

# chicago manual of style geographic research paper citation

## Mastering the Chicago Manual of Style for Geographic Research Paper Citations

**chicago manual of style geographic research paper citation** can seem like a daunting task for students and researchers delving into the complexities of geographical studies. However, understanding and adhering to the guidelines set forth by the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) is crucial for academic integrity and the clear presentation of your research. This comprehensive guide will navigate you through the intricacies of citing various geographic sources, from maps and atlases to digital databases and primary field research, ensuring your work meets the highest academic standards. We will explore the fundamental principles of CMOS, detail the specific requirements for different types of geographic materials, and offer practical advice for consistent and accurate citation practices. Mastering these elements will not only enhance the credibility of your geographic research paper but also streamline your writing process.

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## Understanding the Chicago Manual of Style for Citations

The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) is a widely respected and comprehensive style guide that offers extensive recommendations for manuscript preparation and the citation of sources. It is particularly prevalent in the humanities and social sciences, including fields like geography. CMOS provides two distinct citation systems: the notes-bibliography system and the author-date system. For geographic research papers, the notes-bibliography system is generally preferred, especially in disciplines that rely heavily on textual analysis and historical context. This system uses footnotes or endnotes to cite sources, accompanied by a bibliography at the end of the paper. Understanding the nuances of these systems is the first step toward accurate geographic research paper citation.

The flexibility of CMOS is a significant advantage. It allows authors to adapt the guidelines to the specific needs of their discipline and

publication venue. However, this flexibility also necessitates careful attention to detail and consistency. When embarking on a geographic research paper, researchers must first determine which CMOS system they will employ and then rigorously apply it throughout their work. This consistency is paramount for clarity and for allowing readers to easily locate and verify the sources consulted.

## **Core Principles of CMOS Citation in Geographic Research**

At its heart, the Chicago Manual of Style emphasizes providing readers with enough information to locate and consult the original sources. For geographic research, this means being precise about the origin, scale, projection, and publication details of any map or spatial data cited. Core principles include providing author/creator, title, publication information (publisher, date, location), and specific identifiers like page numbers, map coordinates, or URL access dates where applicable. The goal is to create a transparent and reproducible research trail.

Consistency is another non-negotiable principle. Once a particular format is chosen for a specific type of source, it must be applied uniformly. This applies to the formatting of titles, the order of bibliographic elements, and the use of punctuation. In geographic research, where data can come from a multitude of formats, maintaining this consistency across diverse sources is a key challenge and a mark of a well-prepared paper.

## **Authorial Intent and Geographic Accuracy**

When citing geographic materials, it is essential to consider the authorial intent and the inherent nature of the work. For a published map, the cartographer or the publishing institution is considered the author. For datasets, the originating agency or researcher is paramount. Properly attributing these creators ensures that credit is given where it is due and that the context of the geographic information is preserved. This is particularly vital when dealing with historical maps or specialized thematic maps, where the creator's perspective and methodology shape the information presented.

Geographic accuracy itself is often the subject of research. Therefore, when citing geographic sources, it's important to reflect any known limitations or specificities of the source material. This might include noting the projection used on a map, the temporal resolution of a dataset, or the accuracy standards of the data collection. This level of detail contributes to the rigor of your geographic research paper citation and the overall scholarly value of your work.

# The Importance of Bibliographic Detail

The bibliographic detail provided in your citations is critical for establishing the credibility and verifiability of your research. For any geographic research paper citation, this means going beyond just the basic elements. For instance, when citing a physical map, you would include the title, the publisher, the year of publication, and the scale. If it's a digital map or a geographic information system (GIS) dataset, you'll need to provide the creator, the name of the data product, the version number (if applicable), the date of access, and a stable URL or persistent identifier.

Even for commonly used sources like atlases, specific details matter. Citing an atlas would typically involve the atlas title, the editor or cartographer (if applicable), the publisher, the city of publication, and the year. If you are referencing a specific map within an atlas, you would also include the map's title and the page number(s) on which it appears. This meticulous attention to detail distinguishes strong academic work and is a hallmark of effective Chicago Manual of Style geographic research paper citation.

## Citing Traditional Geographic Sources

Traditional geographic sources encompass a wide range of materials that have been foundational to the discipline for centuries. These include printed maps, atlases, globes, and geographical treatises. Properly citing these items requires adherence to specific CMOS guidelines that capture their unique bibliographic characteristics. The aim is to provide enough information so that another researcher could, in theory, locate the exact same printed or physical resource.

The key is to identify the most specific information available for each type of source. For a single printed map, the title, the cartographer or publishing body, the place and date of publication, and the scale are essential. For atlases, the overall atlas information is primary, with secondary notation for specific maps within it. This meticulous approach ensures that your geographic research paper citation is both accurate and informative.

