

chicago manual of style geographic citation guidelines

chicago manual of style geographic citation guidelines are essential for researchers, writers, and academics seeking to accurately and consistently document the origins of information, particularly when dealing with maps, atlases, and other geographically-focused materials. Adhering to these guidelines ensures clarity, credibility, and avoids potential confusion for readers. This comprehensive article will delve into the intricacies of citing geographic sources according to the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS), covering everything from basic principles to specific scenarios. We will explore the rationale behind these guidelines, the different elements required for a complete citation, and how to handle variations in geographic source types. Understanding these nuances is crucial for any scholarly work that relies on or references geographic data.

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The Importance of Chicago Manual of Style Geographic Citation Guidelines

Accurate citation is the bedrock of academic integrity and scholarly communication. When dealing

with geographic information, the Chicago Manual of Style offers a robust framework to ensure that the sources of maps, spatial data, and geographical descriptions are clearly and consistently attributed. These guidelines are not merely about compliance; they are about enabling readers to locate and verify the information presented, fostering transparency and trust in the research. Failing to adhere to proper citation practices can lead to accusations of plagiarism and can significantly undermine the credibility of a work.

The specific needs of geographic citations stem from the unique nature of the information they represent. Unlike textual sources, maps and geographic data often possess multiple layers of information, including cartographic representations, statistical overlays, and textual annotations. The Chicago Manual of Style recognizes this complexity and provides a flexible yet precise system to capture the essential details that allow for accurate referencing.

Furthermore, understanding the **chicago manual of style geographic citation guidelines** helps authors navigate the evolving landscape of digital mapping and geographical information systems (GIS). As more data becomes accessible online, the methods for citing these dynamic and often interactive resources require careful consideration, which CMOS addresses through its adaptable principles.

Core Components of a Chicago Manual of Style Geographic Citation

While the specific format may vary slightly depending on the type of geographic source, most Chicago-style citations for geographic materials will include several fundamental elements. These components work together to provide a complete picture of the source, allowing a reader to understand its origin, scope, and potential limitations. The goal is to be as informative as possible without being overly cumbersome.

Essential Information for Geographic Citations

Regardless of whether you are citing a printed map or an online GIS dataset, certain pieces of information are consistently vital. These include:

- **Author or Creator:** This could be an individual cartographer, a government agency (like the U.S. Geological Survey), or a commercial mapping company.
- **Title:** The full title of the map, atlas, or geographic resource.
- **Publisher:** The entity responsible for producing and distributing the work.
- **Place of Publication:** The city or region where the publisher is located.
- **Date of Publication:** The year the work was published. For maps, this might be the date of creation or revision.

- **Scale:** For maps, the scale (e.g., 1:24,000) is a crucial piece of information indicating the level of detail.
- **Medium or Format:** Whether the source is printed, digital, or available online.
- **Access Information (for digital sources):** This includes URLs, DOI (Digital Object Identifier), or database names.

The precise order and formatting of these elements will be dictated by whether you are using the notes-bibliography system or the author-date system within CMOS. The notes-bibliography system places the most detailed information in the notes and a condensed version in the bibliography, while the author-date system prioritizes brevity in the text with a full citation in the reference list.

Citing Specific Geographic Source Types

The Chicago Manual of Style provides nuanced guidance for different types of geographic resources, acknowledging that a printed atlas requires a different citation approach than an interactive online map. Understanding these distinctions is key to accurate referencing.

Citing Maps and Atlases

Printed maps and atlases are among the most traditional forms of geographic sources. The citation should clearly identify the map itself, its publisher, and its scale. For atlases, the individual map within the atlas might also need specific identification.

When citing a standalone map, the entry might look something like this in a bibliography:

- Author/Agency. Title of Map. Scale. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year.

For an atlas, the citation typically refers to the atlas as a whole, but if you are referencing a specific map within it, you would include that detail:

- Author/Agency. Title of Atlas. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year. Map: "Title of Specific Map," Scale.

It is important to include the scale of the map as it directly informs the reader about the level of detail and the area covered. The edition or revision date, if available, should also be included to specify which version of the map is being referenced.

Citing Online Geographic Resources

The advent of digital mapping tools and online geographic databases has presented new challenges and requirements for citation. The **chicago manual of style geographic citation guidelines** for online resources emphasize the need for persistent identifiers and clear access information.

When citing an online map or geographic dataset, the citation should include:

- Author/Creator of the data or platform.
- Title of the map or dataset.
- Name of the website or platform.
- Date of publication or last update (if available).
- URL.
- Date of access.

For example, a citation for a web-based map might appear as:

- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. "Sea Level Rise Viewer." NOAA Digital Coast. Accessed October 26, 2023. <https://coast.noaa.gov/slr/>.

It is crucial to provide the most stable URL possible, and if a DOI is available, that should be used in preference to a standard URL. The date of access is also vital for online resources, as their content can change or disappear over time.

Citing Gazetteers and Dictionaries

Gazetteers and geographical dictionaries are valuable resources for information about places. Their citation follows a pattern similar to other reference works but highlights their specific purpose.

A typical citation for a gazetteer might be:

- Author/Editor. Title of Gazetteer. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year.

If you are referencing a specific entry within a gazetteer, you would include that in your note:

- Author/Editor. Title of Gazetteer (Place of Publication: Publisher, Year), entry for "Specific

Location."

The key is to clearly identify the reference work and, if applicable, the specific geographic entity or fact being drawn from it.

