

chicago style citation examples free

Mastering Chicago Style Citations: Your Free Guide to Examples

chicago style citation examples free resources are essential for students, researchers, and writers aiming for academic integrity and clarity. Navigating the intricacies of citation styles can be daunting, but understanding Chicago's specific requirements, whether for notes-bibliography or author-date, is crucial for avoiding plagiarism and properly crediting sources. This comprehensive article delves into the core principles of Chicago style, providing detailed examples for various source types. We will cover the fundamental differences between the two systems, demonstrate how to cite common academic materials like books and journal articles, and offer guidance on less frequent but equally important sources such as websites and interviews. By mastering these free Chicago style citation examples, you can enhance the credibility of your work and ensure adherence to academic standards.

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Understanding the Two Chicago Style Systems

The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) presents two distinct citation systems, each serving different academic disciplines and publication preferences. The first, and historically more common in the humanities, is the notes-bibliography system. The second, often favored in the sciences and social sciences, is the author-date system. Understanding the fundamental differences between these two systems is the first crucial step in correctly applying Chicago style. While both systems aim to provide comprehensive source information and avoid plagiarism, their structural approaches to in-text referencing and bibliography creation vary significantly.

The choice between the notes-bibliography and author-date system typically depends on the specific requirements of your instructor, publisher, or academic field. Many universities and journals will explicitly

state which system you must use. Familiarizing yourself with both will equip you to handle different academic contexts. This guide will provide free Chicago style citation examples for both systems, ensuring you have the tools to cite your sources accurately regardless of which system you're using.

Core Principles of Chicago Style Citation

At its heart, Chicago style emphasizes providing readers with enough information to easily locate the original source. This principle guides the structure and content of all citations, whether in footnotes, endnotes, or a reference list. Key elements that are consistently included across different source types are author(s), title of the work, publication information (like publisher and year for books, or journal title, volume, and issue for articles), and page numbers where applicable. Precision in transcription, including capitalization and punctuation, is paramount.

Another core principle is consistency. Once you choose a system (notes-bibliography or author-date) and a format for a specific source type, you must adhere to that format throughout your document. Deviations can lead to confusion for your readers and can negatively impact the perceived quality of your scholarship. Understanding these foundational principles will make learning the specific examples for different source types much more manageable. We will explore these principles further as we delve into specific citation examples.

Notes-Bibliography System: In-Text Citations and Footnotes/Endnotes

The notes-bibliography system uses numbered footnotes or endnotes to cite sources within the text. When a reader encounters a superscript number in the text, they can refer to a corresponding footnote at the bottom of the page or an endnote at the end of the document for the source information. The first time a source is cited, a full note is provided. Subsequent citations of the same source are shortened to include only the author's last name, a shortened title, and the page number. A bibliography, listing all consulted sources alphabetically, appears at the end of the paper.

This system allows for detailed commentary and the inclusion of tangential information without disrupting the flow of the main text. It is particularly useful for authors who wish to intersperse descriptive text with citations or to provide extensive background information without cluttering the primary argument. Mastering the creation of both full and shortened notes, as well as the final bibliography, is key to effectively using this Chicago style system.

Footnotes and Endnotes in the Notes-Bibliography System

Footnotes are placed at the bottom of the page where the citation appears, while endnotes are collected at the end of the chapter or document. Both serve the same purpose. The initial citation in a note provides complete bibliographic information for the source, allowing the reader to identify it. For subsequent citations of the same work, a shortened note is used to avoid redundancy. This structure streamlines the reading experience while still ensuring all necessary source details are available.

A common shorthand used in subsequent notes is "ibid." which is Latin for "in the same place." It is used when two consecutive notes refer to the exact same source and page number. If the page number changes, you would write "ibid." followed by the new page number. This feature of the notes-bibliography system is efficient but requires careful attention to ensure accuracy.

The Bibliography in the Notes-Bibliography System

The bibliography is an alphabetized list of all the sources that were consulted and used in the paper, not just those that were directly cited in the notes. It appears at the very end of the document. The entries in the bibliography are formatted differently from notes; they typically omit page numbers for entire works like books but include them for specific articles or chapters. The order of elements also differs, with the author's last name coming first, followed by their first name.

The bibliography serves as a comprehensive guide for readers who wish to explore the sources further. It is an essential component of any work employing the notes-bibliography system, demonstrating the breadth of research undertaken and providing a complete reference for all material presented.

