

# chicago manual of style diagram citation examples

chicago manual of style diagram citation examples are essential for academic and professional writers to accurately attribute the source of visual information. When incorporating diagrams, charts, graphs, or other illustrative elements into your work, proper citation is not just a matter of academic integrity; it's a requirement for adhering to the rigorous standards set forth by the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS). This guide will delve deep into the nuances of citing diagrams, providing clear examples and best practices. We will explore why diagram citation is crucial, the different citation styles within CMOS, and how to cite various types of visual media. Understanding these principles ensures your readers can easily locate the original source and gives credit where it is due, enhancing the credibility of your own research and writing.

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## Why Citing Diagrams is Important

Properly citing diagrams, charts, graphs, illustrations, and other visual elements is fundamental to academic and professional integrity. Failing to cite a source for a diagram you have used can constitute plagiarism, a serious ethical breach that undermines your credibility and can have significant consequences. Furthermore, accurate citations allow your readers to verify the information presented and to explore the original source for further context or deeper understanding. This practice not only respects intellectual property rights but also strengthens the scholarly conversation by clearly delineating your contributions from those of others. It is a cornerstone of responsible scholarship, ensuring that all borrowed material is appropriately acknowledged.

# Understanding Chicago Manual of Style Citation Basics for Visuals

The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) offers two primary citation systems: the notes-bibliography system and the author-date system. Both systems require the citation of visual materials, though the format and placement of citations differ. The core principle remains the same: identify the creator, the title of the work (if applicable), the publication details, and a way to locate the specific visual element. For diagrams, this often includes the page number or a figure number. It is crucial to consult the latest edition of the CMOS for the most up-to-date guidelines, as stylistic conventions can evolve. Regardless of the system chosen, consistency is key.

## Citing Diagrams in Notes-Bibliography Style

The notes-bibliography system uses footnotes or endnotes to cite sources within the text and a bibliography to list all sources at the end of the document. This system is common in humanities disciplines.

### Footnotes and Endnotes for Diagrams

When a diagram is reproduced or referenced in the text using the notes-bibliography system, a note (footnote or endnote) is required at the first mention of the diagram. The note should provide sufficient information for the reader to identify the source. For a diagram borrowed from another publication, the note will typically include the author of the original work, the title of the work, publication details, and the specific location of the diagram (e.g., figure number, page number).

For example, if you are quoting or referencing a diagram from a book:

Figure 1. Diagram of cellular mitosis. In *Molecular Biology: A Comprehensive Guide*, by Jane Doe, 123. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020.

If the diagram is your own creation but based on specific research or data:

Figure 1. Diagram illustrating the projected growth of renewable energy sources, 2020-2030. (Author's original illustration based on data from the International Energy Agency).

### Bibliography Entries for Diagrams

The bibliography entry for a diagram generally follows the same structure as other sources but emphasizes the visual aspect and its origin. For a borrowed diagram, the bibliography entry will provide a complete bibliographic record of the source.

A typical bibliography entry for a diagram from a book:

Doe, Jane. *Molecular Biology: A Comprehensive Guide*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020. (See especially fig. 1, p. 123).

If the diagram is an original creation, it may not appear as a separate entry in the bibliography unless it was published independently. If it's an original, clearly labeled illustration within your own work, it might be described in the notes or simply acknowledged as original.

## **Citing Diagrams in Author-Date Style**

The author-date system uses in-text citations that include the author's last name and the publication year, along with page or figure numbers, and a reference list at the end of the document containing full bibliographic details for all cited sources. This system is widely used in social sciences and natural sciences.

### **In-Text Citations for Diagrams**

In the author-date system, the in-text citation for a diagram is placed parenthetically after the reference to the diagram. This citation directs the reader to the corresponding entry in the reference list.

Example of an in-text citation for a borrowed diagram:

(Smith 2021, fig. 3.2)

As illustrated in Figure 3.2, the correlation between economic indicators is significant (Smith 2021).

If the diagram is original to your work, you would generally not need an in-text citation for it, but you would label it clearly as "Figure X. Author's Original Illustration" or similar.

### **Reference List Entries for Diagrams**

The reference list in the author-date system provides comprehensive details for each cited source. For a diagram from a published work, the entry will include the author, year, title, and publication information, often noting the figure number.

A typical reference list entry for a diagram from a book:

Smith, John. 2021. *Principles of Economics*. New York: Oxford University Press. (Fig. 3.2)

For diagrams accessed online, the entry would include the URL and access date.

Brown, Alice. 2022. "Climate Change Impact Analysis." *Environmental Science Journal*.

## **Common Types of Diagrams and Citation Approaches**

Different types of visual information require nuanced citation approaches within the Chicago Manual of Style.

