

chicago style academic writing guidelines for submission

The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) is a widely recognized and respected citation and style guide, particularly in the humanities and social sciences. For scholars and students preparing academic papers for submission, adhering to the chicago style academic writing guidelines for submission is paramount to presenting polished, professional, and credible work. Mastering these guidelines ensures clarity, consistency, and proper attribution of sources, all of which are critical for academic integrity and effective communication. This comprehensive article will delve into the core tenets of Chicago style, covering everything from manuscript preparation and in-text citations to bibliographical entries and the nuances of formatting. We will explore the two primary systems of citation – Notes and Bibliography, and Author-Date – and discuss their appropriate applications. Furthermore, understanding specific formatting requirements for headings, tables, figures, and other elements will be crucial for a successful submission.

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Understanding the Chicago Manual of Style

The Chicago Manual of Style, often abbreviated as CMOS, serves as a comprehensive authority on writing, style, and citation. Its primary purpose is to provide a standardized framework for academic and professional writing, ensuring consistency and clarity across various disciplines. Developed and maintained by the University of Chicago Press, CMOS offers detailed guidance on a vast array of topics, from grammar and punctuation to manuscript preparation and electronic publishing. For academic writing, its recommendations are frequently adopted by journals, presses, and universities, making a thorough understanding of its principles essential for authors aiming for successful publication or submission.

The manual is divided into two major parts: "Part I: Book Mode" and "Part II: Online and Other Media." Within these parts, it covers topics such as the

mechanics of style, grammar, punctuation, syntax, and the treatment of numbers, names, and the like. Crucially for academic work, it provides extensive guidance on the preparation of manuscripts for publication, including how to handle permissions, indexes, and other back matter. When dealing with academic writing, the focus often shifts to its extensive recommendations on how to properly cite sources, a cornerstone of scholarly integrity and intellectual honesty.

Manuscript Formatting Requirements

Preparing a manuscript according to the Chicago style academic writing guidelines for submission involves meticulous attention to detail in its formatting. While specific journal or publisher requirements may vary slightly, CMOS provides a solid baseline for professional presentation. This includes standards for margins, line spacing, font choices, and page numbering, all of which contribute to the readability and professionalism of the document. Adhering to these fundamental formatting rules demonstrates respect for the submission process and the editorial team who will review your work.

General Formatting Standards

For most academic submissions following Chicago style, a standard double-spaced manuscript is the norm. This includes the main body of the text, block quotations, and notes. Margins should typically be one inch on all sides of the page. Font choices should be clear and legible, with Times New Roman or Arial in 12-point font being common recommendations. Page numbers are usually placed in the upper right-hand corner of each page, starting from the title page (though the title page itself is often not numbered). Consistent application of these standards throughout the document is vital.

Title Page and Heading Structure

The title page should include the full title of the paper, the author's name, and the author's affiliation (e.g., university department and institution). Some submissions may also require a running head. For the main body of the text, Chicago style does not mandate a specific heading hierarchy beyond the standard chapter or section divisions. However, journals or publishers often have their own guidelines for subheadings. If using subheadings, ensure they are consistently formatted and clearly indicate the structure of your argument.

Citation Systems in Chicago Style

Chicago style offers two distinct systems for citing sources: the Notes and Bibliography system and the Author-Date system. The choice between these two often depends on the academic discipline or the specific requirements of the journal or publisher. Both systems aim to provide clear and accurate attribution of all borrowed material, but they differ in how they are implemented within the text and in the accompanying reference list or bibliography.

The Notes and Bibliography system is favored in many humanities disciplines, such as literature, history, and art history. It uses numbered footnotes or endnotes to cite sources within the text, and a bibliography at the end of the paper lists all sources cited. The Author-Date system is more common in the social sciences and natural sciences and uses parenthetical in-text citations, followed by a reference list.

The Notes and Bibliography System

The Notes and Bibliography system is a hallmark of traditional academic writing, especially in fields that engage with extensive archival research or nuanced interpretations of texts. This system relies on superscript numbers embedded in the text to correspond to notes, which can be presented as either footnotes (at the bottom of the page) or endnotes (at the end of the document). Each note provides the full bibliographical information for the source upon its first citation, and subsequent citations of the same source are typically shortened.

The primary advantage of this system is its ability to accommodate explanatory material or digressions without disrupting the flow of the main text. Authors can insert additional commentary, provide detailed historical context, or engage with secondary sources in the notes, enriching the reader's understanding. However, it can also lead to a fragmented reading experience if notes are overused or if the content of the notes is not essential to the core argument.