Author-Date System: In-Text Citations and Reference List

The author-date system is characterized by parenthetical in-text citations that include the author's last name and the year of publication. For example, a citation might appear as (Smith 2023, 45). If there are multiple authors, their names are listed accordingly, and for more than three authors, often the first author's name is followed by "et al." A full reference list, titled "References," is provided at the end of the document, alphabetized by author's last name, and contains all the bibliographic information for the cited works.

This system is generally considered more straightforward for readers to follow as the citation is immediately present at the point of reference. It is also often preferred for dissertations, theses, and scientific publications due to its directness and ease of cross-referencing with the reference list. The key is to ensure that every in-text citation has a corresponding entry in the reference list, and vice versa.

In-Text Citations in the Author-Date System

In the author-date system, in-text citations are concise and directly embedded within the text. They typically consist of the author's last name and the year of publication, enclosed in parentheses. If you are referring to a specific part of the source, the page number should also be included after the year, separated by a comma. For example: (Johnson 2021, 112). If the author's name is mentioned in the sentence, you only need to include the year in parentheses. For example: As Johnson (2021) argues, the results are conclusive.

This method of citation allows for quick identification of the source and its publication date without interrupting the narrative flow significantly. It is a system that prioritizes accessibility for the reader, enabling them to pinpoint the source of information rapidly.

The Reference List in the Author-Date System

The reference list in the author-date system is a comprehensive, alphabetized compilation of all the sources cited in the paper. Unlike the bibliography in the notes-bibliography system, the reference list typically only includes works that have been explicitly cited in the text. Each entry provides full bibliographic details, allowing readers to locate and consult the original sources. The formatting of entries in the reference list closely mirrors that of the bibliography in the notes-bibliography system, with author last name first, followed by title and publication information.

The reference list is crucial for the integrity of the author-date system, serving as the complete inventory of your research. Ensuring that every in-text citation corresponds perfectly with an entry in the reference list is a fundamental aspect of proper citation practice.

Chicago Style Citation Examples: Books

Citing books is a fundamental skill in Chicago style, as books are among the most common sources for academic work. The specific format for a book citation will vary slightly depending on whether you are using the notes-bibliography system or the author-date system, and also on the number of authors. For a single-author book in the notes-bibliography system, the full note would include the author's first and last name, the title of the book (italicized), followed by the publication information: city of publication, publisher, and year. In the bibliography, the order is reversed: last name, first name.

For the author-date system, the in-text citation would be (AuthorLastName Year). The corresponding reference list entry for a single-author book would be AuthorLastName, AuthorFirstName. Year. Title of Book. City of Publication: Publisher.

Single-Author Book Examples

Notes-Bibliography System:

- **Full Note:** 1. Eleanor Vance, *The History of Cartography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019), 58.
- **Shortened Note:** 2. Vance, *History of Cartography*, 72.
- **Bibliography Entry:** Vance, Eleanor. *The History of Cartography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019.

Author-Date System:

- **In-Text Citation:** (Vance 2019, 58)
- **Reference List Entry:** Vance, Eleanor. 2019. *The History of Cartography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Two or More Authors Book Examples

When a book has two or three authors, all authors' names are listed in the notes and bibliography/reference list. For more than three authors, the notes-bibliography system typically lists the first author followed by "et al." in the note and bibliography, while the author-date system usually lists all authors in the reference list up to a certain number (often ten) before using "et al.". Always check the latest edition of the Chicago Manual of Style for the most current guidelines on handling multiple authors.

Notes-Bibliography System:

- **Full Note:** 3. David R. Miller and Sarah K. Chen, *Urban Ecology* (New York: Routledge, 2022), 145.
- **Bibliography Entry:** Miller, David R., and Sarah K. Chen. *Urban Ecology*. New York: Routledge, 2022.

Author-Date System:

- **In-Text Citation:** (Miller and Chen 2022, 145)
- **Reference List Entry:** Miller, David R., and Sarah K. Chen. 2022. *Urban Ecology*. New York: Routledge.

Edited Book Examples

For edited volumes, the editor's name(s) are used instead of author names, and the term "edited by" is included. If you are citing a specific chapter within an edited book, you will also need to include the chapter author and chapter title, along with the page range of the chapter.

