

chicago manual style paraphrasing citation

The Chicago Manual of Style is a cornerstone for academic and professional writing, providing a comprehensive framework for clear and consistent communication. When it comes to integrating sources into your work, mastering Chicago Manual Style paraphrasing citation is paramount to avoiding plagiarism and giving credit where it's due. This article will delve deeply into the nuances of Chicago style paraphrasing, covering everything from understanding the core principles to executing proper in-text citations and full bibliography entries. We will explore the distinction between paraphrasing and quoting, common pitfalls to avoid, and the specific requirements for different types of sources. By the end, you will possess the knowledge to confidently and accurately cite paraphrased material according to the Chicago Manual of Style.

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Understanding Paraphrasing vs. Quoting in Chicago Style

The Fundamental Difference

In academic and professional writing governed by the Chicago Manual of Style, distinguishing between paraphrasing and direct quoting is fundamental. A direct quote, also known as an in-text quotation, involves reproducing the exact wording of a source, typically enclosed in quotation marks or presented as a block quotation if it exceeds a certain length. Paraphrasing, on the other hand, involves rephrasing the ideas, arguments, or information from a source in your own words and sentence structure. The core idea remains the same, but the expression is distinctly yours.

Why Paraphrase? The Benefits for Your Writing

Paraphrasing is a vital skill for several reasons. It allows you to demonstrate your comprehension of the source material by synthesizing and integrating it into your own narrative. Effective paraphrasing can also make your writing flow more smoothly, as you can adapt the borrowed ideas to fit the tone and style of your own work. Furthermore, it helps you avoid over-reliance on direct quotations, which can sometimes interrupt the reader's experience. When you paraphrase correctly, you signal to your reader that you have processed and understood the information deeply enough to re-articulate it yourself.

When to Choose Paraphrasing Over Quoting

The decision to paraphrase or quote depends on your specific writing needs. Generally, paraphrasing is preferred when the precise wording of the original source is not critical to your argument. If you can convey the author's idea more effectively or concisely in your own words, paraphrasing is the better choice. However, if the original wording is particularly impactful, eloquently stated, or contains specific terminology that cannot be easily or accurately rephrased, then a direct quotation might be more appropriate. Always consider what best serves your argument and your reader's understanding.

The Mechanics of Chicago Manual Style Paraphrasing Citation

The Chicago Manual of Style offers two primary systems for citation: the notes-bibliography system and the author-date system. Both systems require careful attention to detail when it comes to paraphrasing. Regardless of the system you employ, the overarching goal is to provide sufficient information for your reader to locate the original source. Failing to do so, even when paraphrasing, constitutes plagiarism. Understanding these systems is crucial for any writer adhering to Chicago style.

The Notes-Bibliography System Explained

In the notes-bibliography system, which is common in the humanities, paraphrased material is typically cited using a superscript note number in the text. This note number corresponds to a footnote or an endnote, which contains the full citation details or a shortened version if the source has been cited before. The bibliography at the end of your work will then provide a complete list of all sources consulted, alphabetized by author's last name.

The Author-Date System Explained

The author-date system, more prevalent in the social sciences and sciences, uses parenthetical in-text citations. These citations generally include the author's last name and the year of publication. For paraphrased material, a page number may also be included to help readers pinpoint the exact location of the information, although it is not always strictly required if the idea is a general one from the entire work. A reference list at the end of the document contains full bibliographic information for all cited sources.

Essential Components of a Chicago Citation for Paraphrased Work

Whether using notes-bibliography or author-date, a Chicago citation for paraphrased material must include several key pieces of information. These typically include the author's name(s), the title of the work (book, article, webpage, etc.), and publication details such as the publisher, place of publication, and date. For online sources, the URL and access date are essential. The specific format will vary slightly depending on the source.

type and the chosen citation system, but the principle of providing discoverable information remains constant.

Crafting Effective Paraphrases

Simply rearranging a few words or changing synonyms is not true paraphrasing. To craft an effective paraphrase that adheres to the spirit of academic integrity and Chicago Manual Style paraphrasing citation, you must truly understand and re-articulate the source's ideas in your own voice.

Active Reading and Comprehension

Before you can paraphrase effectively, you must first thoroughly understand the source material. Read the passage carefully, perhaps multiple times, until you can explain its core meaning in your own words without looking at the original. Identify the main points, supporting evidence, and the author's overall argument. This active engagement with the text is the bedrock of good paraphrasing.

Rephrasing in Your Own Words and Structure

Once you have a firm grasp of the source, begin to write your paraphrase. Focus on using your own vocabulary and sentence structures. Avoid simply substituting synonyms for the original words, as this can result in a paraphrase that is too close to the original and may still be considered plagiarism. Try to condense, expand, or reorganize the information as needed to fit seamlessly into your own writing. The goal is to present the author's idea, not their exact phrasing.

