

chicago style examples for quoting poetry

Mastering Chicago Style: A Comprehensive Guide to Quoting Poetry

chicago style examples for quoting poetry can seem daunting at first, but with a clear understanding of the guidelines, citing poetic passages becomes manageable and accurate. This article will delve into the intricacies of incorporating poetic excerpts into academic and creative works, adhering strictly to the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS). We will cover everything from short, inline quotations to longer, block quotations, explaining the nuances of punctuation, line breaks, and stanza indications. Understanding these principles ensures your work maintains academic integrity and presents poetry with the respect it deserves. Whether you are a student, a researcher, or a writer, mastering these examples will enhance your ability to integrate verse seamlessly and correctly into your prose. We will explore how to handle different poetic forms and the specific rules for footnotes or endnotes and the bibliography.

Table of Contents

Understanding the Basics of Quoting Poetry in Chicago Style

Quoting Short Passages: Inline Poetry Citations

Handling Longer Passages: Block Poetry Quotations

Specific Considerations for Poetic Quoting

Footnotes and Endnotes for Poetry Citations

Bibliography Entries for Poetry

Common Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them

Understanding the Basics of Chicago Style for Poetry Quotations

The Chicago Manual of Style provides a robust framework for academic and scholarly writing, including the precise methods for quoting from literary works, particularly poetry. The core principle is to represent the original text as faithfully as possible while integrating it smoothly into your own writing. This involves paying close attention to line breaks, stanza divisions, and punctuation, as these elements are often crucial to the meaning and rhythm of the poem. Chicago style distinguishes between quoting a few lines of poetry within your text and quoting longer passages that require separate treatment.

When quoting poetry, the goal is not just to present the words but to convey the form and artistic intent of the poet. This means understanding how the arrangement of words on the page contributes to the poem's overall effect. Chicago style acknowledges this by offering specific formatting rules designed to preserve these visual and structural elements. These rules help readers understand the context and impact of the quoted material, enhancing the persuasiveness and clarity of your analysis.

Quoting Short Passages: Inline Poetry Citations

For short quotations, typically one or two lines of poetry, Chicago style dictates that these should be incorporated directly into the body of your text. The quotation is enclosed in quotation marks, and a forward slash (/) is used to indicate line breaks. It is crucial to place a space before and after each forward slash. If the original poem uses specific punctuation at the end of a line, such as a comma or a period, that punctuation should be retained within the quotation marks before the slash.

Consider the following example from Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken." If you are discussing the choice presented in the poem, you might quote the first two lines as follows: Robert Frost famously wrote, "Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, / And sorry I could not travel both." This method ensures that the reader sees the quotation integrated seamlessly into your prose, with the line breaks clearly marked. The citation would then follow the quoted material.

Punctuation and Inline Poetry

The placement of punctuation is a key detail when quoting poetry inline. Commas, periods, and other marks that appear at the end of a poetic line should be included within the quotation marks. For instance, if a line ends with a comma, it remains: "Whose woods these are I think I know, / His house is in the village though." The slash then indicates the transition to the next line. If the quoted lines conclude your sentence, the period for your sentence should follow the closing quotation mark, not be placed before it.

Incorporating Multiple Lines Inline

While it's generally best to keep inline poetry quotes brief, you can include up to three lines of poetry within your prose. When doing so, continue to use the forward slash to separate each line. The structure should remain fluid, allowing the quoted poetry to flow naturally with your own sentences. For longer sections, block quotations become the appropriate method, as they provide a clearer visual separation and preserve the poem's structure more effectively.

Handling Longer Passages: Block Poetry Quotations

When quoting three or more lines of poetry, or when the original poem's layout is particularly complex and important to your analysis, Chicago style requires the use of a block quotation. This means the quoted poetry is set apart from your main text, typically indented from the left margin. Block quotations are not enclosed in quotation marks. The indentation should be consistent, usually about half an inch or five spaces. The spacing within the block quotation should mirror the original poem, including stanza breaks and line spacing.

Imagine quoting a substantial portion of T.S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." A block quotation would allow the reader to appreciate the poem's fragmented nature and distinct sections

without interruption from your narrative. The first line of the block quotation begins on a new line, and the entire passage is indented. This visual separation signals to the reader that this is a distinct piece of text, requiring their focused attention on the poetic elements.