Notes-Bibliography System:

- **Full Note (for the whole book):** 4. Edited by Anya Sharma, *Perspectives on Global Literature* (London: Penguin Books, 2020).
- **Full Note (for a chapter):** 5. Benjamin Lee, "Postcolonial Narratives in African Fiction," in *Perspectives on Global Literature*, edited by Anya Sharma, 88-105 (London: Penguin Books, 2020).
- **Bibliography Entry (for the whole book):** Sharma, Anya, edited by. *Perspectives on Global Literature*. London: Penguin Books, 2020.
- **Bibliography Entry (for a chapter):** Lee, Benjamin. "Postcolonial Narratives in African Fiction." In *Perspectives on Global Literature*, edited by Anya Sharma, 88-105. London: Penguin Books, 2020.

Author-Date System:

- **In-Text Citation (for the whole book):** (Sharma 2020)
- **In-Text Citation (for a chapter):** (Lee 2020, 92)
- **Reference List Entry (for the whole book):** Sharma, Anya, ed. 2020. *Perspectives on Global Literature*. London: Penguin Books.
- **Reference List Entry (for a chapter):** Lee, Benjamin. 2020. "Postcolonial Narratives in African Fiction." In *Perspectives on Global Literature*, edited by Anya Sharma, 88-105. London: Penguin Books.

Chicago Style Citation Examples: Journal Articles

Citing journal articles is critical for academic research. The structure of a journal article citation in Chicago style requires specific details such as the author(s), article title, journal title, volume and issue numbers, year of publication, and page numbers. Online articles also often include a DOI (Digital Object Identifier) or a URL.

The distinction between the notes-bibliography system and the author-date system is again evident in how these elements are presented. In the notes-bibliography system, full notes and a bibliography are used, while in the author-date system, in-text parenthetical citations are paired with a reference list.

Journal Article Examples (Print and Online)

When citing a journal article, especially one found online, it's important to include all relevant identifying information. For articles found online, the inclusion of a DOI is preferred over a URL if available, as DOIs are persistent identifiers. If no DOI is available, the URL can be used. Page numbers for online articles are typically represented by the original page range if provided.

Notes-Bibliography System:

- **Full Note (Print):** 6. Michael Chen, "The Impact of Social Media on Political Discourse," *Journal of Communication Studies* 35, no. 2 (2021): 115-130.
- **Full Note (Online with DOI):** 7. Anya Sharma, "AI in Education: Challenges and Opportunities," *Educational Technology Review* 18, no. 1 (2022): doi:10.1080/12345678.2022.1234567.
- **Full Note (Online with URL, no DOI):** 8. David Lee, "Climate Change Adaptation Strategies," *Environmental Science Journal* 42, no. 3 (2023): <https://www.esj.com/articles/climate-adaptation>.
- **Shortened Note:** 9. Chen, "Social Media," 122.
- **Bibliography Entry (Print):** Chen, Michael. "The Impact of Social Media on Political Discourse." *Journal of Communication Studies* 35, no. 2 (2021): 115-130.
- **Bibliography Entry (Online with DOI):** Sharma, Anya. "AI in Education: Challenges and Opportunities." *Educational Technology Review* 18, no. 1 (2022). doi:10.1080/12345678.2022.1234567.

- **Bibliography Entry (Online with URL, no DOI):** Lee, David. "Climate Change Adaptation Strategies." *Environmental Science Journal* 42, no. 3 (2023). <https://www.esj.com/articles/climate-adaptation>.

Author-Date System:

- **In-Text Citation (Print):** (Chen 2021, 115)
- **In-Text Citation (Online with DOI):** (Sharma 2022)
- **In-Text Citation (Online with URL, no DOI):** (Lee 2023)
- **Reference List Entry (Print):** Chen, Michael. 2021. "The Impact of Social Media on Political Discourse." *Journal of Communication Studies* 35, no. 2: 115-130.
- **Reference List Entry (Online with DOI):** Sharma, Anya. 2022. "AI in Education: Challenges and Opportunities." *Educational Technology Review* 18, no. 1. doi:10.1080/12345678.2022.1234567.
- **Reference List Entry (Online with URL, no DOI):** Lee, David. 2023. "Climate Change Adaptation Strategies." *Environmental Science Journal* 42, no. 3. <https://www.esj.com/articles/climate-adaptation>.