## Citing Printed Maps

When citing a printed map, the Chicago Manual of Style generally requires the following elements in your bibliography entry (using the notes-bibliography system): Author/Cartographer (if known), Title of Map (*italicized*), Publication Information (Place: Publisher, Year), and Scale. If the map is part of a larger work, like an atlas or a book, you would indicate that as

well, along with the relevant page or plate number.

For example, a bibliography entry for a standalone map might look like this:  
Smith, John. Topographic Map of the Sierra Nevada. San Francisco: Overland Publishing, 1985. Scale 1:100,000.

If the map is within a book:

- Footnote/Endnote: John Smith, "Topographic Map of the Sierra Nevada," in Geological Survey of California, ed. Mary Jones, 45 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), plate 12.
- Bibliography: Smith, John. "Topographic Map of the Sierra Nevada." In Geological Survey of California, edited by Mary Jones, 45. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.

## Citing Atlases and Globes

Citing atlases follows a similar pattern, focusing on the atlas as a whole unless a specific map within it is the primary focus of your citation. The author(s) or editor(s), the title of the atlas (*italicized*), the edition (if applicable), the place of publication, the publisher, and the year are crucial. For globes, the inventor or manufacturer, the title of the globe, and the date of manufacture would be the key elements.

A typical bibliography entry for an atlas:

- Atlas of the World. Edited by Robert Davis. 3rd ed. New York: National Geographic Society, 2010.

If referencing a specific map within the atlas, you would include its title and the page number where it appears, similar to the example for printed maps within a book.

## Citing Digital and Online Geographic Resources

The digital age has transformed the landscape of geographic research, introducing a wealth of online data, interactive maps, and geospatial databases. Citing these resources requires a specific approach under CMOS to ensure their accessibility and to account for their dynamic nature. Unlike static print materials, digital sources can be updated, moved, or removed,

making precise citation even more critical for reproducibility.

When citing digital geographic resources, the focus shifts to providing stable identifiers, access dates, and URLs that are as persistent as possible. This ensures that future researchers can navigate to the same information. Understanding the format of the digital resource—whether it's a GIS dataset, a web map, or an online atlas—will dictate the specific elements required in your citation.

## **Citing Geographic Information System (GIS) Datasets**

Citing GIS datasets requires careful attention to the creator, the dataset name, the version number, the date of creation or publication, and the source from which it was accessed. Since GIS data is often layered and can be manipulated, it's important to specify the exact dataset and its associated metadata. For CMOS, the author-date system is often employed for citing datasets in the notes-bibliography format, or it can be fully detailed in the bibliography.

A typical bibliography entry for a GIS dataset using the notes-bibliography system might look like this:

- Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI). "WorldStreetMap." Version 12. Redlands, CA: ESRI, 2022. Accessed May 15, 2024.  
<https://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=...>

The specific metadata you choose to include will depend on the nature of the dataset and the requirements of your paper. However, always aim for the most complete information possible to ensure verifiability.

## **Citing Online Maps and Web-Based Geospatial Data**

Online maps and web-based geospatial data, such as those provided by Google Maps, OpenStreetMap, or various government agencies, require citations that acknowledge the provider, the title of the map or data layer, the version or date of access, and the URL. Because these resources are constantly updated, including the date you accessed the information is crucial.

For an online map service:

- Google Maps. "Street Map of Paris." Accessed May 15, 2024.  
<https://www.google.com/maps/...>

For specific data layers within a web mapping application:

- United States Geological Survey. "National Hydrography Dataset."  
Accessed May 15, 2024. [https://....](https://...)

The key is to be as specific as possible about the exact view or data layer you are referencing. If you are citing a static image of an online map, you would cite it similarly to how you would cite a printed map, including the source and access date.

## **Citing Primary Geographic Research Data**

Primary geographic research often involves collecting data directly through fieldwork, surveys, interviews, or remote sensing. Citing this type of data requires a different approach, as it may not have a formal publication history. The goal here is to clearly describe the data, its collection method, the date of collection, and its current location or accessibility.

When presenting your own primary data or citing that of others, transparency is key. This allows for scrutiny and potential replication of your research methods. CMOS provides guidance on how to effectively incorporate and cite these original data sources within your geographic research paper citation framework.

## **Field Notes and Raw Survey Data**

Field notes, raw survey data, or interview transcripts are considered primary sources. When citing your own field notes, you would describe the collection date, location, and the nature of the notes. If citing another researcher's field data, you would need to know how it was collected and where it is archived or accessible. CMOS suggests that for unpublished materials, you should provide as much descriptive information as possible.