Indentation and Formatting for Block Poetry

The standard indentation for block quotations in Chicago style is generally 0.5 inches from the left margin. This creates a clear visual distinction. If the poetry itself has internal indentation that is significant to its meaning or form, that indentation should be preserved within the block quote. Line breaks are rendered exactly as they appear in the original poem, and stanza breaks are maintained with appropriate vertical spacing.

When to Use Block Quotations

The decision to use a block quotation versus an inline quotation is based on length and the importance of the poem's visual structure. While three lines is the general guideline for switching to a block quote, consider the density of the lines. If three short lines would disrupt the flow of your prose more than a slightly longer inline quote, you might judiciously opt for inline. Conversely, if a longer passage, even if technically fewer than three lines, features a significant layout crucial for your argument, a block quote is advisable. Always prioritize clarity and fidelity to the original text.

Specific Considerations for Poetic Quoting

Beyond the basic rules for inline and block quotes, Chicago style addresses several specific scenarios that arise when quoting poetry. These include how to handle ellipses, omissions, and changes made to the original text, as well as citing poems from collections or anthologies.

When you omit words or phrases from a quoted passage, you must use an ellipsis, indicated by three periods (...). If the omission occurs in the middle of a sentence, the ellipsis is typically placed within the quotation marks. If the omission occurs at the end of a sentence, the ellipsis is followed by the sentence's concluding punctuation. Chicago style generally prefers ellipses with spaces between the periods: However, some style guides and specific journal requirements might differ, so always check.

Handling Omissions and Additions

To indicate an omission from the original text, use an ellipsis. For example, if you are quoting from William Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" and want to omit some words: "I wandered lonely as a cloud / That floats on high o'er vales and hills, / When all at once I saw a crowd, / A host, of golden daffodils..." Here, the ellipsis shows where text has been removed. If you need to add explanatory words or phrases within a quotation, you must enclose these additions in square

brackets []. This clearly distinguishes your own words from the poet's original text.

Citing Poems in Collections

When quoting a poem that appears in a collection or anthology, your citation needs to account for both the poem itself and the collection it is found in. The bibliography entry will list the editor of the collection, the title of the collection, and publication details, along with the page numbers where the poem appears. In footnotes or endnotes, you will cite the specific poem and its location within the collection.

Representing Line and Stanza Breaks

As mentioned, line breaks in inline quotes are indicated by a forward slash (/), with spaces on either side. For block quotes, line breaks are reproduced exactly. Stanza breaks are typically indicated by an extra line of space in block quotations. If you are quoting a very short excerpt that spans across a stanza break but is still inline, you can represent the stanza break with a double slash (//) or by indicating it parenthetically if clarity demands it, although the former is less common in standard CMOS practice for inline quotes. The primary method remains the single slash for line breaks.

Footnotes and Endnotes for Poetry Citations

Chicago style employs a note-bibliography system, where citations are provided either as footnotes at the bottom of the page or as endnotes at the conclusion of the document. For poetry, the note should include the author's name, the title of the poem, and specific location information such as book and line numbers, or page numbers if line numbers are unavailable or impractical. The first time a source is cited, the note is typically in full form; subsequent citations can be shortened.

For instance, a first note for a poem might look like this: William Wordsworth, "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud," in *Lyrical Ballads*, 2nd ed. (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1805), lines 1-4. A subsequent note could be abbreviated to: Wordsworth, "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud," lines 5-8.

First Reference Notes

The initial note for any quoted poem should be comprehensive. This includes the author's full name, the title of the specific poem (in quotation marks), the title of the collection or volume in which it appears (in italics), the edition information if applicable, the publisher, place and year of publication, and precise location within the poem (line numbers are preferred for poetry). If line numbers are not available for a particular edition, use page numbers.

Subsequent Reference Notes

After the first full citation, subsequent notes referring to the same source can be significantly shortened. This typically involves the author's last name, a shortened title of the poem, and the relevant line or page numbers. For example: Frost, "The Road Not Taken," lines 1-2. This brevity makes notes less intrusive while still providing sufficient information for the reader to locate the source. Ensure consistency in shortening for all subsequent references.

Citing Shakespearean Verse

A common special case is citing Shakespeare. Traditionally, Shakespearean verse is cited by act, scene, and line number, not page number. For example: William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, act 3, scene 1, lines 56-59. The title of the play is italicized, and act, scene, and line numbers are used without abbreviation, separated by periods or colons depending on the specific convention you and your instructor agree upon (CMOS offers flexibility here, but consistency is key).