Chicago Style Citation Examples: Websites and Online Sources

Citing online sources, including websites, web pages, and online reports, is a common necessity in contemporary academic writing. The key to citing these sources accurately in Chicago style lies in providing enough information for the reader to locate the specific content. This generally includes the author (if available), the title of the specific page or article, the name of the website, and the date of publication or last update, along with a URL and access date.

For websites where an author is not clearly identified, the name of the organization or corporate author is used. If no publication date is available, the access date becomes particularly important. Consistency in formatting, especially for the access date and URL, is crucial for maintaining clarity and professionalism.

Website Page Examples

When citing a specific page on a website, aim to be as precise as possible. If an author is listed for the page,

use their name. If the page is part of a larger organization's site and no individual author is credited, the organization itself serves as the author. The title of the page should be in quotation marks, and the website name should be italicized.

Notes-Bibliography System:

- **Full Note:** 10. "Best Practices for Remote Work," Microsoft WorkLab, last modified October 26, 2023, <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/best-practices-remote-work>.
- **Bibliography Entry:** Microsoft WorkLab. "Best Practices for Remote Work." Last modified October 26, 2023. <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/best-practices-remote-work>.

Author-Date System:

- **In-Text Citation:** (Microsoft WorkLab, "Best Practices")
- **Reference List Entry:** Microsoft WorkLab. 2023. "Best Practices for Remote Work." Last modified October 26. <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/best-practices-remote-work>.

Corporate Author Website Examples

If a website is published by an organization or institution, the organization's name acts as the author. This is common for official government sites, company blogs, or non-profit organizational pages. Ensure the organization's name is consistently presented.

Notes-Bibliography System:

- **Full Note:** 11. World Health Organization, "COVID-19 Pandemic," accessed November 15, 2023, <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>.
- **Bibliography Entry:** World Health Organization. "COVID-19 Pandemic." Accessed November 15, 2023. <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>.

Author-Date System:

- **In-Text Citation:** (World Health Organization, "COVID-19 Pandemic")
- **Reference List Entry:** World Health Organization. 2023. "COVID-19 Pandemic." Accessed November 15. <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>.

Chicago Style Citation Examples: Other Common Sources

Beyond books and journal articles, academic research often draws upon a variety of other sources, including newspapers, magazines, interviews, and even unpublished materials. Each type of source requires a specific citation format to ensure all necessary details are provided for the reader to locate it. Understanding these variations is key to comprehensive and accurate citation.

The core principle remains the same: provide enough information for retrieval. For interviews, this means identifying the interviewee, interviewer, date, and context. For newspapers and magazines, it includes the publication title, date, and page numbers or URL. Even for less common sources like dissertations or conference proceedings, Chicago style offers a structured approach.

Newspaper and Magazine Article Examples

When citing articles from newspapers and magazines, it's important to include the publication date and page numbers or URL. For daily newspapers, the date should be fully specified. For magazines, the issue number might be included if relevant.

Notes-Bibliography System:

- **Full Note:** 12. Sarah Miller, "The Future of Urban Planning," *The City Times*, October 25, 2023, A1.
- **Bibliography Entry:** Miller, Sarah. "The Future of Urban Planning." *The City Times*, October 25, 2023.

Author-Date System:

- **In-Text Citation:** (Miller 2023)
- **Reference List Entry:** Miller, Sarah. 2023. "The Future of Urban Planning." *The City Times*, October

Interview Examples

Interviews are often cited as personal communications. In the notes-bibliography system, they are typically included in a footnote or endnote, but not in the bibliography, as they are not generally retrievable by the reader. In the author-date system, they are also not included in the reference list. The note should identify the interviewee, the interviewer (if applicable), and the date the interview was conducted.

Notes-Bibliography System:

- **Full Note:** 13. Interview with Dr. Evelyn Reed by the author, November 10, 2023.

Author-Date System:

- **In-Text Citation:** (Interview with Dr. Evelyn Reed, November 10, 2023)

Dissertation and Thesis Examples

Citing dissertations and theses, whether published or unpublished, requires specific formatting. Include the author, title, degree sought (e.g., PhD dissertation, MA thesis), university, and year. For published dissertations, also include the publication information.

Notes-Bibliography System:

- **Full Note:** 14. Benjamin Carter, "The Evolution of Artificial Intelligence Ethics" (PhD dissertation, Stanford University, 2022).
- **Bibliography Entry:** Carter, Benjamin. "The Evolution of Artificial Intelligence Ethics." PhD dissertation, Stanford University, 2022.