Citing Geographic Data Sets

Geographic data sets, often used in GIS, represent complex collections of spatial information. Their citation requires careful attention to the creator, title, version, and accessibility.

A citation for a geographic data set might include:

- Creator of the dataset (e.g., agency, institution).
- Title of the dataset.
- Version or release number (if applicable).
- Year of release.
- Provider or repository where the data was obtained.
- DOI or URL.

An example could be:

- Esri. "World Elevation Service." ArcGIS Living Atlas of the World. Version 3. Updated 2022. <https://livingatlas.arcgis.com/en/home/>.

For academic research, it is often beneficial to specify the exact format of the data (e.g., shapefile, GeoTIFF) if it is relevant to the methodology.

Special Considerations for Geographic Citations

Beyond the core components, several special considerations can enhance the accuracy and completeness of geographic citations, ensuring that the reader has all the necessary context.

Attribution and Ownership

When citing geographic sources, especially those produced by government agencies or organizations, it is essential to attribute them correctly. This includes acknowledging the agency responsible for their creation and maintenance. For commercially produced maps or data, understanding licensing and usage rights might also influence how you cite them, though the core citation elements remain the same.

Proper attribution respects intellectual property and allows readers to find original sources, which is particularly important when dealing with official maps or datasets that may be updated or superseded by newer versions.

Scale and Projections

The scale of a map is a fundamental characteristic that indicates the ratio between a distance on the map and the corresponding distance on the ground. It directly affects the level of detail visible. Including the scale in your citation is often a requirement and always a good practice.

Similarly, map projections, the methods used to represent the three-dimensional Earth on a two-dimensional surface, can introduce distortions. While not always explicitly stated in a basic citation, awareness of the projection used is important for interpreting the geographic information accurately. For highly specialized academic works, mentioning the projection might be warranted.

Editions and Dates

Geographic information is often dynamic. Maps are updated, atlases are revised, and online data is refreshed. Therefore, specifying the edition or revision date of a geographic source is crucial for ensuring that your readers are referencing the same version of the information you are. This is especially important for historical research or when comparing data over time.

If an edition is not clearly marked, use the copyright date or the date of publication as a proxy. For frequently updated online resources, the "last updated" date is the most appropriate information to include.

Geographic Citation Examples

To illustrate the application of the **chicago manual of style geographic citation guidelines**, here are a few practical examples in the notes-bibliography format:

Note for a printed map:

- 1. National Geographic Society, "World Political Map," scale 1:22,000,000 (Washington, DC: National Geographic Society, 2021).

Bibliography entry for the same map:

- National Geographic Society. "World Political Map." Scale 1:22,000,000. Washington, DC: National Geographic Society, 2021.

Note for an online map:

- 2. U.S. Census Bureau, "TIGER/Line Shapefiles," accessed October 26, 2023, <https://www.census.gov/geographies/mapping-files/time-series/geo/tiger-line-file.html>.

Bibliography entry for the same online map:

- U.S. Census Bureau. "TIGER/Line Shapefiles." Accessed October 26, 2023. <https://www.census.gov/geographies/mapping-files/time-series/geo/tiger-line-file.html>.

These examples demonstrate how to consistently present key information for different types of geographic sources, ensuring clarity and verifiability for your readers.

FAQ

Q: What is the primary purpose of following Chicago Manual of Style geographic citation guidelines?

A: The primary purpose is to ensure accuracy, credibility, and clarity in citing geographic sources, enabling readers to locate and verify the information presented and to understand the origin and scope of the data.

Q: How does the Chicago Manual of Style handle citations for older maps compared to contemporary digital ones?

A: CMOS provides adaptable principles. For older maps, it emphasizes details like publisher, place, date, and scale. For contemporary digital maps, it prioritizes URLs, DOIs, access dates, and information about the platform or data provider.

Q: Is it always necessary to include the scale of a map in a Chicago-style citation?

A: Yes, including the scale is highly recommended and often considered essential for printed maps as it directly informs the reader about the level of detail and geographic coverage.

Q: What information should I prioritize when citing an online GIS dataset?

A: Prioritize the creator of the dataset, the full title, any version or release numbers, the year of release, the provider or repository, and a persistent identifier like a DOI or a stable URL, along with the access date.

Q: Do I need to cite individual maps within an atlas separately in Chicago style?

A: Generally, you cite the atlas as a whole. However, if you are referencing a specific map within the atlas and it has a distinct title, you can include that in your note or bibliography entry for more precise referencing.

Q: What is the role of the "access date" in Chicago-style citations for online geographic resources?

A: The access date is crucial for online resources because their content can change or be removed without notice. It tells the reader the specific date on which you accessed the information, allowing for reproducibility and acknowledging potential volatility.

Q: Are there specific guidelines for citing geographic data that is not publicly available but used in research?

A: While CMOS primarily focuses on publicly accessible sources, if you use proprietary or restricted geographic data, you should provide as much identifying information as possible in your notes and bibliography, including the data provider, dataset name, version, and any relevant licensing or access details.

Q: How do the Chicago Manual of Style geographic citation guidelines differ between the notes-bibliography system and the author-date system?

A: In the notes-bibliography system, full citation details are typically in the notes, with a condensed version in the bibliography. In the author-date system, brief in-text citations are used, and the full citation appears in the reference list, with both systems emphasizing clarity and completeness of geographic source information.

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