For your own field notes:

- Author's Field Notes, [Date], [Location of Collection], [Brief Description of Content]. (e.g., Author's Field Notes, July 20, 2023, Amazon Rainforest Transect 5, Observations on vegetation density).

For another researcher's data:

- Jane Doe, "Survey Data on Coastal Erosion in Oregon," collected [Dates], [Archival Location or Access Method].

## Remote Sensing Data and Aerial Imagery

Remote sensing data, such as satellite imagery or aerial photographs, often comes from specific sensors or missions and has associated processing dates and acquisition parameters. When citing these, you should include the name of the sensor or mission, the date of acquisition, the processing level or source, and any relevant access information. This detail is vital for understanding the temporal and spatial context of the imagery used in your geographic research.

For example, citing Landsat imagery:

- Landsat 8 OLI/TIRS Collection 2 Level-1 Data, acquired [Date], United States Geological Survey. Accessed [Date of Access]. [URL if available].

Similarly, for aerial photographs:

- Aerial Photograph, [Location], [Date of Flight], [Producing Agency/Company], [Image ID/Frame Number].

Ensuring accuracy in these citations is essential for the reproducibility and credibility of analyses that rely on such data. Proper Chicago manual of style geographic research paper citation for these materials enhances the scholarly rigor of your work.

## Frequently Asked Questions about CMOS Geographic Citations

**Q: What is the primary difference between CMOS notes-bibliography and author-date systems for geographic research?**

A: The notes-bibliography system uses footnotes or endnotes for in-text citations and a comprehensive bibliography at the end. This is generally preferred for humanities and social sciences, including many types of

geographic research where detailed source attribution is beneficial. The author-date system uses in-text citations like (Author Year) and a reference list at the end, more common in natural and social sciences. For geographic research papers, the notes-bibliography system often provides greater flexibility for incorporating detailed source information, especially for complex map or data citations.

### **Q: How do I cite a specific area shown on a web map like Google Maps?**

A: When citing a specific view or area on a web map, you should treat it as an online resource. Include the provider (e.g., Google Maps), a descriptive title for the specific view or map feature (e.g., "Street Map of Central Park"), the date of access, and the stable URL of the page you viewed. For instance: Google Maps. "Street Map of Central Park." Accessed May 15, 2024. <https://www.google.com/maps/....> This ensures that others can attempt to find the same viewed area.

### **Q: What information is crucial for citing a GIS dataset in a geographic research paper?**

A: For GIS datasets, it's crucial to identify the creator or originating institution, the full title of the dataset, any version numbers or dates, the date of access, and a stable URL or persistent identifier (like a DOI) if available. It's also good practice to mention the source from which the dataset was obtained. For example: Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI). "WorldStreetMap." Version 12. Redlands, CA: ESRI, 2022. Accessed May 15, 2024. <https://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=....>

### **Q: How should I cite historical maps that I accessed in an archive?**

A: Citing historical maps from an archive requires you to identify the map's title, cartographer/publisher, and date if known. Crucially, you must also specify the archive where you accessed it, including the collection name and item number or call number. For example: Smith, John. Map of the Oregon Trail. 1850. John Smith Papers, Box 12, Folder 3, [Archive Name], [City, State].

### **Q: What if the geographic source I'm citing has no clear author or publication date?**

A: If a geographic source lacks a clear author, you should use the corporate author (e.g., a government agency or research institution) or the title of the work itself as the first element of the citation. For missing publication dates, use the abbreviation "n.d." (no date). For example, for a map with no

author and no date: Topographic Map of the Yosemite Valley. n.d. [Publisher information if known].

## **Q: Should I include the map scale in my Chicago Manual of Style geographic research paper citation?**

A: Yes, including the map scale is often highly recommended, especially for printed maps, as it provides critical information about the map's representation of reality. It helps readers understand the level of detail and the geographic area covered. For example: Smith, John. Topographic Map of the Sierra Nevada. San Francisco: Overland Publishing, 1985. Scale 1:100,000.

## **Q: How do I cite a specific geographic feature from a publication, like a mountain range?**

A: You don't cite a geographic feature directly unless it's the primary subject of a publication (e.g., a book about Mount Everest). Instead, you cite the source that discusses or depicts the feature. For instance, if a book mentions Mount Everest, you would cite the book. If a map shows Mount Everest, you cite the map. The citation refers to the source of information, not the feature itself.

## **Q: Is there a specific format for citing different map projections in CMOS?**

A: While CMOS doesn't mandate a specific format for describing map projections as a standard citation element, it strongly encourages you to include such details when they are relevant to your research or when they distinguish the source material. For instance, if the projection influences your analysis, you might note it in your citation or within the text of your paper. For example: "Mercator projection of the world map."

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