Author-Date System:

- **In-Text Citation:** (Carter 2022)
- **Reference List Entry:** Carter, Benjamin. 2022. "The Evolution of Artificial Intelligence Ethics." PhD dissertation, Stanford University.

Common Citation Errors to Avoid in Chicago Style

While Chicago style offers a robust framework for academic citation, several common errors can detract from the accuracy and professionalism of your work. One frequent mistake is inconsistent application of the chosen system (notes-bibliography or author-date). Another is incorrect punctuation, such as missing commas or misplaced periods, which can significantly alter the meaning or legibility of a citation. Forgetting to italicize book or journal titles, or misusing quotation marks for article titles, are also common pitfalls.

Another area of concern is the omission of crucial information, like publication dates or page numbers, especially for specific references. When citing online sources, failing to include URLs or access dates can make it impossible for readers to find the material. Finally, not consulting the latest edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style* for specific or complex citation scenarios can lead to outdated or incorrect formatting.

- Inconsistent use of notes-bibliography versus author-date system.
- Incorrect punctuation, including commas, periods, and colons.
- Failure to italicize book and journal titles.
- Misuse of quotation marks for article or chapter titles.
- Omitting essential publication details (author, title, publisher, date, page numbers).
- Incorrect formatting of URLs and DOIs.
- Not providing an access date for online sources where no publication date is evident.
- Mixing up full and shortened notes in the notes-bibliography system.
- Not alphabetizing the bibliography or reference list correctly.

Frequently Asked Questions About Chicago Style Citation Examples Free

Q: Where can I find free Chicago style citation examples online?

A: You can find free Chicago style citation examples on university writing center websites, academic resource sites, and through official guides like The Chicago Manual of Style online, which often provides sample citations. Many student guides and templates are also available for free.

Q: What is the main difference between the notes-bibliography and author-date systems in Chicago style?

A: The main difference lies in how in-text citations are handled. The notes-bibliography system uses numbered footnotes or endnotes, while the author-date system uses parenthetical in-text citations (e.g., (Smith 2023)). Both systems conclude with a comprehensive list of sources (bibliography or reference list).

Q: How do I cite a book with more than three authors in Chicago style?

A: In the notes-bibliography system, you typically list the first author followed by "et al." in both notes and bibliography. For the author-date system, the reference list entry often lists all authors up to a certain number (e.g., ten) before using "et al." Always consult the latest edition of the Chicago Manual of Style for specific guidance on the number of authors to list.

Q: What information should I include when citing a website in Chicago style?

A: When citing a website, include the author (if available), the title of the specific page or article (in quotation marks), the name of the website (italicized), the publication or last modified date, and the URL. An access date is also recommended.

Q: Do I need to include an access date for online sources in Chicago style?

A: An access date is crucial for online sources, especially if the content is likely to change or if there is no clear publication date. It helps readers know when you accessed the information. If a stable publication date is available, the access date is less critical but still often included.

Q: How do I cite a personal interview in Chicago style?

A: Personal interviews are typically cited as personal communications. In the notes-bibliography system, they appear in a footnote or endnote (but not the bibliography), identifying the interviewee, interviewer, and date. In the author-date system, it's usually cited parenthetically in the text, again including interviewee, interviewer, and date. They are not included in the reference list as they are not retrievable by others.

Q: Is it acceptable to use online citation generators for Chicago style?

A: Online citation generators can be helpful starting points, but they are not always perfectly accurate for Chicago style, which has nuanced rules. It is always best to cross-reference the generated citation with official Chicago style guides and examples to ensure correctness and completeness.

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

A: In the notes-bibliography system, the bibliography lists all sources consulted, even if not directly cited. In the author-date system, the reference list includes only those sources that were actually cited in the text. Both provide full bibliographic details.

Q: How should I format the title of a journal article versus the title of a journal in Chicago style?

A: The title of a journal article should be enclosed in quotation marks. The title of the journal itself should be italicized. This distinction is important for clear identification of the source.

Q: Are there free Chicago style citation examples for specific fields like history or literature?

A: Yes, many university writing centers and academic departments offer field-specific Chicago style citation examples for free. These resources often cater to the particular types of sources common in those disciplines, providing tailored guidance.

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