

chicago style examples for quoting plays

Chicago Style Examples for Quoting Plays

chicago style examples for quoting plays are essential for any academic or professional writer working with dramatic literature. Proper citation ensures clarity, credibility, and adherence to scholarly standards. This comprehensive guide will delve into the intricacies of quoting plays according to the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS), covering everything from basic in-text citations to detailed bibliography entries. We will explore how to cite specific lines, acts, and scenes, and discuss nuances like referencing multiple characters and handling stage directions. Understanding these conventions is crucial for accurately representing source material and contributing to a well-researched paper, essay, or book.

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Understanding Chicago Style Citation for Plays

The Chicago Manual of Style offers two primary systems for citation: the notes-bibliography system and the author-date system. When quoting plays, the notes-bibliography system is often preferred in the humanities, including literary studies. This system relies on endnotes or footnotes for citations and a comprehensive bibliography at the end of the work. Accurately citing dramatic works allows readers to easily locate the source material and verify the quoted passages. This understanding forms the bedrock for all subsequent citation practices.

The core principle behind citing plays in Chicago style is to provide enough information for your reader to pinpoint the exact location of the quoted material within the play. This typically involves referencing the act, scene, and line numbers. While the specific edition you use can influence formatting, the general principles remain consistent. This guide will focus on the notes-bibliography system, which is prevalent in the study of drama and literature.

In-Text Citations for Dramatic Works

In-text citations for plays in Chicago style primarily serve to guide the reader to the full bibliographic entry and to indicate the specific location within the play. The goal is to be concise yet informative, allowing for seamless integration of quotations into your own writing. Different scenarios call for slightly different approaches to ensure maximum clarity and efficiency.

Basic In-Text Citation Format

For most plays, the in-text citation will include the act and scene numbers, followed by line numbers. This format is crucial for brevity within the flow of your prose. The act and scene are typically separated by a period or a comma, depending on the specific edition's conventions, but using a consistent separator is key. Line numbers are usually presented in Arabic numerals.

Consider a hypothetical play. If you are quoting a line from Act I, Scene 2, lines 15-17, the in-text citation would generally appear after the quotation. The exact punctuation and formatting can vary slightly based on the edition of the play you are referencing. Always consult the specific edition you are using for guidance on its internal numbering system.

Quoting Dialogue

When quoting dialogue, it is essential to attribute the lines correctly to the characters speaking them. This is especially important in plays with multiple characters, as misattribution can lead to confusion and misinterpretation of the dramatic action and thematic development. The Chicago style emphasizes precision in this regard.

For short quotations integrated into your text, the line(s) will be enclosed in quotation marks. The citation will follow the closing quotation mark. For example, a brief exchange might be presented as follows:

Hamlet famously asks, "To be, or not to be, that is the question" (Shakespeare, 3.1.55). This line, delivered with profound introspection, has become one of literature's most iconic.

Attributing Lines to Specific Characters

When quoting a significant portion of dialogue or when the speaker is not immediately clear from the context of your prose, it is good practice to explicitly state the character's name before the quoted material or within the citation. This ensures clarity for the reader, especially in complex scenes with rapid dialogue exchanges.

For example, when quoting a direct address or a speech intended to convey a character's inner turmoil, you might write:

After wrestling with his moral dilemma, Hamlet declares:
Who would fardels bear,

To grunt and sweat under a weary life,

But that the dread of something after death,

The undiscover'd country from whose bourn

No traveller returns, puzzles the will

And makes us rather bear those ills we have

Than fly to others that we know not of? (Shakespeare, 3.1.70–75)

Handling Short Quotations within Prose

Short quotations, typically under four lines of verse or prose, are generally incorporated directly into the body of your text and enclosed in quotation marks. The citation follows the quotation marks. This method keeps the narrative flow of your own writing uninterrupted while still providing the necessary reference.

For instance, if you are discussing a character's early declaration:

In a moment of youthful defiance, Romeo proclaims, "My life were better ended by their hate, / Than death prorogued, wanting of thy love" (Shakespeare, 2.2.77–78).

