

chicago manual of style citing visual examples

The Chicago Manual of Style is a cornerstone for academic and professional writing, offering comprehensive guidance on a wide array of citation practices. When it comes to incorporating and citing visual examples, such as images, figures, tables, and other graphic elements, the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) provides clear, albeit sometimes nuanced, instructions. Understanding how to properly cite visual examples ensures academic integrity, avoids plagiarism, and allows readers to easily locate and verify the source of any given visual material. This article will delve deeply into the intricacies of the Chicago Manual of Style citing visual examples, covering essential principles, specific formats for different types of visuals, and best practices for seamless integration into your work. We will explore the nuances of noting artwork, photographs, charts, and more, providing visual examples of how these citations should appear.

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Understanding the Core Principles of Citing Visual Examples

The fundamental principle behind citing any source, including visual examples, is to give credit where credit is due and to enable readers to find the original material. The Chicago Manual of Style emphasizes clarity, consistency, and completeness. When dealing with visual examples, this means accurately identifying the creator, the title (if applicable), the date of creation or publication, and the source from which the visual was obtained. These elements form the bedrock of both in-text citations and bibliographic entries, ensuring that your scholarly or professional work adheres to established citation standards.

The purpose of citing visual examples extends beyond mere attribution. It also serves to contextualize the visual for your reader. By providing source information, you allow your audience to assess the credibility and relevance of the visual in relation to your argument. Furthermore, understanding the Chicago Manual of Style citing visual examples ensures that your work meets

the expectations of academic publishers, editors, and reviewers. This meticulous attention to detail distinguishes professional writing from casual communication and upholds the integrity of your research.

Citing Artwork and Photographs

Citing artwork and photographs often involves a slightly different approach than citing textual sources, particularly when the visual itself is the primary subject of discussion or analysis. The Chicago Manual of Style provides specific guidelines for how to present these elements.

Artwork Citations

When referencing a specific piece of artwork, such as a painting, sculpture, or photograph, you need to include key details. The format typically includes the artist's name, the title of the work (*italicized*), the year of creation, and the medium. Crucially, you must also note the collection or location where the artwork can be found, or the source from which you accessed an image of it. For example, if you are citing Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa," your citation would need to reflect its current location.

A typical bibliographic entry for artwork might look like this:

- Da Vinci, Leonardo. "Mona Lisa." Circa 1503–1506. Oil on poplar panel. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

If you are referencing a reproduction of the artwork found in a book or online, your citation will need to include information about that secondary source as well. This requires careful attention to ensure all necessary details are captured.

Photograph Citations

Citing photographs follows similar principles, but the nature of photography may mean attributing a photographer rather than an artist. For historical photographs or iconic images, attribution might be to an archive or agency. As with artwork, the title of the photograph (if it has one), the photographer's name, the date it was taken, and the source of your access are critical. For instance, a famous photograph might be credited to Ansel Adams, with details about the specific print and its provenance.

An example of a photograph citation:

- Adams, Ansel. "Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico." 1941. Gelatin silver print. Collection of the Center for Creative Photography, Tucson, Arizona.

When citing a photograph found online or in a publication, you will need to include details about that specific source, just as you would for artwork. The goal is to be as precise as possible so a reader could, in theory, find the original or a high-quality reproduction.

Citing Figures, Tables, and Charts

Figures, tables, and charts are common in academic and professional writing and require a standardized approach to citation within the Chicago Manual of Style. These visuals often present data or information that needs to be clearly sourced.

Figures and Charts

Figures, which can encompass a wide range of graphics from diagrams to complex charts, typically require a number (e.g., Figure 1, Figure 2) and a title or caption. The source of the figure must be clearly indicated. If the figure is adapted or modified from another source, this alteration should be noted. In-text citations will refer to the figure number, and the full source details will appear in the bibliography.

For a figure created by the author based on data from another source, the caption might read:

- **Figure 1.** Global carbon emissions, 1990–2020. (Adapted from IPCC 2021, 55.)

If the figure is directly reproduced from another source, the caption would attribute it more formally:

- **Figure 2.** Demographic trends in major urban centers. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022.

Tables

Tables are structured arrangements of data. Like figures, they are typically numbered sequentially and are accompanied by a title or caption that explains their content. The source of the data presented in the table must be clearly stated. If the table is compiled by the author using data from multiple sources, all sources should be acknowledged. Consistency in presentation is key when dealing with Chicago Manual of Style citing visual examples of tables.

