

chicago manual of style photograph citation

chicago manual of style photograph citation is crucial for academic integrity and for giving proper credit to creators. Understanding how to cite photographic works accurately within the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) framework is essential for students, researchers, and writers across various disciplines. This comprehensive guide will delve into the nuances of citing photographs, covering everything from identifying the necessary bibliographic elements to understanding the two primary citation systems: notes and bibliography, and author-date. We will explore how to cite photographs found in books, journals, online databases, and even those taken by the author. Mastering these details ensures your work is credible and respects intellectual property rights, making your research polished and professional.

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Understanding the Chicago Manual of Style for Photographs

The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) provides a robust and flexible system for citing a wide array of sources, including visual materials like photographs. Its emphasis on clarity and thoroughness extends to the meticulous details required for attributing photographic works. Whether you are working with a historical daguerreotype or a contemporary digital image, adhering to CMOS guidelines ensures your audience can locate and verify the source of the visual evidence you present.

The core principle behind any citation, including for photographs, is to provide enough information for a reader to find the original source. This involves identifying key details about the photograph itself, its creator, and its location. CMOS acknowledges that different types of photographic sources may require slightly varied approaches, but the underlying objective remains consistent: accurate and complete attribution.

Core Elements of a Photograph Citation

Regardless of the specific CMOS system used (notes and bibliography or author-date),

certain core elements are fundamental to creating a complete photograph citation. Missing even one of these can render a citation incomplete or even misleading. These elements work together to identify the photograph precisely and its origin.

The primary components typically include:

- The name of the photographer (if known).
- The title of the photograph (if it has one).
- The date the photograph was taken.
- The medium of the photograph (e.g., photograph, daguerreotype, digital image).
- The location or repository where the photograph is housed or can be accessed.
- The collection name or accession number, if applicable.
- Any relevant publication details, such as the book, journal, or website where it was found.
- Access dates and URLs for online sources.

Photographer and Title

The photographer's name is arguably the most crucial piece of information. When a photographer is credited, their name should be included. If the photographer is unknown, it's important to note that. Similarly, if the photograph has a specific title, it should be presented. Titles are often enclosed in quotation marks or italicized, depending on the nature of the work it's part of. For example, a standalone photograph might have an italicized title, while a photograph within a book might have its title in quotation marks.

Date and Medium

The date of creation is vital for historical context. This could be the year, or a more specific date if available. The medium of the photograph helps classify the type of visual art and can include terms like "photograph," "print," "daguerreotype," "tintype," or "digital image." This detail can be particularly important when citing historical or artistic photographic processes.

Repository and Collection Information

For unpublished or archived photographs, identifying the repository (e.g., a library, archive, museum) and the specific collection or accession number is paramount. This allows researchers to track down the physical or digital original. For published photographs, the publication details serve a similar purpose, directing the reader to the book, journal, or website where the image was reproduced.

Citing Photographs in Notes and Bibliography System

The notes and bibliography system in CMOS is characterized by the use of footnotes or endnotes for in-text citations, followed by a comprehensive bibliography at the end of the work. Citing photographs within this system requires careful attention to detail for both the notes and the bibliography entry.

Footnote/Endnote Citation for Photographs

In the notes, the citation aims to be concise while providing sufficient information to identify the source. The order of elements can vary slightly depending on whether the photograph is published or unpublished.

A typical note for a published photograph might look like this:

1. Photographer's First Name Last Name, "Title of Photograph," in Title of Book (Place of Publication: Publisher, Year), page number of photograph.

For an online photograph:

2. Photographer's First Name Last Name, "Title of Photograph," Date Accessed, URL.

If the photographer is unknown, the note would begin with the title or a description of the photograph.

Bibliography Entry for Photographs

The bibliography entry for a photograph is more comprehensive than a note, aiming to provide all necessary information for a reader to locate the source independently. The order of elements generally follows standard CMOS practices for books or other published materials, with specific adaptations for visual works.

A bibliography entry for a published photograph might appear as:

Photographer's Last Name, First Name. "Title of Photograph." In Title of Book. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year. Page number.

For an online photograph:

Photographer's Last Name, First Name. "Title of Photograph." Date Accessed. URL.

When citing photographs from archives or special collections, the bibliography entry will focus on the repository and collection details.

Citing Photographs in Author-Date System

The author-date system uses in-text citations that include the author's last name and the year of publication, with a corresponding reference list at the end of the document. This system is often favored in scientific and social science fields.

In-Text Citation for Photographs

In the author-date system, the in-text citation for a photograph is brief, typically including the author's name (often the photographer if they are the author of the work in which the photo appears) and the year. Page numbers are included if referring to a specific instance of reproduction.

Example:

(Smith 2020, 15)

If the photographer is not the author of the larger work, the citation would reflect the author of the work and the year, with the photograph itself being fully described in the reference list.

Reference List Entry for Photographs

The reference list provides the full details for all sources cited in the text. For photographs, this entry needs to be comprehensive, including all the core elements identified earlier.

A reference list entry for a published photograph might look like this:

Smith, John. "Sunset Over the City." In *Urban Landscapes*. New York: Acme Press, 2020. Photograph.

For an online photograph:

Doe, Jane. "Portrait of an Artist." Accessed October 26, 2023.
<https://www.example.com/artistportrait>.

When the photographer is unknown but the photograph is attributed to a collection, the

collection name might be used as the author.

Photograph Citations from Different Sources

The specific context in which you encounter a photograph significantly influences how you cite it according to CMOS. Each source type presents unique challenges and requires specific information to be included in the citation.

Photographs in Books and Journals

When a photograph is reproduced within a book or journal article, the citation must account for both the photograph itself and the publication in which it appears. The page number where the photograph is located is essential for both citation systems.