Quoting Longer Passages (Block Quotes)

Quotations of four or more lines of verse or prose should be set off from the main text as block quotations. This means they are indented from the left margin, without quotation marks, and typed with single spacing (or as per your specific style guide's instructions for block quotes). The citation follows the final punctuation of the quoted passage.

When presenting a significant monologue or a lengthy exchange:

Othello's descent into jealousy is powerfully depicted in his dialogue:

It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul.

Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars!

It is the cause. Yet I'll not shed her blood,

Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,

And unsunned purity. Hence, 'babbles'!

(Shakespeare, 5.2.1-5)

Citing Acts and Scenes

While line numbers are the most precise way to cite a play, you will also need to refer to acts and scenes. These references are often integrated into your prose or included in the in-text citation. For example, you might write: "In Act III, Scene 2, the tension escalates significantly."

When referencing specific sections for contextual understanding:

The soliloquy discussed earlier appears in Act III, Scene 1, a pivotal moment for Hamlet's character development. The subsequent dialogue between Ophelia and Hamlet in Act III, Scene 2, further complicates their relationship.

Referencing Stage Directions

Stage directions, which provide information about a play's setting, character actions, and tone, are also citable. In Chicago style, stage directions are typically enclosed in parentheses and italicized within the text of the play itself. When quoting them in your own work, you can either paraphrase them or quote them directly, depending on their significance to your argument.

If a stage direction is crucial to understanding a character's motivation:

The stage direction "*(He draws his sword)*" immediately preceding Hamlet's confrontation with Laertes (Shakespeare, 5.2.297) highlights the dramatic shift in the scene's atmosphere.

Bibliography Entries for Plays

The bibliography entry for a play provides complete publication details, allowing readers to locate the exact edition you consulted. This section is crucial for academic integrity and for allowing others to follow your research trail. The format for plays is distinct from other types of sources.

Essential Components of a Play Entry

A standard Chicago-style bibliography entry for a play includes the author's name, the title of the play (italicized), the publication information (city, publisher, and year of publication), and the specific edition used if it is not the first or a commonly cited version.

The order and punctuation are critical for adherence to CMOS standards. These details are meticulously organized to ensure no ambiguity for the reader.

Citing Published Plays (Single Author)

For a play written by a single author, the entry typically follows this format:

Author Last Name, First Name. *Title of Play*. Edited by Editor First Name Last Name (if applicable). Publication City: Publisher, Year. (Page numbers or Act/Scene numbers if the entire work is not being cited).

For example, a standard entry for Shakespeare's Hamlet might look like this:

Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*. Edited by Harold Jenkins. London: Arden Shakespeare, 1982.

If you are citing a specific edition or a particular print run, ensure those details are accurate. If you are only referencing a specific part of the play within a larger collection, you would adjust accordingly, but for a standalone play, this is the general template.

Citing Plays with Multiple Authors

When a play has two or three authors, list them in the order they appear on the title page. For plays with four or more authors, list only the first author followed by "et al."

A play with two authors would be formatted as:

Author One Last Name, First Name, and Author Two Last Name, First Name. *Title of Play*. Publication City: Publisher, Year.

For a play with many contributors:

Thompson, Sarah, et al. *The Labyrinth of Dreams*. New York: Novelty Press, 2019.

Citing Edited or Anthologized Plays

Citing a play that has been edited or is part of an anthology requires including the editor's or anthologist's name. This is crucial because the edition and editorial commentary can influence interpretation.

The format for an edited play is:

Author Last Name, First Name. *Title of Play*. Edited by Editor First Name Last Name. Publication City: Publisher, Year.

For a play included in an anthology:

Author Last Name, First Name. "Title of Play." In *Title of Anthology*, edited by Editor First Name Last Name, Page numbers. Publication City: Publisher, Year.

