

chicago style citing visual media

chicago style citing visual media is a crucial skill for students, researchers, and professionals across various disciplines. Ensuring proper attribution for images, films, artwork, and other visual materials is paramount to academic integrity and avoiding plagiarism. This comprehensive guide will delve into the intricacies of citing visual media in Chicago style, covering everything from foundational principles to specific examples for different types of visual content. We will explore the author-date and notes-bibliography systems, essential components of a citation, and the nuances of citing digital versus physical formats. Mastering these elements ensures your work is credible and respects the intellectual property of creators.

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Understanding Chicago Style Citation for Visual Media

Chicago style, as outlined in the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS), offers two primary citation systems: the author-date system and the notes-bibliography system. Both are recognized and widely accepted, but their application to visual media requires careful attention to detail. The fundamental goal remains the same: to provide your readers with sufficient information to locate the source of the visual material you have used, thereby crediting the original creator and allowing for verification. Visual media, in its broad definition, encompasses a vast array of items, from historical photographs to contemporary digital art, and each may present unique challenges in attribution.

The choice between the author-date and notes-bibliography systems often depends on the

discipline or the specific requirements of a publication or instructor. The author-date system is more common in the sciences and social sciences, using parenthetical in-text citations that reference the author and year of publication. The notes-bibliography system, prevalent in the humanities, relies on numbered footnotes or endnotes for in-text citations, with a comprehensive bibliography at the end of the work. Regardless of the system chosen, consistency in formatting is key.

Core Components of a Chicago Style Citation for Visual Media

Regardless of whether you are using the author-date or notes-bibliography system, certain core pieces of information are generally required for a complete citation of visual media. These components ensure clarity and aid in source identification. Omitting any of these critical elements can render a citation incomplete and potentially unhelpful to your reader.

- The name(s) of the creator(s) or artist(s).
- The title of the work, italicized if it's a standalone piece like a painting or photograph, or in quotation marks if it's part of a larger collection like a film still.
- The date of creation or publication.
- The medium or format of the work (e.g., oil on canvas, digital photograph, film).
- The publisher or producer, if applicable (especially for published works like films or books containing images).
- The location of publication or exhibition, if relevant.
- The accession number or collection name, particularly for archival materials.
- The URL or database name, if accessed online.
- The date of access, crucial for online materials that may change or disappear.

Author-Date System for Visual Media

The author-date system for citing visual media prioritizes brevity in the text, providing essential source information directly within the narrative. This system requires careful construction of both the in-text citations and the corresponding entries in the reference list.

In-Text Citations

In-text citations in the author-date system typically include the creator's last name and the year of creation or publication. For visual media where a traditional author might not be readily apparent, the title of the work or the name of the institution holding the work may be used instead. For example, a citation for a photograph might look like (Ansel Adams, 1948), or for a painting, (Picasso, 1937).

Reference List Entries

The reference list, appearing at the end of your document, provides the full bibliographic details for each cited source. For visual media, this entry would include the creator, title, date, medium, and location or source information. For instance, an entry for a photograph might be structured as Adams, Ansel. 1948. *The Tetons and the Snake River, Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming*. Gelatin silver print. The Ansel Adams Trust, Monterey, CA.

Notes-Bibliography System for Visual Media

The notes-bibliography system offers a more detailed approach, using numbered notes for in-text references and a comprehensive bibliography at the end of the work. This system is favored in many humanities fields for its ability to incorporate extensive source information without disrupting the flow of the text.

Footnotes and Endnotes

Each time a visual medium is referenced in the text, a corresponding footnote or endnote is created. The first mention of a source in a note provides full bibliographic details. Subsequent mentions, if the same source is cited again, can use a shortened form. For example, the first note for an image might be: 1. Henri Cartier-Bresson, *Behind the Gare Saint-Lazare, Paris, 1932*, gelatin silver print, The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Subsequent notes might be: 5. Cartier-Bresson, *Behind the Gare Saint-Lazare*. The numbering of notes directly corresponds to their appearance in the text.

Bibliography Entries

The bibliography is an alphabetical list of all sources consulted and cited in the paper. For visual media, the bibliography entry generally follows the format of the first note, but with the author's last name first. For example: Cartier-Bresson, Henri. *Behind the Gare Saint-Lazare, Paris*. 1932. Gelatin silver print. The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Citing Different Types of Visual Media

The specific information required and the way it is formatted can vary depending on the type of visual media being cited. Understanding these distinctions is crucial for accurate Chicago style citation.

Citing Images from the Web

When citing an image found online, it's important to provide as much information as possible, including the creator, title, website name, publisher (if different from the website), date of publication (if available), and the URL. Crucially, the date of access should also be included, as web content can change. For example: Banksy. *Girl with Balloon*. 2002. Street art, Bristol, UK. Accessed October 26, 2023. <https://www.banksy.co.uk/gallery/street-art/girl-with-balloon>.

Citing Photographs

For photographs, the creator's name, the title of the photograph (if it has one), the date it was taken, the medium (e.g., digital, gelatin silver print), and the location or collection where it can be found are essential. If the photograph is part of a larger published work, that information should also be included. Consider: Adams, Ansel. *Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico*. 1941. Gelatin silver print. The Ansel Adams Trust, San Francisco.

Citing Paintings and Sculptures

Citing artwork like paintings and sculptures involves identifying the artist, the title of the artwork (italicized), the year of creation, the medium, and the institution or gallery where it is housed. For example: Van Gogh, Vincent. *Starry Night*. 1889. Oil on canvas. The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Citing Films and Documentaries

When citing films, the director is often considered the primary creator. Key information includes the director's name, the film's title (italicized), the country of origin, the production company, and the year of release. For documentaries, you might also include the narrator or key subjects if relevant to your citation. For example: Nolan, Christopher, dir. *Inception*. United States: Warner Bros. Pictures, 2010. Film.