Formatting Footnotes and Endnotes

When formatting footnotes or endnotes, the initial citation of a source should include all relevant bibliographical details: author's full name, title of the work (italicized for books, in quotation marks for articles), publication information (city, publisher, year), and page number(s) being cited. For subsequent citations of the same source, a shortened form is used, typically including the author's last name, a shortened title, and the page

number.

An example of a full footnote for a book might look like this:

- 1. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 25.

A subsequent shortened note would appear as:

- 2. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 48.

Creating the Bibliography

The bibliography, placed at the end of the paper, lists all the sources that were cited in the notes. Unlike the notes, the bibliography entries are alphabetized by the author's last name. The formatting of bibliography entries closely resembles the full citation information in the notes, but with a few key differences. The author's last name appears first, followed by a comma and their first name. Book titles are italicized, and article titles are enclosed in quotation marks. The publication details follow, culminating in the page numbers if it's an article or chapter.

The Author-Date System

The Author-Date system, widely adopted in scientific and social science disciplines, offers a more concise method of in-text citation. Instead of relying on numbered notes, it uses parenthetical citations directly within the text, typically including the author's last name, the year of publication, and the page number(s) if a specific passage is being referenced. This system is often preferred for its efficiency and for allowing readers to quickly identify the source of information without referring to separate notes.

The main advantage of the Author-Date system is its streamlined presentation. It reduces the visual clutter in the text, making it easier to follow the narrative flow. This system is particularly useful in fields where research is rapidly evolving, as the publication date immediately signals the currency of the information cited. The accompanying reference list at the end of the paper then provides the full bibliographical details for each cited source, allowing readers to locate the original material with ease.

In-Text Parenthetical Citations

In the Author-Date system, in-text citations are generally enclosed in parentheses. The format typically includes the author's last name and the year of publication. If a specific point or quotation is being referenced, the page number is also included. For instance, a citation might appear as (Smith 2020, 115). If the author's name is mentioned in the sentence, only the year and page number are needed within the parentheses: Smith argues that (2020, 115).

When citing multiple works by the same author in the same year, or multiple authors, specific rules apply. Works by the same author in the same year are distinguished by adding lowercase letters to the year, such as (Jones 2019a) and (Jones 2019b). For multiple authors, the number of authors included in the citation depends on the number of authors and the specific guidelines of the publication. Generally, for two authors, both are listed, separated by an ampersand (Garcia & Lee 2021). For three or more authors, the first author's last name is followed by "et al." (Chen et al. 2018).

The Reference List

The reference list in the Author-Date system, found at the end of the paper, is an alphabetized list of all sources cited in the text. Each entry provides complete publication details. The format for book entries includes the author's last name, first initial(s), year of publication, title of the work (italicized), and publication information (city, publisher). Journal article entries include the author(s), year, article title (in quotation marks), journal title (italicized), volume and issue numbers, and page numbers.

An example of a reference list entry for a book using the Author-Date system would be:

- Smith, John. 2020. *Theories of Modern Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

And for a journal article:

- Johnson, Emily, and David Lee. 2019. "The Impact of Technology on Education." *Journal of Educational Research* 55 (2): 45-67.

Formatting In-Text Citations

Regardless of which Chicago style citation system you employ, the accurate and consistent formatting of in-text citations is a cornerstone of academic integrity. These citations serve to acknowledge the intellectual contributions of others and allow your readers to locate the original sources of information, arguments, or data. Meticulous attention to these details not only avoids accusations of plagiarism but also enhances the credibility and thoroughness of your research.

Whether using notes or parenthetical citations, the goal is to provide enough information within the text or through accompanying notes to clearly identify the source. This involves correctly referencing authors, titles, and specific page numbers where applicable. Deviations from the established formats can lead to confusion for the reader and may result in your work being returned for revisions by editors or instructors.

Integrating Citations Seamlessly

In the Notes and Bibliography system, superscripts are used to indicate the presence of a note. These superscripts are typically placed after the punctuation mark at the end of a sentence or clause that contains borrowed information. It is crucial to ensure that every piece of information, idea, or direct quotation not originating from the author is properly attributed. The placement of the superscript should logically connect it to the specific phrase, sentence, or paragraph to which it applies.

