

chicago style citing indirectly

Chicago Style Citing Indirectly: A Comprehensive Guide

chicago style citing indirectly is a fundamental skill for academic and professional writing, ensuring proper attribution and avoiding plagiarism. This practice involves referencing ideas or information from a source that you have encountered through another source, rather than directly from the original work. Understanding the nuances of indirect citation in Chicago style is crucial for maintaining academic integrity and providing readers with accurate pathways to information. This article will delve into the intricacies of indirect citations, covering their definition, when to use them, how to format them in both notes and bibliography, and common pitfalls to avoid. We will explore the specific guidelines provided by the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) to ensure your citations are accurate and adhere to scholarly standards.

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Understanding Indirect Citations

An indirect citation, often referred to as a "secondary source citation," occurs when you cite a work that you have not personally read or consulted in its original form. Instead, you are relying on a summary, quotation, or paraphrase of that original work as presented in another source that you have read. For example, if you read an article by Smith that quotes or discusses an idea from an earlier work by Jones, and you want to reference Jones's idea based on Smith's presentation, you would use an indirect citation. This is a common scenario in research, especially when dealing with foundational texts that are difficult to access or when a secondary source offers a particularly clear exposition of an idea.

The core principle behind indirect citation is to acknowledge the source of the information accurately. While you are presenting an idea or information that originated elsewhere, you are directly interacting with the secondary source where you found it. Therefore, your citation must reflect this layered retrieval of information. Failing to do so can lead to misattribution and, in the worst case, accidental plagiarism. Chicago style, with its flexible note-and-bibliography system, provides clear guidelines for managing these citations effectively, ensuring clarity for your readers.

When to Use Chicago Style Indirect Citations

There are several specific circumstances where employing Chicago style indirect citations becomes

not only appropriate but necessary. The most common scenario is when the original source is out of print, exceptionally rare, or inaccessible to you in a timely manner. For instance, a historical document or an early scholarly work might only be readily available through a modern compilation or a later academic article that discusses it at length. In such cases, citing the secondary source that provided you with the information is the most practical and honest approach.

Another frequent reason for using indirect citations is when a secondary source offers a particularly concise, accurate, or authoritative interpretation or summary of a complex idea from an original work. If an expert in the field has already synthesized and explained the core arguments of a seminal text, it can be more efficient and effective to cite their interpretation, especially if your focus is on the idea itself rather than a deep textual analysis of the original. However, it is always preferable to consult the original source if possible, as summaries can sometimes omit crucial nuances or introduce the summarizer's own biases.

Accessibility and Availability of Original Sources

When the original source is genuinely inaccessible, such as being out of print for decades, held only in specialized archives, or published in a language you do not command, relying on a reputable secondary source is the only viable option. It is imperative to thoroughly evaluate the secondary source to ensure its accuracy and reliability before citing it indirectly. The credibility of the secondary source directly impacts the trustworthiness of your own work.

Efficiency and Clarity of Explanation

In academic writing, the goal is to convey information clearly and efficiently. If a secondary source provides a more accessible and understandable presentation of a concept or argument from an original work, it may be judicious to cite that secondary source. This is particularly true when the original text is dense, complex, or written in archaic language. However, this should not be used as a shortcut to avoid engaging with primary materials when direct engagement is expected or beneficial for a deeper understanding.

When the Secondary Source is the Focus

Sometimes, your research might specifically be about how a particular idea or text has been interpreted or discussed by later scholars. In such cases, you are inherently engaging with the secondary source's analysis of the primary material. Therefore, citing the secondary source is not just a matter of convenience but a direct reflection of your research methodology and focus.

Formatting Indirect Citations in Notes

In Chicago style's note-and-bibliography system, indirect citations in footnotes or endnotes require specific phrasing to indicate that you are citing a source through another. The general rule is to mention the original author and work, followed by "as quoted in" or "as cited in" (or similar phrasing) and then the details of the secondary source you consulted. This clearly communicates to your reader

the indirect nature of the citation.

For example, if you found a quote by John Locke in a book by Michael Sandel, your note would look something like this: John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, bk. 4, chap. 7, sec. 9, as quoted in Michael J. Sandel, *Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009), 112. Note how the original work is identified, followed by the phrase indicating indirect citation, and then the full bibliographic information for the secondary source, including the page number where the information was found.

