understand the context of the information and ensures accuracy if multiple editions of the same atlas exist. If you are citing a specific print run or impression, that information can also be included for further specificity, though it is less commonly required than the edition.

Citing Atlases in the Notes-Bibliography System

The notes-bibliography system, favored in many humanities disciplines, uses footnotes or endnotes to cite sources and a bibliography to provide a full

list of all sources consulted. Citing geographic atlases within this system requires careful attention to the format for both notes and the bibliography.

Footnotes and Endnotes for Atlases

In a footnote or endnote, you provide a condensed but complete citation of the atlas, pointing to the specific location of the information. The format typically includes the author/editor (if named), the atlas title (*italicized*), publication details, and then the specific page or map reference. For instance, a note might look like: "1. National Geographic Society, *The Times Atlas of the World*, 12th ed. (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 2007), plate 45, map of Western Europe." The initial citation in the first note should be more complete than subsequent ones, which can be shortened.

Bibliography Entry for Atlases

The bibliography entry for an atlas consolidates the essential bibliographic information without the specific page or map reference that is found in the notes. This entry provides a comprehensive overview of the atlas. The format is generally: Author/Editor (Last Name, First Name). Atlas Title. Edition (if not the first). Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication. For an atlas with no named author or editor, you would start with the title. Example: Oxford Atlas of the World. 9th ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Citing Atlases in the Author-Date System

The author-date system, common in social sciences, relies on in-text citations that include the author's last name and the publication year, with full source details provided in a reference list at the end of the document. Citing atlases in this system requires a slightly different approach to integrate the source information seamlessly.

In-Text Citations for Atlases

In-text citations for atlases typically include the author's last name and the publication year. If the atlas has no author, the title (or a shortened version) is used instead. For instance: (National Geographic Society 2007). If you are referring to a specific map or page, you might include that information parenthetically or in the text itself, depending on the context and how precise you need to be. For example, you might write: "As shown on the map of Western Europe in the *Times Atlas of the World* (National Geographic Society 2007, plate 45)..." or simply state the fact and follow with the citation (National Geographic Society 2007, plate 45).

Reference List Entry for Atlases

The reference list entry in the author-date system is similar to the bibliography entry in the notes-bibliography system, but it follows a slightly different order and includes the publication year immediately after the author. The format is generally: Author/Editor (Last Name, First Name). Year of Publication. Atlas Title. Edition (if not the first). Place of Publication: Publisher. Example: National Geographic Society. 2007. The Times Atlas of the World. 12th ed. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society. If no author is listed, you begin with the title and year. Example: Oxford University Press. 2006. Oxford Atlas of the World. 9th ed. New York: Oxford University Press.

Variations in Atlas Citation

The general guidelines for citing atlases can accommodate various types of atlases and specific circumstances that may arise during research. Being aware of these variations ensures that your citations remain accurate and compliant with CMOS standards.

Thematic and Specialized Atlases

When citing thematic atlases (e.g., historical atlases, geological atlases, or atlases of a specific region), it is crucial to include the specific subject matter in the title to clearly identify the nature of the maps. If the atlas has a primary editor or compiler who is more prominent than the publisher, they should be cited as the author. For example, if you are citing a historical atlas of the Civil War, the title would reflect this, and the editor would be listed first.

Atlases Without Named Authors or Editors

Many atlases, particularly those produced by large cartographic organizations or institutions, may not list a specific author or editor. In such cases, CMOS instructs you to treat the publishing organization or the title of the atlas itself as the author. For example, you would start the citation with "National Geographic Society" or, if no organization is clearly designated as the author, begin with the title of the atlas. This ensures that the source is still attributable and traceable.

Citing Individual Maps within an Atlas

Often, researchers cite specific maps within a larger atlas rather than the atlas as a whole. CMOS recommends providing the map's title (if it has one), followed by the atlas's publication details. This is particularly important

if the map has a distinct title or if you are referencing specific cartographic representations. In notes, this would be the most specific element after the atlas title. In the bibliography or reference list, the focus remains on the atlas itself, but the text using the citation would clarify which map was consulted.

Digital and Online Atlases

The increasing prevalence of digital and online atlases presents new challenges and considerations for citation. CMOS provides guidelines for citing electronic resources, which are applicable to digital atlases.