### **Original Diagrams Created by the Author**

When you create a diagram yourself, you don't need to cite it as a source. However, it's good practice to clearly label it as an original illustration and, if it's based on specific data or research from other sources, to acknowledge that foundational work within the caption or accompanying text. This clarifies that the visual representation is yours, but the underlying information comes from elsewhere.

### **Published Diagrams from Books and Journals**

This is one of the most common scenarios. As detailed in the sections on notes-bibliography and author-date styles, you will cite the original source of the diagram. Ensure you accurately identify the figure number and page number if available in the source. The goal is to provide a direct path for the reader to find the exact visual you are referencing.

### **Online Diagrams and Digital Visuals**

With the proliferation of digital resources, citing online diagrams is increasingly important. CMOS guidelines for online sources apply here. You will need to provide the author (if identifiable), title of the visual or the webpage it's on, the name of the website, and the URL. Crucially, include the date of access because online content can change or be removed.

### **Diagrams from Databases and Reports**

Visuals found within databases or formal reports (like government publications or corporate annual reports) require careful citation. You should cite the specific report or database entry. This often involves identifying the authoring organization, the title of the report, the publication year, and the specific location within the report or database (e.g., report number, page, or figure number).

# **Best Practices for Chicago Manual of Style Diagram Citation**

Consistency is paramount when citing diagrams. Whichever system you choose (notes-bibliography or author-date), apply it uniformly throughout your document. Always aim to provide the most specific information possible to help your readers locate the original source. If a diagram is modified or adapted from an original, clearly state this in your citation or caption. It is also a good practice to check with your instructor or publisher regarding any specific preferences or requirements they may have for citing visual materials, as these can sometimes vary.

## **Troubleshooting Common Diagram Citation Issues**

One common challenge is when diagrams are not clearly labeled with a figure number or page number in the original source. In such cases, describe the diagram's content in your note or in-text citation to help readers identify it. Another issue arises with unattributed online visuals; if an author or source cannot be identified, you may need to note this limitation in your citation, while still providing as much context as possible. Always err on the side of providing too much information rather than too little when in doubt about a citation.

## **FAQ**

### **Q: What is the most crucial element to include when citing a diagram from a published book in Chicago style?**

A: The most crucial element when citing a diagram from a published book in Chicago style is to provide enough information for your reader to precisely locate that specific diagram within the original source. This typically includes the author of the book, the title, publication details, and most importantly, the figure number and/or page number where the diagram appears.

### **Q: How do I cite a diagram that I created myself based on data from several different sources?**

A: If you create a diagram yourself, you do not need to cite it as a source in the same way you would a borrowed image. However, it is essential to clearly label it as an "Author's Original Illustration" or similar. You should also acknowledge the sources of the data used to create the diagram in the caption or accompanying text, perhaps with a note like "Data

compiled from [Source A], [Source B], etc."

## **Q: What is the difference in citing a diagram in the notes-bibliography system versus the author-date system in Chicago style?**

A: In the notes-bibliography system, diagram citations are primarily handled through footnotes or endnotes, providing detailed source information at the point of reference, followed by a comprehensive bibliography entry. In the author-date system, the in-text citation is brief (author, year, page/figure number), directing the reader to a more detailed entry in the reference list at the end of the document.

## **Q: How should I cite a diagram found on a website where the author is not explicitly stated?**

A: If a website diagram lacks an explicit author, you should use the name of the organization or the title of the website as the author. You would then include the title of the diagram or webpage, the website name, the publication date (if available), and the URL, along with the access date. For example: Organization Name. "Title of Diagram or Webpage." Website Name. Publication Date. Accessed Month Day, Year. URL.

## **Q: Is it necessary to cite every single diagram I use, even if it's just a simple illustration?**

A: Yes, according to Chicago Manual of Style guidelines, it is necessary to cite every diagram, chart, graph, or illustration that is not your original creation or common knowledge. Proper attribution is essential for academic integrity and to avoid plagiarism, regardless of the diagram's complexity.

## **Q: What if a diagram from a journal article is not numbered?**

A: If a diagram in a journal article is not explicitly numbered, you can refer to it by its caption or a descriptive phrase in your citation. In a footnote or endnote, you might write: "Diagram of gene expression. In 'New Discoveries in Genetics,' by John Smith, 45." In an author-date reference list, it might appear as: Smith, John. 2022. "New Discoveries in Genetics." *Journal of Genetics* 35 (1): 45. (Diagram of gene expression).

## **Q: Can I use a general citation for all diagrams from the same book if they are similar?**

A: No, you should cite each diagram individually. Even if diagrams are from the same book, each one requires a specific citation that points to its exact location (figure number and/or page number) within that book. This ensures accuracy and allows readers to find

the precise visual element being referenced.

## **Chicago Manual Of Style Diagram Citation Examples**

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