Maintaining the Original Meaning

While you are rephrasing, it is crucial to preserve the original meaning of the source. Do not introduce your own interpretations or alter the author's intent. If you are unsure about the precise meaning of a particular phrase or sentence, consult a dictionary or another reliable source, or consider quoting directly if the meaning is ambiguous. Accuracy in conveying the source's message is paramount for valid Chicago Manual Style paraphrasing citation.

In-Text Citations for Paraphrased Material

The way you signal that you are using paraphrased material in Chicago style is through in-text citations. These serve as immediate signposts for your reader, indicating where borrowed ideas have been integrated. The specific format depends on whether you are using the notes-bibliography or author-date system.

Notes-Bibliography System: Footnotes and Endnotes

When paraphrasing in the notes-bibliography system, you will typically place a superscript Arabic numeral immediately after the paraphrased sentence or clause, before the punctuation. This numeral corresponds to an entry in your footnotes (at the bottom of the page) or endnotes (at the end of the chapter or document). The first time a source is cited, the note will include full bibliographic information. Subsequent citations of the same source use a shortened form, typically including the author's last name, a shortened title, and the page number.

- Example of a first note for a book: 1. John Smith, *The History of Ideas* (New York: Academic Press, 2020), 45.
- Example of a subsequent note for the same book: 2. Smith, *History of Ideas*, 67.

Author-Date System: Parenthetical Citations

In the author-date system, in-text citations for paraphrased material are enclosed in parentheses. The standard format includes the author's last name, the year of publication, and, if applicable, the page number. The page number is especially helpful when the paraphrased idea is specific to a particular section of the source, allowing the reader to locate it easily. If you mention the author's name in your text, you can omit it from the parenthetical citation.

- Example of a standard parenthetical citation: (Smith 2020, 45).
- Example with author mentioned in text: According to Smith, the history of ideas is complex (2020, 45).

When Page Numbers are Necessary (or Not)

The necessity of including a page number in your in-text citation for paraphrased material can vary. For the author-date system, it is generally recommended when you are paraphrasing a specific idea or piece of information that is clearly located on a particular page or set of pages. If you are paraphrasing a general concept or the overall argument of a work, a page number may not be required. In the notes-bibliography system, page numbers are almost always included in the notes to indicate the precise source of the information. Always consult the specific guidelines of your instructor or publication.

Bibliography Entries for Paraphrased Sources

The bibliography (or reference list) serves as a comprehensive catalog of all the sources you have cited in your paper. For paraphrased material, these entries must be complete and accurately formatted according to Chicago Manual Style. The goal is to provide enough information for any reader to find the

original source themselves.

Formatting a Book in the Bibliography

For a book, a bibliography entry typically includes the author's full name (last name first), the full title of the book (italicized), and publication details. For the notes-bibliography system, the author's first name comes first in the bibliography entry, and the title is followed by the place of publication, publisher, and year. For the author-date system, the author's last name comes first, followed by the year of publication in parentheses, then the title, and finally the publisher and place.

- Notes-Bibliography Example: Smith, John. *The History of Ideas*. New York: Academic Press, 2020.
- Author-Date Example: Smith, John. 2020. *The History of Ideas*. New York: Academic Press.

Formatting an Article in the Bibliography

Articles, whether from journals, magazines, or newspapers, also require specific formatting in the bibliography. This usually includes the author's name, the title of the article (in quotation marks), the title of the publication (italicized), volume and issue numbers for journals, and publication dates. For online articles, URLs and access dates are crucial.

- Notes-Bibliography Example: Miller, Jane. "The Evolution of Modern Thought." *Journal of Intellectual History* 25, no. 3 (2021): 115-130.
- Author-Date Example: Miller, Jane. 2021. "The Evolution of Modern Thought." *Journal of Intellectual History* 25 (3): 115-130.

Formatting Online Sources

Citing online sources requires special attention due to their ephemeral nature. For Chicago Manual Style paraphrasing citation of webpages, blog posts, or online articles, include the author's name, the title of the page or article, the website name, and the URL. Crucially, include the date you accessed the material, as online content can change or disappear.

- Notes-Bibliography Example: Davis, Emily. "Understanding Citation Styles." *Academic Writing Resources*, last modified October 15, 2022. <https://www.academicwriting.com/citation-styles>.
- Author-Date Example: Davis, Emily. 2022. "Understanding Citation Styles." *Academic Writing Resources*. Accessed October 20, 2022. <https://www.academicwriting.com/citation-styles>.

Common Challenges in Chicago Style Paraphrasing Citation

While the principles of Chicago Manual Style paraphrasing citation are straightforward, writers often encounter difficulties. Being aware of these common pitfalls can help you avoid errors and ensure the integrity of your work.

Avoiding Patchwriting and Plagiarism

One of the most significant challenges is avoiding patchwriting, which is a form of plagiarism where you change a few words or phrases from the original source but retain the original sentence structure and much of the original wording. True paraphrasing requires a complete re-expression of the idea. Always compare your paraphrase to the original text to ensure you have sufficiently altered both the wording and the sentence construction. If your paraphrase sounds too much like the original, it's a red flag.