Components of Digital Atlas Citations

When citing an online atlas, you will need to include the same core bibliographic information as for a print atlas, along with the URL and the date you accessed the resource. This helps readers locate the dynamic online content. The format often includes the title of the atlas, the name of the website or platform, and the date of access. Example: Google Earth. Accessed March 15, 2024. <https://earth.google.com/>.

Database and Subscription Atlas Citations

If you are accessing an atlas through a subscription database (e.g., within an academic library's resources), your citation should reflect this. Include the name of the database and, if possible, a stable URL or DOI. The publisher of the database or the platform hosting it should also be identified. This ensures that the source is retrievable through the specific portal used.

Case Studies and Examples

To solidify understanding, let's examine a few practical examples of how to cite geographic atlases under different scenarios, adhering strictly to CMOS principles.

Example 1: A Standard Print Atlas in a Note

Let's say you are referencing a map of ancient Rome from a historical atlas. Note: 5. Richard Talbert, *The Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), map 42, grid E4.

Example 2: The Same Atlas in a Bibliography

Bibliography Entry: Talbert, Richard. The Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000.

Example 3: An Online Atlas in a Reference List (Author-Date)

Imagine citing data from an online environmental atlas.

Reference List Entry: Environmental Protection Agency. 2023. National Atlas of Environmental Data. Accessed January 20, 2024.

<https://www.epa.gov/national-atlas>.

These examples illustrate how the required elements are presented in each citation style, emphasizing the importance of accuracy and completeness for every reference, especially when dealing with the complex nature of cartographic resources like geographic atlases.

Conclusion: Mastering Atlas Citations

Effectively citing geographic atlases using the Chicago Manual of Style is a skill that enhances the credibility and usability of any scholarly work. By carefully attending to the essential bibliographic details, the specific location of information within the atlas, and the distinctions between the notes-bibliography and author-date systems, researchers can ensure their citations are both precise and compliant. Whether dealing with traditional print atlases or their digital counterparts, the principles of clarity and verifiability remain paramount. Mastering these citation practices not only fulfills academic requirements but also contributes to the robust exchange of knowledge, allowing readers to easily trace and consult the authoritative geographic resources you have employed in your research.

Q: What is the most crucial element when citing a specific map within a geographic atlas in Chicago style?

A: The most crucial element is providing the map's title, if it has one, along with its specific page number or plate number within the atlas, to pinpoint the exact location of the referenced information.

Q: How does the citation of an atlas without a named

author differ between the notes-bibliography and author-date systems in CMOS?

A: In the notes-bibliography system, an atlas without a named author is typically cited starting with its title in the notes and bibliography. In the author-date system, the title is used in place of the author's name in the in-text citation and at the beginning of the reference list entry, followed by the publication year.

Q: Should I include the edition information when citing a geographic atlas in Chicago style?

A: Yes, it is generally advisable to include the edition number if the atlas is not the first edition. This is important because atlases are often updated to reflect new geographic or political information.

Q: What information is necessary when citing a digital or online geographic atlas in CMOS?

A: When citing a digital or online atlas, you must include the URL and the date you accessed the resource, in addition to the standard bibliographic information such as the title, publisher, and publication date.

Q: How do I cite a single map from a larger atlas in a footnote within the notes-bibliography system?

A: In a footnote, you would typically cite the author of the atlas, the italicized title of the atlas, publication details, and then the specific map's title (if applicable), followed by its page or plate number and any grid reference.

Q: Is it necessary to include the publisher's location when citing a geographic atlas in CMOS?

A: Yes, the place of publication is a standard component for citing published works, including geographic atlases, in both the notes-bibliography and author-date systems under Chicago style.

Q: How do I handle atlases that have multiple editors or compilers in Chicago style?

A: If an atlas has multiple editors or compilers, you should list them all in the citation, following the standard CMOS format for listing multiple authors or editors. The first editor or compiler is typically listed by their last

name first.

Q: What is the purpose of citing specific map details like plate numbers or grid references?

A: Citing specific map details ensures the highest level of precision, allowing readers to locate the exact cartographic representation or data point referenced in your work, which is crucial for verification and further research.

[Chicago Manual Of Style Citing Geographic Atlases](#)

Chicago Manual Of Style Citing Geographic Atlases

Related Articles

- [chicago manual of style for academic citation formatting](#)
- [chicago manual of style figure caption placement within text](#)
- [chicago manual of style academic writing grammar](#)

[Back to Home](#)