

chicago manual paraphrase citation guide

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The Essential Chicago Manual Paraphrase Citation Guide

chicago manual paraphrase citation guide is fundamental for academic and professional writing, ensuring proper attribution and avoiding plagiarism. Paraphrasing, the act of restating someone else's ideas in your own words, is a crucial skill. However, simply rephrasing content without acknowledging the original source is a serious academic offense. This comprehensive guide will navigate you through the intricacies of paraphrasing and citing according to the widely respected Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS). We will delve into when and how to cite paraphrased material, explore common citation scenarios, and address potential pitfalls. Understanding these principles is vital for maintaining academic integrity and enhancing the credibility of your written work, whether you are drafting a research paper, a thesis, or any scholarly document that relies on existing research.

Understanding Paraphrasing and the Need for Citation

The core of academic integrity rests on properly acknowledging the intellectual contributions of others. Paraphrasing is a technique that allows writers to integrate external information into their own text without directly quoting. It involves digesting the original material and then expressing its meaning using a different sentence structure and vocabulary. However, the origin of the ideas or facts remains with the original author.

What Constitutes Paraphrasing?

Paraphrasing is more than just swapping out a few words. It requires a deep understanding of the source material. A successful paraphrase captures the

essence of the original text while employing entirely new phrasing and sentence construction. It demonstrates that you have processed and understood the information, rather than merely copying it. Think of it as translating the author's thoughts into your own distinct voice and style, ensuring that the core message remains intact.

Why is Citing Paraphrased Material Essential?

The primary reason for citing paraphrased material is to give credit where credit is due. Failing to do so constitutes plagiarism, which can have severe academic and professional consequences. Citation also allows your readers to trace the origins of your information, verify its accuracy, and explore the original sources themselves. It lends authority to your arguments by showing that they are supported by credible research and established knowledge within your field.

When and How to Cite Paraphrased Material in Chicago Style

Adhering to the Chicago Manual of Style requires careful attention to detail when it comes to citing paraphrased content. The style offers two primary citation systems: the notes-bibliography system and the author-date system. For paraphrased material, both systems necessitate clear attribution.

The Notes-Bibliography System for Paraphrased Content

In the notes-bibliography system, you will typically use footnotes or endnotes to cite your sources. When you paraphrase an idea, fact, or argument from another source, you should insert a superscript number at the end of the sentence or clause containing the paraphrased material. This number corresponds to a corresponding note at the bottom of the page (footnote) or at the end of the document (endnote). The note itself will contain a citation for the source, including sufficient information for your reader to locate it.

The Author-Date System for Paraphrased Content

The author-date system is more common in certain disciplines, particularly in the sciences. In this system, an in-text citation is placed directly after the paraphrased material, usually in parentheses. This citation typically includes the author's last name, the year of publication, and the page number(s) from which the information was drawn. For example, (Smith 2020, 15). This brief citation directs the reader to a full entry in the

bibliography or reference list at the end of your paper.

Key Elements of a Paraphrased Citation

Regardless of the system employed, a citation for paraphrased material should generally include the following core components:

- Author's last name
- Year of publication
- Page number(s) from which the paraphrased information was derived
- (In the notes-bibliography system) A title for the source and publication details

The level of detail required in the in-text citation or note will depend on whether you are using the notes-bibliography or author-date system, as well as whether the author's name is mentioned in the text itself.

Navigating Common Scenarios with Chicago Manual Paraphrase Citation

Writers frequently encounter specific situations that require careful consideration when paraphrasing and citing. Understanding these common scenarios will help you avoid errors and ensure accuracy in your citations.

Paraphrasing a Specific Idea or Argument

When you paraphrase a particular concept or a central argument from a source, it is crucial to cite the original work. Even if you have thoroughly restated the idea in your own words, the intellectual property belongs to the original author. For instance, if you are discussing a sociologist's theory on social stratification, and you explain that theory using your own sentence structure, you must still attribute the theory to that sociologist. In the author-date system, this would look like (Durkheim 1912, 45-47), and in the notes-bibliography system, a note would refer to Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*.

Paraphrasing Factual Information

Factual information, statistics, or data presented in a source also require citation when paraphrased. While facts themselves are not copyrighted, the

way they are presented, analyzed, or compiled in a particular source is. If you encounter a statistic about economic growth in a report, and you incorporate that statistic into your paper after rephrasing the context around it, you must cite the report. For example, (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2023, 5) or a corresponding note with the report's details.

Paraphrasing from Multiple Sources

When synthesizing information from several sources to create a paraphrased section, you must cite each source individually for the specific ideas or facts that originated from it. You cannot simply cite one source at the end of a paragraph if multiple authors contributed to the content. Each distinct piece of information needs its appropriate attribution. This often means multiple citations within a single sentence or a series of sentences.

Troubleshooting Common Citation Issues for Paraphrases

Even with careful attention, citation can be a complex process. Being aware of common mistakes and knowing how to rectify them is essential for producing polished, credible work.