In the Author-Date system, parenthetical citations are integrated directly into the text. They should be placed at the end of the clause or sentence that contains the borrowed material, typically before the final punctuation mark. The aim is to keep the citation as close as possible to the information it references without disrupting the grammatical flow or readability of the sentence. When quoting directly, the page number is essential; for paraphrased ideas, the page number is often optional but recommended for clarity, especially in dense academic prose.

Handling Direct Quotations and Paraphrases

When using direct quotations, whether in the Notes and Bibliography system or the Author-Date system, the quoted text must be exact and enclosed in quotation marks. For longer quotations (typically more than four or five lines, depending on the style guide), a block quotation format is used, which involves indenting the entire quotation from the left margin and omitting quotation marks. In both cases, the in-text citation must include the precise page number(s) from which the quotation was taken.

For paraphrased ideas or summarized information, while direct quotation marks are not used, the source must still be cited. In the Notes and Bibliography system, a note number is still required. In the Author-Date system, the parenthetical citation with the author's name and year is necessary. While page numbers are not strictly required for paraphrases in all contexts, CMOS recommends including them for clarity and to help readers pinpoint the origin of the idea within the source text, especially in disciplines where precise attribution is critical.

Crafting Bibliographical Entries

The bibliography (or reference list, depending on the citation system) is a critical component of any academic submission adhering to Chicago style. It serves as a comprehensive catalog of all the sources consulted and cited in the work, providing readers with the full details needed to locate and verify these sources. Accuracy, consistency, and adherence to the specific formatting rules for each source type are paramount to creating a professional and trustworthy bibliography.

The way sources are presented in the bibliography differs slightly between the Notes and Bibliography system and the Author-Date system, particularly in the initial arrangement of names and punctuation. However, the core principle remains the same: to provide complete and unambiguous information about each cited work. This section will detail the construction of entries for common source types, ensuring you can accurately represent your research materials.

Formatting Books and Book Chapters

For books, the primary elements of a bibliography entry include the author's full name (last name first), the title of the book (italicized), the place of publication, the publisher, and the year of publication. For example, in the Notes and Bibliography system: Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books, 1995.

In the Author-Date system, the order is slightly different, with the year appearing after the author's name: Foucault, Michel. 1995. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books.

When citing a chapter or essay within an edited book, the entry includes the author of the chapter, the title of the chapter (in quotation marks), the word "in," the title of the book (italicized), the editor(s) of the book, and the page range of the chapter. For example: Derrida, Jacques. "Signature Event Context." In *Limited Inc*, edited by Gerald Graff, 1–24. Evanston, IL:

Northwestern University Press, 1988.

Formatting Journal and Magazine Articles

Entries for journal articles in Chicago style require the author's name (last name first), the article title (in quotation marks), the journal title (italicized), the volume number, the issue number (if applicable), the year of publication, and the page numbers of the article. For example: Geertz, Clifford. "The Interpretation of Cultures." *Culture and Analysis* 1 (1973): 10–5. (Note: Example adapted for clarity and demonstration; actual page numbers would be specific.)

Magazine articles are formatted similarly, but often include the date of the issue more specifically (e.g., month and day for weekly magazines) and are generally shorter than academic journal articles. It is crucial to verify the exact requirements for periodicals, as nuances exist between academic journals and popular magazines.

Formatting Online Sources and Other Media

Citing online sources requires careful attention to detail, as URLs can change and websites may be updated or removed. CMOS provides guidelines for citing various online materials, including web pages, articles from online journals, and other digital content. Typically, an entry includes the author (if available), the title of the specific page or article, the name of the website, and a URL. A crucial element for online sources is the access date, indicating when the material was last viewed, to account for potential changes.

For example, an online article might be cited as: Doe, Jane. "The Future of Renewable Energy." *EcoWatch*, October 26, 2023.
<https://www.ecowatch.com/future-of-renewable-energy.html>. Accessed November 15, 2023.

Other media, such as interviews, films, or audio recordings, also have specific formatting conventions within Chicago style. Always consult the latest edition of the Chicago Manual of Style for the most up-to-date and precise guidelines for every type of source you consult.

Specific Formatting Elements

Beyond the core citation and text formatting, several other elements require specific attention when adhering to Chicago style academic writing guidelines

for submission. These elements, such as the treatment of numbers, the use of abbreviations, and the incorporation of visuals, contribute to the overall polish and professionalism of your work. Understanding and applying these conventions correctly ensures your manuscript meets the expected standards of academic presentation.