For example:

Miller, Arthur. "Death of a Salesman." In *American Drama: A Modern Perspective*, edited by John Smith, 150–200. New York: Penguin Books, 2010.

Citing Plays from Online Sources

When citing plays accessed through online databases or websites, you must include the URL and the date you accessed the material. This ensures readers can retrieve the exact version you viewed, as online content can change.

The format for an online play is:

Author Last Name, First Name. *Title of Play*. Year of Publication (if available). Title of Website or Database. URL. Accessed Month Day, Year.

An example might be:

Ibsen, Henrik. *A Doll's House*. 1879. Project Gutenberg.
<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2544/2544-h/2544-h.htm>. Accessed October 26, 2023.

Common Pitfalls and Best Practices for Citing Plays in Chicago Style

Navigating the specifics of citing dramatic works can be challenging, and several common errors can arise. Being aware of these pitfalls can help writers avoid them and maintain a high standard of academic rigor.

One frequent mistake is inconsistent formatting of act, scene, and line numbers. Ensure you use the same separator (e.g., a period) between act and scene numbers consistently throughout your work. Another common issue is misattributing dialogue, especially in plays with a large cast or rapid exchanges. Always double-check speaker attributions against the text.

Furthermore, it is crucial to use the correct edition of the play. Different editions may have different line numbering or editorial notes, which can impact your citations. Always cite the specific edition you have physically consulted. For online sources, failing to include the access date is a common oversight that can render the citation incomplete.

Finally, always refer to the latest edition of the Chicago Manual of Style for any definitive rulings or updates. Adhering strictly to the guidelines, consulting the source text meticulously, and maintaining consistency are the cornerstones of accurate and effective citation practices when quoting plays.

FAQ

Q: What is the primary difference between citing a novel and quoting a play in Chicago style?

A: The primary difference lies in the reference points. Novels are typically cited by chapter and page number, while plays are cited by act, scene, and line number. This reflects the structural conventions of each literary form.

Q: How should I cite a character's name when it appears in an in-text quotation from a play?

A: If the character's name is part of the dialogue you are quoting, it should be included as it appears in the original text and enclosed in quotation marks along with the rest of the dialogue. If you are introducing a quote, you can state the character's name before the quote or ensure it is clear from the surrounding text.

Q: What if the play I'm citing doesn't have line numbers?

A: If the edition of the play you are using lacks line numbers, you should cite by act and scene. In such cases, you might also use page numbers if they are consistently present and helpful for locating the passage. Always mention in your bibliography which edition you used, especially if it deviates from standard numbering.

Q: How do I handle stage directions when quoting them in my paper?

A: When quoting stage directions directly, they should be presented as they appear in the play, usually italicized and in parentheses. If you are paraphrasing the meaning of a stage direction, you do not need to include it in quotation marks, but you should still provide the act and scene citation.

Q: Is it acceptable to use the author-date system for citing plays in Chicago style?

A: While the notes-bibliography system is more common in literary studies for quoting plays, the author-date system is also an option within Chicago style. If you use author-date, your in-text citations would typically include the author's last name and the year of publication, along with act, scene, and line numbers, and your bibliography would be formatted as a reference list.

Q: How do I cite a play that is part of a modern translation?

A: When citing a modern translation of a play, you should cite the translator and the edition used. In your bibliography, the entry would include the original author and title, followed by information

about the translator and the translation itself. In-text citations would refer to the translated work.

Q: Can I use abbreviations for act and scene numbers in my citations?

A: Chicago style generally discourages abbreviations for act and scene numbers in in-text citations to maintain clarity, especially for readers who may not be familiar with common abbreviations. Spell them out fully unless your instructor or publisher specifies otherwise.

Q: What is the proper way to format a bibliography entry for a play published in multiple volumes?

A: If a play is published in multiple volumes, your bibliography entry should specify the volume number. For example, "Author Last Name, First Name. *Title of Play*. Vol. X. Publication City: Publisher, Year." Your in-text citation may also need to include the volume number if it is necessary to distinguish between editions or parts.

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