Handling Complex or Technical Language

When dealing with complex or technical language, paraphrasing can be particularly challenging. If the precise technical term is essential, you may need to use it and then explain it in your own words. Alternatively, if the term is not central to your argument, you might be able to explain the concept it represents more generally. If the original wording is crucial for conveying a nuanced technical meaning, a direct quote might be more appropriate, followed by your own analysis.

Citing Multiple Authors and Indirect Sources

Citing works by multiple authors or indirect sources (when you cite a source mentioned in another source) requires careful adherence to Chicago style. For multiple authors, list them as per the Chicago Manual of Style guidelines, which vary based on the number of authors. For indirect sources, it is always best to find and cite the original source if possible. If that's not feasible, Chicago style provides a method for citing the secondary source, clearly indicating that the information was obtained indirectly.

Paraphrasing from Different Source Types

The Chicago Manual of Style acknowledges a wide array of source types, and the principles of paraphrasing apply universally, though the specific citation details will differ.

Books and Book Chapters

Paraphrasing from books or individual chapters involves capturing the author's arguments, findings, or narratives in your own words. Whether it's a

single author's monograph or a chapter in an edited collection, the key is to accurately reflect the content and cite it appropriately in both your in-text citations and your bibliography entry. Ensure you correctly identify the author of the specific work or chapter you are referencing.

Journal Articles and Magazine Pieces

When paraphrasing from academic journals or magazine articles, focus on the core research, analysis, or reporting presented. These sources often contain specific data, methodologies, or arguments that need to be clearly and accurately rephrased. Remember to include journal titles, volume, issue numbers, and page ranges for journal articles, and publication dates for magazines.

Websites and Online Content

Paraphrasing from websites requires diligence, as online content can be less formal and may lack clear authorship or publication dates. Always strive to identify the author or organization responsible for the content. When paraphrasing, accurately reflect the information presented and include the website name, URL, and access date in your citations. Be critical of the source's credibility.

Final Thoughts on Chicago Manual Style Paraphrasing Citation

Mastering Chicago Manual Style paraphrasing citation is an ongoing process that requires practice and attention to detail. By understanding the difference between paraphrasing and quoting, correctly implementing in-text citations and bibliography entries, and being mindful of common challenges, you can effectively and ethically integrate source material into your writing. The Chicago Manual of Style provides a robust framework for clear attribution, ensuring that your work is both well-supported and academically honest. Consistent application of these principles will enhance the credibility and clarity of your scholarly endeavors.

Q: What is the most common mistake when paraphrasing in Chicago style?

A: The most common mistake is not truly rephrasing the source material. Writers often fall into the trap of "patchwriting," where they change only a few words or rearrange phrases while keeping the original sentence structure, which can still be considered plagiarism. True paraphrasing requires a complete re-articulation of the idea in your own words and sentence structure.

Q: Do I always need to include a page number when

paraphrasing in Chicago style?

A: It depends on the citation system you are using and the nature of the paraphrased material. In the notes-bibliography system, page numbers are generally included in footnotes/endnotes to pinpoint the exact source of the information. In the author-date system, page numbers are highly recommended when paraphrasing a specific idea or piece of information located on a particular page, but may not be necessary if you are referencing a general concept or the entire work.

Q: How does Chicago Manual Style paraphrasing citation differ between the notes-bibliography system and the author-date system?

A: The core principles of paraphrasing are the same, but the citation format differs. The notes-bibliography system uses superscript numbers for in-text citations that link to footnotes or endnotes, while the author-date system uses parenthetical citations in the text (e.g., (Author Year, Page)). Both systems require a full bibliography or reference list at the end.

Q: Can I paraphrase from a website, and how do I cite it in Chicago style?

A: Yes, you can paraphrase from websites. When citing paraphrased material from a website in Chicago style, you will need to include the author (if known), the title of the specific page or article, the website's name, the URL, and crucially, the date you accessed the material. The format will vary slightly between the notes-bibliography and author-date systems.

Q: What is the difference between paraphrasing and summarizing in Chicago style?

A: Paraphrasing restates a specific passage or idea from a source in your own words, usually at a similar length to the original. Summarizing, on the other hand, condenses the main points of a larger work or section into a much shorter overview. Both require proper Chicago Manual Style paraphrasing citation or citation of summarized material.

Q: How do I ensure my paraphrase is original enough to avoid plagiarism under Chicago style guidelines?

A: To ensure originality, read the source material carefully until you understand it thoroughly, then put it aside. Write your paraphrase from memory, focusing on conveying the author's idea in your own unique vocabulary and sentence structure. Afterward, compare your paraphrase to the original to check for unintentional similarities in wording or structure. If it sounds too close, revise it further.

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