Numbers and Abbreviations

Chicago style offers clear guidance on when to spell out numbers and when to use numerals. Generally, numbers one through ten are spelled out, while numerals are used for numbers 11 and above. However, there are exceptions for specific contexts, such as in dates, measurements, percentages, and statistics, where numerals are often preferred for clarity. Consistency in applying these rules is key.

Abbreviations should be used judiciously. Common abbreviations may be used without definition (e.g., "etc.," "i.e.," "e.g."). However, for less common or discipline-specific abbreviations, it is best practice to define them upon their first use in the text, often by spelling out the term followed by the abbreviation in parentheses. This ensures that all readers can understand the terminology used throughout your paper.

Capitalization and Punctuation

Chicago style provides detailed rules for capitalization, particularly for titles of works and headings. For titles of books, articles, and other works, it generally follows "title case," capitalizing most major words. For headings within a document, the specific style (e.g., sentence case or title case) often depends on the context and the hierarchy of the heading, with consistent application being the most important factor.

Punctuation rules in Chicago style are extensive, covering everything from comma usage and semicolon placement to the proper use of em dashes and quotation marks. For instance, CMOS typically uses the "American" or "closing" style for quotation marks, where periods and commas are placed inside the closing quotation mark. Mastering these punctuation nuances ensures clarity and adherence to professional academic standards.

Tables and Figures

The inclusion of tables and figures in academic writing serves to present complex data and visual information in a clear and accessible manner. Chicago style provides specific guidelines for formatting these elements to ensure

consistency and readability. Properly labeled and formatted tables and figures enhance the reader's understanding of your research and contribute to the overall professionalism of your submission.

Formatting Tables

Tables should be clearly labeled with a number (e.g., Table 1, Table 2) and a descriptive title. The title should be concise and informative, accurately reflecting the content of the table. Column headings and row labels should be clear and unambiguous. Data within the table should be aligned appropriately, and the use of excessive lines or shading should be avoided to maintain clarity. All tables must be referenced in the text, typically by calling out the table number (e.g., "As shown in Table 1...").

Formatting Figures

Figures, which include charts, graphs, maps, and images, are also assigned numbers sequentially and given descriptive titles. The title for a figure is usually placed below the visual element. Like tables, figures must be referenced in the text, allowing readers to understand their relevance to your argument. Any necessary notes or explanations for the figure should be placed directly beneath the title.

It is essential to ensure that all figures are of high resolution and clarity if they are to be included in a printed publication. For digital submissions, the file formats and resolution requirements should be carefully checked with the publisher or institution. Proper attribution for any borrowed figures is also critical, adhering to copyright and citation standards.

Avoiding Common Chicago Style Errors

Even with careful attention, writers can sometimes overlook specific nuances of Chicago style, leading to common errors that can detract from the professionalism of their academic writing. Recognizing these potential pitfalls and actively working to avoid them is crucial for a flawless submission. Common mistakes often involve inconsistencies in citation formatting, misapplication of punctuation rules, or incorrect formatting of specific elements like block quotes or bibliographical entries.

By familiarizing yourself with the most frequent errors, you can conduct a more targeted review of your manuscript. This proactive approach not only ensures compliance with Chicago style academic writing guidelines for submission but also demonstrates a commitment to scholarly rigor and

attention to detail. A final proofread, specifically looking for these common issues, can significantly improve the quality of your final document.

Consistency in Citations and Formatting

One of the most pervasive errors is inconsistency. This can manifest in the citation system itself—mixing elements of Notes and Bibliography with Author-Date—or in the detailed formatting of individual entries. For example, using different punctuation styles for similar sources or varying the way authors' names are presented within the bibliography can create confusion. Similarly, inconsistent use of italics for titles or quotation marks for article titles can be problematic.

Beyond citations, inconsistencies in general formatting, such as varying line spacing within the document, using different font styles or sizes for headings, or inconsistent page numbering, can also undermine the manuscript's professional appearance. Strict adherence to one chosen style and meticulous proofreading for any deviations are the best remedies.

Correct Use of Punctuation and Style

Punctuation is another area where errors frequently occur. For instance, the placement of commas and periods relative to quotation marks, or the correct use of semicolons to connect independent clauses, can be tricky. Another common issue is the misuse of em dashes versus hyphens, or the incorrect application of apostrophes in possessives and contractions.

Regarding style, errors might include the overuse of passive voice when active voice would be clearer, or the misapplication of capitalization rules for titles and headings. Even seemingly minor stylistic choices, when not aligned with CMOS guidelines, can impact the overall clarity and authority of your writing. Regularly consulting the CMOS for clarification on specific stylistic points is highly recommended.