A sample table caption:

- **Table 3.** Comparative analysis of advertising campaign effectiveness. Data compiled from internal company reports (2020-2022) and market research studies (Smith & Jones, 2021).

When a table is taken directly from a publication, the citation information will be detailed in the caption and also in the bibliography. The caption will often include a direct reference to the source, similar to how textual citations are handled.

Placement and Labeling of Visual Examples

The placement and labeling of visual examples are crucial for their effectiveness and for adhering to the Chicago Manual of Style. Visuals should generally be placed as close as possible to the text that discusses them.

Labeling Conventions

All visual materials that are meant to be referenced formally should be labeled. This typically involves assigning a number (e.g., Figure 1, Table 1, Plate 1) and providing a descriptive title or caption. The numbering should be sequential throughout the document, unless specific sections warrant separate series (e.g., Figure 1.1, Figure 1.2 for Chapter 1). The title or caption should clearly articulate what the visual represents, making it understandable even without immediate reference to the main text.

Caption Content

Captions are more than just labels; they are integral to the visual's

context. According to the Chicago Manual of Style, citing visual examples in captions should include:

- The figure or table number.
- A concise title or description of the visual.
- The source of the visual, including author, title of the work, publication details, and page numbers or accession numbers where applicable.
- Any necessary notes or explanations about the data or content presented.
- Permission statements, if required.

The level of detail in the caption depends on whether the visual is an original creation, reproduced directly from a source, or adapted from one. When directly reproducing, the caption often mirrors the full bibliographic entry in condensed form.

In-Text Citations for Visuals

While many visual examples are accompanied by detailed captions, Chicago Manual of Style citing visual examples also requires in-text references. These allow you to draw your reader's attention to a specific visual within your narrative.

Referencing Figures and Tables

When you refer to a figure, table, or chart in your text, you should use its assigned number. For example, you might write, "As illustrated in Figure 3, the trend shows a significant increase..." or "The data presented in Table 1 supports this hypothesis." This direct reference guides the reader to the relevant visual element.

For artwork or photographs that are embedded directly into the text, or if you are discussing them extensively, you might also include a brief parenthetical citation if the context doesn't make the source immediately obvious. However, for visuals that are integrated with detailed captions, a separate in-text citation might be redundant.

When to Use Parenthetical Citations

Parenthetical citations for visuals are generally used when the visual is not immediately preceding the mention or when the caption itself does not contain all the necessary bibliographic information. If you are discussing a specific detail within a complex diagram, you might need to point the reader to that particular aspect while also citing the source of the diagram.

For instance, if you are quoting from a text that includes an illustration, you might cite the illustration as part of the textual citation: "(Smith 2020, fig. 5)." This integrates the visual reference seamlessly with the source of the information.

Bibliographic Entries for Visual Materials

The bibliography (or notes and bibliography) is where the full details of all cited sources, including visual examples, are listed. The Chicago Manual of Style citing visual examples in the bibliography requires a specific structure to ensure completeness and clarity.

Format for Artwork and Photographs in Bibliography

As mentioned previously, artwork and photographs require detailed entries. The key is to provide enough information for a reader to locate the original or a reproduction. A standard format includes:

- Artist's full name.
- Title of the work (*italicized*).
- Date of creation.
- Medium.
- Name of the collection or museum, followed by the city and state or country.
- If accessed via a website or book, include the publication details of that source.

Example for a sourced image:

- Rothko, Mark. "No. 14, 1960." 1960. Oil on canvas. San Francisco Museum

of Modern Art. Image accessed via Wikimedia Commons, January 15, 2023.

Format for Figures, Tables, and Charts in Bibliography

When figures, tables, or charts are reproduced or adapted from a published source, their bibliographic entry should reflect the source of the publication. If the visual is presented as a standalone item (e.g., a handout or an independent chart), the citation would be structured similarly to citing a report or article.

For a table from a book:

- Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). "Table 3.2: Renewable Energy Share in Total Final Energy Consumption." In *OECD Environmental Performance Reviews: United States 2021*, 88. Paris: OECD Publishing, 2021.

The principle remains consistent: provide enough information for retrieval. This detailed approach is what makes Chicago Manual of Style citing visual examples so robust.