First Reference Notes

When you make an indirect citation for the first time in your work, the note should be comprehensive. It needs to include all necessary information about both the original source and the secondary source that led you to it. The phrasing "as quoted in" is standard, but variations like "as cited in" or "cited in" are also acceptable. The key is to be explicit about the chain of sources.

Here's a template for a first reference note:

- Original Author's First and Last Name, *Title of Original Work* (place of publication: publisher, year), original page number(s), as quoted in Secondary Author's First and Last Name, *Title of Secondary Work* (place of publication: publisher, year), page number(s) where quoted/discussed.

Subsequent Reference Notes

Once a source has been cited in full in a previous note, subsequent references to the same indirect citation can be shortened. This follows the same principles as shortening direct citations in Chicago style. You can use a shortened form that includes the original author's last name, a shortened version of the original title (if applicable and necessary to distinguish from other works by the same author), and the page number from the secondary source.

For example, if the full note above was the first reference, a subsequent note would look like:

- Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, bk. 4, chap. 7, sec. 9, as quoted in Sandel, *Justice*, 250.

It is crucial to ensure that the shortened note still provides enough information for the reader to locate the source easily. If you are citing multiple works by the same original author, or if the title of the secondary work is very similar to other cited works, you may need to include a more complete shortened title or even the full title.

Formatting Indirect Citations in the Bibliography

The bibliography in Chicago style, located at the end of your paper, provides a complete list of all sources consulted and cited. When dealing with indirect citations, the bibliography entry should primarily focus on the secondary source you actually consulted. While you acknowledge the original author, the full bibliographic details will pertain to the work that contained the information you are referencing.

The convention is to list the original author's name first, followed by the phrase "as quoted in" or "as cited in," and then the full bibliographic details of the secondary source. This structure clearly indicates that the original work was not directly accessed. Some style guides and instructors might prefer a simpler entry that omits the original author entirely, focusing solely on the secondary source. Always check your specific style guide or instructor's preferences.

Bibliography Entry Structure

The standard format for an indirect citation in the bibliography is as follows:

- Original Author's Last Name, First Name. *Title of Original Work*. Place of publication: Publisher, Year. "As quoted in" or "As cited in" Secondary Author's First Name Last Name, *Title of Secondary Work*. Place of publication: Publisher, Year.

Let's revisit the Locke example. The bibliography entry would appear like this:

- Locke, John. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Edited by Peter H. Nidditch. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975. As quoted in Michael J. Sandel, *Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009.

Notice that the entry focuses on the secondary source (Sandel's book) for publication details. The original source (Locke's essay) is mentioned to give credit to the original author of the idea.

Handling Different Types of Original Sources

The exact formatting can vary slightly depending on the type of original source. If the original source is a chapter in an edited book, a journal article, or another type of publication, you would still follow the "as quoted in" convention, ensuring that the details of the original source (as presented in the secondary source) are accurately included before the details of the secondary source itself.

Common Challenges and Best Practices for Indirect

Citations

Navigating indirect citations can present several challenges. One of the most significant is the potential for misinterpretation or omission of crucial context when relying on a secondary source's summary or quotation. It is vital to remember that the secondary source's author might have their own agenda or analytical framework, which could subtly (or overtly) color their presentation of the original work's ideas. Therefore, critically evaluating the secondary source is paramount.

Another common issue is simply forgetting to indicate the indirect nature of the citation. This can lead to readers assuming you have read the original work, which is misleading. Always double-check your notes and bibliography entries to ensure the "as quoted in" or equivalent phrasing is present where necessary.

Verifying Accuracy

Before citing a source indirectly, make every effort to verify the accuracy of the quotation or summary presented in the secondary source. If possible, consult the original source, even if only to check the specific passage you are referencing. This is the most reliable way to ensure you are not perpetuating errors or misrepresentations.

Choosing Reputable Secondary Sources

When you must cite indirectly, prioritize secondary sources that are widely recognized for their scholarship and rigor. Academic books and peer-reviewed journal articles are generally more reliable than popular magazines, blogs, or websites, which may lack rigorous fact-checking and editorial oversight. The reputation of the secondary source reflects on your own research.

Consistency in Phrasing

Maintain consistency in your phrasing throughout the document. Whether you choose "as quoted in," "as cited in," or another acceptable variation, use it uniformly for all indirect citations. This consistency contributes to the professional appearance and clarity of your work.