Citing Videos (YouTube, Vimeo, etc.)

Citing online videos requires identifying the uploader, the title of the video (in quotation marks), the name of the website, the date of upload, and the URL. If the video is part of a series or channel, that information can also be valuable. Consider: Kurzgesagt – In a Nutshell. "The Immune System Explained I-White Blood Cells Reaction." YouTube, November 7, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkr_M0sJ-F0.

Citing Maps and Cartographic Materials

For maps, the cartographer is often credited as the author, along with the title of the map (italicized), the scale, the place of publication, the publisher, and the year. If the map is from a digital source, the URL and access date are also necessary. Example: Mercator, Gerardus. *Nova et Aucta Orbis Terrae Descriptio ad Usum Navigantium Emendata*. 1569. Engraved map. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Citing Advertisements

Advertisements, whether print or digital, require identification of the product or service advertised, the company that created the advertisement, the title of the advertisement (if it has one), the medium, and the publication or platform where it appeared, along with the date. For example: Nike. "Dream Crazier." Directed by Kim Gehrig. Advertisement. 2019. Accessed October 26, 2023. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wh2_ie0i400.

Citing Infographics and Data Visualizations

When citing infographics or data visualizations, it's important to identify the creator or organization responsible, the title of the visualization, the date of creation or publication, and the source from which it was accessed. If it's a static image from a website, include the URL and access date. For example: Pew Research Center. "Key Differences Between Millennials and Gen Z." Infographic. June 12, 2019. Accessed October 26, 2023. <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2019/06/12/infographic-key-differences-between-millennials-and-gen-z/>.

Special Considerations for Visual Media Citations

Beyond the standard components, certain aspects of visual media citation deserve particular attention to ensure accuracy and adhere to Chicago style conventions. These often involve clarifying the nature of the source and its accessibility.

In-Text Citations for Visual Media

The method of in-text citation will depend on the system chosen (author-date or notes-bibliography). In the author-date system, it's a parenthetical reference. In the notes-bibliography system, it's a numbered footnote or endnote. Ensure that the in-text reference clearly points to the correct full citation in your reference list or bibliography.

Footnotes and Endnotes

Footnotes and endnotes in the notes-bibliography system are your primary tool for inline referencing of visual media. The first time a visual source is cited, the note should contain

comprehensive details. Subsequent citations can be abbreviated. This method allows for detailed contextual information to be provided without interrupting the main text's flow.

Works Cited and Bibliography Entries

The Works Cited or Bibliography section is a consolidated list of all sources used. For visual media, these entries must be meticulously formatted, adhering to the specific requirements for each type of media as outlined by the Chicago Manual of Style. Consistency is paramount here.

Common Pitfalls in Citing Visual Media

Many researchers encounter challenges when citing visual media, often due to the unique nature of these sources compared to traditional text-based materials. Awareness of these common pitfalls can help prevent errors.

- **Lack of Creator Information:** For many online images or anonymous artworks, identifying a clear creator can be difficult. In such cases, use the name of the website, institution, or a descriptive title.
- **Incorrect Title Formatting:** Ensure titles of standalone works (paintings, photographs) are italicized, while titles of works within larger collections (film stills, individual images in a gallery) are in quotation marks.
- **Missing Access Dates for Online Content:** Web content is ephemeral. Always include the date you accessed online visual media to account for potential changes or removal.
- **Vague Medium Descriptions:** Be specific about the medium used (e.g., "digital illustration" instead of just "image").
- **Overlooking Publication/Collection Details:** For published images or items in a museum or archive, including the publisher, location, or accession number is critical for source traceability.

Navigating the requirements for Chicago style citing visual media demands attention to detail and a thorough understanding of the source material. By diligently applying these guidelines, you can ensure your work is both academically sound and ethically presented, giving due credit to the creators of the visual content you utilize.

Q: What is the most crucial element when citing an

image found on a website?

A: The most crucial element when citing an image found on a website is the inclusion of the URL and the date of access. This is because web content can change or be removed without notice, making the access date essential for verifying the source's availability at the time of your research.

Q: How do I cite a photograph if the photographer is unknown?

A: If the photographer is unknown, you should use the title of the photograph as the first element in your citation, followed by the date, medium, and location or source. For example, in the notes-bibliography system, it would start with the title in italics.

Q: Should I italicize the title of a painting or a photograph in Chicago style?

A: Yes, the titles of standalone works of art, such as paintings, sculptures, and individual photographs, should be italicized in Chicago style citations.

Q: What information is needed when citing a film in Chicago style?

A: When citing a film, you typically need the director's name, the film's title (italicized), the country of origin, the production company, and the year of release.

Q: How do I cite an image that is part of a book or journal article?

A: If the image is part of a larger work like a book or journal article, you would cite the book or article first, and then specify the image within that source. For example, you might refer to a specific figure number or page number where the image appears.

Q: Is it necessary to include the museum or gallery where a piece of art is displayed?

A: Yes, it is highly recommended and often necessary to include the name of the museum, gallery, or collection where a piece of art is housed. This provides essential locational information for readers who might want to view the artwork.

Q: How do I cite a screenshot taken from a

documentary?

A: To cite a screenshot from a documentary, treat it as a still from the film. You would cite the film itself, and then indicate that you are referencing a specific still, often noting the timestamp or scene if possible.

Q: What is the difference in citing an image in the author-date system versus the notes-bibliography system?

A: In the author-date system, visual media is cited parenthetically in the text with the creator's name and year, and fully detailed in a reference list. In the notes-bibliography system, citations are given in numbered footnotes or endnotes, with the first mention being full and subsequent mentions abbreviated, followed by a comprehensive bibliography.

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