When a Citation Seems Unnecessary

There are instances where a citation might not be strictly required. Common knowledge, generally accepted facts within your field, or your own original ideas do not need citation. However, the line between common knowledge and specific information from a source can be blurry. When in doubt, it is always safer to cite. For example, stating that "the Earth revolves around the Sun" is common knowledge and doesn't require citation. However, stating "a recent study found that a specific agricultural practice increased crop yields by 15%" absolutely requires citation.

Ensuring Accuracy in Parenthetical Citations

In the author-date system, accuracy in the parenthetical citation is paramount. Ensure that the author's name, year, and page number(s) precisely match the information in your bibliography. A misspelled name or an incorrect year can render the citation useless. Double-check that the page numbers cited accurately reflect where the paraphrased information was found in the original source.

Understanding Note Citation Details

For the notes-bibliography system, the details within the notes are critical. Each note must contain enough information for a reader to find the source in your bibliography. This often includes the author's full name, the title of the work, publication details (city, publisher, year), and the specific page number. Subsequent citations of the same source can be shortened to include just the author's last name, a shortened title, and the page number, but the first citation must be comprehensive.

The Nuances of Paraphrasing and Citation in Chicago Style

Mastering the art of paraphrasing and citation within the Chicago Manual of Style involves a nuanced understanding of its principles and flexibility. The goal is always clarity, accuracy, and academic integrity.

Distinguishing Paraphrasing from Summarizing

While both paraphrasing and summarizing involve restating information in your own words, they differ in scope. A paraphrase restates a specific passage or section of a source in roughly the same length. A summary, on the other hand, condenses the main points of a longer work or an entire article into a much shorter overview. Both require citation. When summarizing an article, you cite the entire article, typically with a page range if referring to specific sections, or the entire work if summarizing its overall argument.

Paraphrasing Indirectly Cited Material

If you are citing a source that itself cites another source (a secondary source), Chicago Style advises you to consult the original source whenever possible. If you must cite the secondary source, you should indicate this in your citation. For example, a note might read: "Cited in Johnson, Book Title, page number, referencing Smith, Original Work Title, page number." In the author-date system, this is less common and usually managed within the text or a specific note, but the principle of clarity remains.

The Role of the Bibliography in Paraphrased Citations

The bibliography, or reference list, is the comprehensive collection of all sources cited in your paper. For paraphrased material, each source you have referenced through in-text citations or notes must have a corresponding entry in the bibliography. The format of these entries is highly specific in

Chicago Style, detailing author, title, publication information, and other relevant data. This allows readers to easily locate and consult your sources, reinforcing the credibility and thoroughness of your research.

Frequently Asked Questions about Chicago Manual Paraphrase Citation Guide

Q: What is the primary difference between paraphrasing and quoting in Chicago Style?

A: Quoting involves using the exact words of the original source, enclosed in quotation marks, and requires a precise citation with page number. Paraphrasing, conversely, rephrases the source's ideas in your own words and also requires a citation with a page number to indicate where the idea originated.

Q: When is it acceptable to not cite paraphrased material in Chicago Style?

A: You do not need to cite paraphrased material if it is considered common knowledge within your field or if it is your own original idea. However, if the information comes from a specific source, even if you have restated it entirely in your own words, it must be cited to avoid plagiarism.

Q: Does Chicago Style require page numbers for all paraphrased citations?

A: Yes, in both the notes-bibliography and author-date systems, Chicago Style generally requires page numbers for paraphrased material. This is because it helps the reader locate the specific passage that inspired your paraphrase, ensuring accuracy and transparency.

Q: How do I cite a paraphrase if I cannot find the original page number?

A: If a source lacks page numbers (e.g., some online articles or older texts), you should omit the page number from your citation. In the notes-bibliography system, the note will still include author, title, and publication details. In the author-date system, the parenthetical citation would be (Author Year), and the bibliography entry would be complete.

Q: What happens if I paraphrase too closely to the original source?

A: Paraphrasing too closely, even with a citation, can still be considered a form of plagiarism, often termed "patchwriting." Chicago Style emphasizes restating ideas in your own unique sentence structure and vocabulary, demonstrating true comprehension. If your paraphrase retains too much of the original phrasing, it should be treated more like a direct quotation, or you should revise it more extensively.

Q: How does Chicago Style handle paraphrasing of online sources without page numbers?

A: For online sources without page numbers, Chicago Style recommends using other locators if available, such as paragraph numbers (often abbreviated as par. or ¶) or section headings. If no such locators exist, the citation will include the author and year (or just the author if they are mentioned in the text) in the parenthetical citation, and the full details in the bibliography.

Q: Is it necessary to include a bibliography entry for every in-text citation of a paraphrase?

A: Absolutely. Every source that you cite in your paper, whether through a direct quote or a paraphrase, must have a corresponding full entry in your bibliography or reference list. This is a fundamental principle of academic citation.

Q: Can I paraphrase a whole chapter and cite it only once?

A: While you can paraphrase an entire chapter, it is best practice to cite specific sections or ideas as they appear within your text, especially if the chapter covers multiple distinct points. A general citation for the entire chapter might suffice for a very broad summary, but for specific arguments or data, page-specific citations are crucial.

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