Examples of Indirect Citations in Chicago Style

To further clarify the application of Chicago style indirect citations, let's consider a few more practical examples. These examples illustrate how to handle different types of original works when citing them indirectly.

Example 1: Citing a Book Through Another Book

Suppose you are writing a paper on modern philosophy and find a discussion of Descartes' ideas in a contemporary ethics textbook. The textbook mentions a specific passage from Descartes' *Meditations*.

- **Note:** René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, med. 1, as quoted in Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, *Moral Relativism and the Problem of Meaning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 45.
- **Bibliography:** Descartes, René. *Meditations on First Philosophy*. Med. 1. As quoted in Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, *Moral Relativism and the Problem of Meaning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Example 2: Citing a Journal Article Through a Book

If you encounter a quotation from a historical journal article in a recent scholarly monograph, you would cite it as follows:

- **Note:** Eleanor Vance, "The Economic Impact of the Silk Road," *Journal of Ancient Commerce* 15, no. 2 (1985): 112, as quoted in David Chen, *Global Trade Routes in Antiquity* (London: Penguin Books, 2019), 201.
- **Bibliography:** Vance, Eleanor. "The Economic Impact of the Silk Road." *Journal of Ancient Commerce* 15, no. 2 (1985): 112. As quoted in David Chen, *Global Trade Routes in Antiquity*. London: Penguin Books, 2019.

Example 3: Citing a Foundational Text Through a Secondary Analysis

When referencing a classic literary theory, but you've only read it as analyzed by a literary critic:

- **Note:** Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," as cited in Jonathan Culler, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 67.
- **Bibliography:** Barthes, Roland. "The Death of the Author." As cited in Jonathan Culler, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

These examples demonstrate the consistent principle: clearly identifying the origin of the idea and then fully detailing the source you consulted.

Adhering to these formatting guidelines for indirect citations in Chicago style is essential for maintaining academic integrity and providing transparent scholarship. By clearly indicating when

information is sourced through a secondary reference, you empower your readers to trace the lineage of ideas and critically assess the sources themselves. While the ideal is always to consult original works, understanding and correctly implementing indirect citations is a vital skill for any researcher.

FAQ

Q: What is the primary difference between a direct and an indirect citation in Chicago style?

A: A direct citation involves referencing material exactly as it appears in the original source, quoting it verbatim. An indirect citation, on the other hand, refers to ideas, concepts, or information that you encountered through a secondary source, meaning you did not consult the original work directly.

Q: When is it acceptable to use an indirect citation in Chicago style?

A: It is acceptable to use an indirect citation when the original source is inaccessible (e.g., out of print, rare, in a foreign language), or when a secondary source provides a particularly authoritative or concise summary of the original work's ideas that is sufficient for your purpose. However, it is always preferable to consult the original source if feasible.

Q: How do I format an indirect citation in a Chicago style footnote or endnote?

A: In notes, you typically state the original author and work, followed by a phrase like "as quoted in" or "as cited in," and then provide the full bibliographic details of the secondary source you consulted, including the page number.

Q: What information should be included in a Chicago style bibliography entry for an indirect citation?

A: The bibliography entry primarily details the secondary source you consulted. It usually lists the original author and title, followed by the phrase "as quoted in" or "as cited in," and then the full bibliographic information for the secondary source.

Q: Can I omit the original author's name when citing indirectly in Chicago style?

A: While the primary focus of the bibliography entry is the secondary source, it is best practice and often required by Chicago style to include the original author's name and work to give credit to the original source of the idea. Always check specific guidelines.

Q: What are the risks of relying too heavily on indirect citations?

A: The main risks include misinterpreting or misrepresenting the original author's ideas due to the secondary source's potential biases or errors, and failing to gain a deeper understanding that might come from engaging with the primary text.

Q: Should I use "as quoted in" or "as cited in" in Chicago style?

A: Both phrases are generally acceptable in Chicago style for indirect citations. The key is consistency and clarity in indicating that you are referencing the original work through another source. "As quoted in" is often used when a direct quotation from the original work is being presented, while "as cited in" can be used for paraphrases or summaries.

Q: What if the secondary source is a summary of an entire book rather than a specific quote?

A: In this case, you would use "as cited in" or a similar phrase. The note and bibliography entry would identify the original author and work, and then clearly state that the information was found as discussed or summarized in the secondary source.

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