For notes and bibliography:

- Note: Photographer, "Title of Photo," Title of Book, page.
- Bibliography: Photographer, Last Name, First Name. "Title of Photo." In Title of Book. Place: Publisher, Year. Page.

For author-date:

- In-text: (Photographer Last Name Year, page)
- Reference List: Photographer, First Name Last Name. "Title of Photo." In Title of Book. Place: Publisher, Year. Page.

Online Photographs and Databases

Citing online photographs requires attention to web-specific details, such as access dates and URLs. Many online databases dedicated to images also have their own citation guidelines, which should be consulted if available, while still adhering to CMOS principles.

Key elements for online citations include:

- Photographer's Name
- Title of Photograph

- Name of Website or Database
- Publication or Last Updated Date (if available)
- Access Date
- URL

When the creator of an online image is not a named individual (e.g., a corporate entity or a user-generated content platform), CMOS provides guidance on how to attribute it, often by treating the entity as the author.

Photographs from Archives and Special Collections

Citing photographs held in physical archives or special collections demands precision in identifying the repository, collection name, and accession or item number. This is crucial for enabling others to retrieve the original material.

The citation typically includes:

- Photographer's Name (if known)
- Title or Description of Photograph
- Date of Creation
- Name of Collection
- Name of Archive or Repository
- Location of Repository
- Accession Number or Item Identifier

These citations are particularly important in historical research where the original artifact is a primary source.

Specific Scenarios in Photograph Citation

Certain situations present unique challenges when citing photographs, requiring specific interpretations of CMOS guidelines to ensure accuracy and clarity.

When the Photographer is Unknown

If the photographer is not identified, the citation should proceed without their name, usually starting with the title of the photograph or a descriptive phrase. CMOS emphasizes that you should cite what you can reliably identify. For example, if you find a photograph of a historical event without a credited photographer, you might begin with the title or a descriptive phrase like "View of the Great Fire of Chicago."

When the Photograph Has No Title

In cases where a photograph lacks an official title, a descriptive phrase can be used in its place. This description should be clear and concise, accurately identifying the subject matter of the photograph. For instance, instead of a title, you might use "Portrait of a Young Woman in a Lace Collar." This descriptive phrase is then treated similarly to a title in the citation structure.

Citing Your Own Photographs

Even when you are the creator of the photograph, you must cite it if you are including it as a visual aid in a work that requires formal citation, such as a thesis or dissertation. This is particularly important for demonstrating the origin of your evidence. Your own photographs are typically treated as personal communications or unpublished works, depending on how they are presented and stored.

For your own photographs used in a thesis or dissertation, you might cite them as:

- In-text (Author Last Name Year, page if applicable)
- Reference List: Author, First Name Last Name. "Title of Photograph" (if titled) or Description. Personal photograph. Date taken.

This ensures that the origin of all visual material is transparent, even when it is your own creation.

Photographs as Part of a Larger Work (e.g., Art Installation)

When a photograph is part of a larger artistic context, such as an installation or a series, the citation may need to reflect this relationship. The primary focus might be on the larger artwork, with the photograph being a component. CMOS guidelines for citing artworks can

often be adapted for such scenarios, ensuring the relationship between the photograph and the larger work is clearly articulated.

Frequently Asked Questions About Chicago Manual of Style Photograph Citation

Q: What is the most important element in a Chicago Manual of Style photograph citation?

A: The most important element is usually the photographer's name, if known, as it provides direct attribution to the creator. If the photographer is unknown, then the title or a clear description of the photograph becomes critically important.

Q: How do I cite a photograph found on Google Images according to CMOS?

A: Citing images directly from Google Images is often discouraged due to the difficulty in verifying the original source and copyright. However, if you must, you should attempt to trace the image back to its original source (e.g., a museum website, a news article) and cite that source, including the photographer, title, date, website name, access date, and URL of the original source, not Google Images itself.

Q: Should I italicize the title of a photograph in CMOS?

A: Whether a photograph's title is italicized or placed in quotation marks depends on its context. If the photograph is considered a standalone artwork, its title is often italicized. If it's part of a larger work (like an article or a chapter), its title may be enclosed in quotation marks. Consult the specific guidance within CMOS for visual materials and artwork.

Q: What is the difference between citing a photograph in a book and citing the book itself in CMOS?

A: When citing a photograph in a book, you must provide details about the specific photograph (photographer, its title, date) in addition to the publication details of the book (title, publisher, year, page number where the photo appears). When citing the book as a whole, you only need the standard book citation elements.

Q: How do I cite a photograph if the date it was taken is unknown but the publication date is known?

A: If the date the photograph was taken is unknown, you should indicate this in your citation using "n.d." (no date) or a similar convention, as appropriate for the citation system you are using. However, the publication date of the source where you found the photograph

is still crucial.

Q: Can I cite a photograph I took myself?

A: Yes, you can cite your own photographs. Treat them as personal photographs or unpublished works. Include your name as the creator, a title or description, and the date you took the photograph, along with notes about its location (e.g., "Personal collection").

Q: What are the key differences in citing photographs between the notes-bibliography and author-date systems in CMOS?

A: The primary difference lies in the format and placement of citations. The notes-bibliography system uses footnotes/endnotes for in-text citations and a comprehensive bibliography at the end. The author-date system uses parenthetical in-text citations (Author Year) and a reference list at the end. The core information required for the photograph citation remains largely the same, but the structure and presentation vary.

Q: How does CMOS handle photographs where the creator is a group or organization rather than an individual?

A: When a photograph is credited to a group or organization (e.g., Associated Press, Getty Images), that entity is treated as the author in the citation. The rest of the citation follows standard CMOS principles for attributing the work to that organizational author.

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