When a Visual Example Requires Special Attention

Certain types of visual examples, or situations surrounding their use, may necessitate additional considerations beyond the standard citation practices. These can include copyright, fair use, and the use of unpublished or rare materials.

Copyright and Permissions

When reproducing copyrighted visual material, it is essential to secure the necessary permissions from the copyright holder. The Chicago Manual of Style advises that you should seek permission for any use that exceeds fair use guidelines. If permission is granted, this should be clearly stated in the caption, often following the citation information. Failure to do so can have legal repercussions and also undermines academic integrity.

Fair Use Considerations

Fair use allows for the limited use of copyrighted material without permission for purposes such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, or research. When citing visual examples under fair use, you must still provide a complete citation. The determination of what constitutes fair use can be complex and depends on factors like the purpose and character of the use, the nature of the copyrighted work, the amount and substantiality of the portion used, and the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.

Understanding the nuances of fair use is critical, and consulting legal counsel or specific guidelines on copyright law is recommended for extensive or commercial use. For academic purposes, a thorough and accurate citation is the minimum requirement.

Unpublished or Rare Materials

Citing visual materials that are unpublished, such as personal photographs, archival documents, or rare manuscripts, requires you to provide the most detailed information available. This might include the creator's name, the date of creation, the nature of the material, and its current location (e.g., the name of the archive, library, or personal collection). For these items, the "source" is often the repository where they are housed. Proper identification of the archival collection and the item within it is paramount for Chicago Manual of Style citing visual examples of such unique materials.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the primary difference between citing artwork and citing a photograph according to the Chicago Manual of Style?

A: The primary difference lies in the attribution and the potential for the image to be a primary source for analysis. Artwork citations typically focus on the artist, title, date, and medium, emphasizing its unique creation. Photograph citations similarly credit the photographer, title, date, and medium, but may also involve attributing the image to a specific archive or agency, especially for historical or documentary photographs. Both require detailed source information for reproduction.

Q: How should I cite a figure that I have created myself but based on data from another source?

A: When you create a figure yourself but use data from another source, you should label it as "Figure X. Your Title" and in the caption, indicate that the data was adapted or compiled from the original source, providing a full citation for that source. For example, "(Adapted from Smith, 2020, p. 15)."

Q: Do I always need to include copyright and permission information when citing visual examples?

A: You must address copyright and permissions if you are reproducing a visual that is protected by copyright. If your use falls under fair use, you still need to cite the source thoroughly. However, explicit permission statements are generally required if you are using more than what fair use allows, especially for publication. Always check the terms of use for the visual you are employing.

Q: What is the importance of italicizing artwork titles in citations?

A: Italicizing artwork titles, such as paintings, sculptures, or films, is a convention used to distinguish them as distinct creative works. This helps readers quickly identify that the mention refers to a specific titled piece of art rather than a descriptive phrase. It's a standard practice in bibliographic entries according to CMOS.

Q: How do I cite a visual that I found online and is not attributed to a specific creator or published work?

A: If a visual is found online without clear attribution or publication details, you should cite it to the best of your ability, noting its online location (URL) and the date you accessed it. If a website has a general title or is identified by an organization, include that. Be cautious about using unattributed visuals, as their copyright status may be unclear.

Q: Can a visual example have both an in-text citation and a detailed caption, and is this redundant?

A: A visual example typically has a detailed caption that provides comprehensive source information. In-text citations are used to refer the reader to that visual element within the narrative (e.g., "See Figure 5").

While the caption provides the full bibliographic details, the in-text citation is a rhetorical device to connect the discussion in the text to the visual itself. They serve different but complementary functions.

Q: What are the key differences in citing tables versus citing figures in the Chicago Manual of Style?

A: Both tables and figures are numbered sequentially and require clear titles or captions. The core difference is in their presentation and content. Figures are generally graphical representations (charts, graphs, diagrams, illustrations), while tables are organized in rows and columns to present numerical or textual data. The citation principles for both are similar, focusing on clear labeling and full source attribution in the caption and bibliography.

Q: When is it appropriate to use the term "Plate" instead of "Figure" for visual examples?

A: The term "Plate" is often used for full-page illustrations or reproductions of artwork, particularly in books dealing with art history or similar subjects. "Figure" is a more general term for any illustration, diagram, chart, or photograph. The choice between "Plate" and "Figure" can sometimes depend on the specific discipline or publication's conventions, but for general academic use, "Figure" is more common.

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