Final Considerations for Submission

Before submitting your academic work, a final review is essential to ensure all Chicago style academic writing guidelines for submission have been met. This involves not only a thorough check of content and argument but also a meticulous examination of the manuscript's presentation. Adhering to these guidelines is not merely about following rules; it is about communicating your research effectively, ethically, and professionally.

The ultimate goal of following any style guide, including Chicago, is to present your work in a manner that is clear, consistent, and credible. By dedicating time to a final review, you can catch any last-minute errors and present your research with confidence, knowing it meets the highest academic standards. This commitment to detail distinguishes strong scholarly work and enhances its potential for acceptance and impact within your field.

Ensure that your manuscript is free of grammatical errors, typos, and formatting inconsistencies. If the submission guidelines specify a particular file format or naming convention, adhere to these precisely. A well-formatted and meticulously edited paper reflects positively on the author's diligence and respect for the academic publishing process, significantly increasing the likelihood of a positive reception.

Reviewing Against Submission Requirements

It is imperative to re-read the specific submission requirements provided by the journal, publisher, or institution. While this article provides a comprehensive overview of Chicago style, individual entities may have minor modifications or additional stipulations. Check for requirements regarding word count, abstract length, keywords, file types, and any specific formatting for references or author information. Overlooking these specific instructions can lead to immediate rejection, regardless of the quality of the writing itself.

Proofreading and Final Polish

The final stage of preparing your manuscript should always include a thorough proofreading process. This is distinct from editing; proofreading focuses on catching surface-level errors such as typos, grammatical mistakes, punctuation errors, and formatting inconsistencies. Reading your work aloud can be an effective method for catching awkward phrasing and missed errors. It is also highly advisable to have a colleague or peer review your work for a fresh perspective, as it is easy to overlook your own mistakes.

Paying close attention to the details covered in this article—from in-text citations and bibliographies to headings and general formatting—will ensure your Chicago style academic writing is polished and professional. A submission that adheres strictly to the Chicago style academic writing guidelines for submission demonstrates not only competence but also a deep respect for scholarly communication and the rigorous standards of academic discourse.

Q: What are the two main citation systems in the Chicago Manual of Style?

A: The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) offers two primary citation systems: the Notes and Bibliography system, which uses numbered footnotes or endnotes and a bibliography, and the Author-Date system, which uses parenthetical in-text citations and a reference list.

Q: Which citation system is more common in humanities disciplines according to Chicago style?

A: The Notes and Bibliography system is generally more common in humanities disciplines such as literature, history, and art history.

Q: When should I use a block quotation in Chicago style?

A: In Chicago style, block quotations are typically used for direct quotations that are longer than four or five lines of text. These quotations are indented from the left margin and do not use quotation marks.

Q: What is the difference in formatting between a footnote and a bibliography entry for the same source in the Notes and Bibliography system?

A: In a footnote, the author's name is listed in first name-last name order, and the publication information is presented similarly to how it would appear in a sentence. In the bibliography, the author's last name comes first, followed by their first name, and the publication information is presented in a more structured, list-like format.

Q: How do I cite a website in Chicago style?

A: To cite a website in Chicago style, you generally need to include the author (if available), the title of the specific page or article, the name of the website, and the URL. You should also include the date you accessed the material.

Q: Is it necessary to include page numbers in the Author-Date system when paraphrasing?

A: While not always strictly mandatory for paraphrases in the Author-Date system, CMOS recommends including page numbers for clarity and to help readers pinpoint the origin of the idea within the source text, especially in

academic contexts.

Q: How should I format a running head in a Chicago style manuscript?

A: Chicago style's guidelines for running heads can vary depending on specific journal or publisher requirements. However, generally, a running head (or running title) is a shortened version of the main title, placed at the top of each page, often in the upper right-hand corner, along with the page number. Always check the specific submission guidelines.

Q: What is the main purpose of a bibliography or reference list in Chicago style?

A: The primary purpose of a bibliography or reference list is to provide readers with a complete and accurate record of all sources consulted and cited in the academic work. This allows readers to locate and verify the original sources, upholding academic integrity.

Q: Does Chicago style have specific rules for capitalizing headings?

A: Yes, Chicago style offers guidance on capitalization for headings. It often uses "title case" for major headings and may allow for "sentence case" for subheadings or in specific contexts. Consistency within the document is key, and it's advisable to check the specific requirements of your submission venue.

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