Bibliography Entries for Poetry

The bibliography, appearing at the end of your work, lists all the sources you have consulted and cited. For poems, the entry format depends on whether you are citing a standalone poem or a poem within a larger collection. Poems are generally listed under the author's last name. The title of the poem appears in quotation marks, followed by details of the collection in which it is found.

A typical bibliography entry for a poem in an anthology would be structured as follows: Author's Last Name, First Name. "Title of Poem." In *Title of Collection*, edited by Editor's First Name Last Name, page numbers. Publisher, Year of Publication.

Structuring a Poetry Bibliography Entry

Let's take an example. If you are citing "Ozymandias" by Percy Bysshe Shelley from a hypothetical anthology, the entry might look like this: Shelley, Percy Bysshe. "Ozymandias." In *English Romantic Poetry*, edited by John Smith, 123-24. Penguin Classics, 2020. The author's name is inverted, the poem title is in quotation marks, the collection title is italicized, and publication details are provided clearly. The use of italics and quotation marks is crucial for distinguishing between the poem and the collection.

Handling Multiple Poems by the Same Author

If your work cites multiple poems by the same author, the bibliography will list each poem individually if they are from different sources. If they are from the same collection, they might be

listed as separate entries or grouped under the author's name depending on the complexity of the citations and the overall structure of your bibliography. For each entry, ensure that the poem title is in quotation marks and the collection title is italicized.

Common Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them

Despite careful attention, writers can sometimes fall into common traps when quoting poetry in Chicago style. One of the most frequent errors is incorrect formatting of line breaks, particularly the use of the forward slash. Another common mistake is forgetting to preserve the original indentation and spacing in block quotations, which can obscure the visual form of the poem.

Confusing inline and block quotation rules is also a frequent issue. Forgetting to enclose inline quotes in quotation marks or inadvertently indenting inline quotes can lead to formatting errors. Ensuring that all necessary punctuation from the original poem is included, or correctly omitted with an ellipsis, is also vital. Finally, inconsistent citation formatting between notes and bibliography can cause confusion for the reader and detract from the professionalism of your work.

Incorrect Line Break Formatting

When quoting poetry inline, remember that a single forward slash (/) with spaces on either side separates lines. Forgetting the spaces, using a different symbol, or not using a slash at all when a line break occurs are all common errors. Always double-check that your inline poetry quotations accurately reflect the line breaks of the original text. For instance, "Line one / Line two" is correct, whereas "Line one/Line two" or "Line one Line two" is not.

Inconsistent Citation Styles

Another pitfall is inconsistency in how notes and bibliography entries are formatted. While both systems provide citation information, their structure and level of detail differ. Ensure that all notes adhere to Chicago's note style, and all bibliography entries follow Chicago's bibliography format. This consistency is paramount for scholarly rigor and reader usability. If you are using a specific journal's style guide, always prioritize its requirements over general CMOS guidelines.

Misinterpreting Omissions with Ellipses

When using ellipses, it's important to represent omissions accurately. An ellipsis should not change the meaning of the original text or create ambiguity. Ensure that the ellipses are placed correctly and that any punctuation surrounding them is handled according to Chicago style. For example, "... ." is generally preferred over "... ." at the end of a sentence within a quote, signifying both the omission and the sentence end.

Q: How do I indicate line breaks when quoting poetry inline in Chicago style?

A: When quoting poetry inline in Chicago style, you indicate line breaks using a forward slash (/) with a space before and after it. For example: "Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, / And sorry I could not travel both."

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

A: You should use a block quotation for poetry in Chicago style when quoting three or more lines, or when the poem's visual layout is essential to your analysis. Block quotations are indented from the left margin and do not use quotation marks.

Q: What is the proper indentation for a block quotation of poetry in Chicago style?

A: The standard indentation for block quotations of poetry in Chicago style is typically 0.5 inches from the left margin. Any indentation present in the original poem that is significant to its meaning should also be preserved within the block quote.

Q: How do I cite a poem that appears in an anthology in my Chicago style notes and bibliography?

A: In notes, you would cite the poem's author and title, followed by the anthology title, editor, publisher, year, and page number. In the bibliography, the entry begins with the author's name, then the poem's title in quotation marks, followed by the anthology details.

Q: What is the correct way to use ellipses when quoting poetry in Chicago style?

A: Ellipses (three periods, often with spaces: ...) are used to indicate omitted words or phrases. If the omission occurs within a sentence, the ellipsis is placed within the quotation marks. If it occurs at the end of a sentence, the ellipsis is followed by the sentence's final punctuation.

Q: How do I cite Shakespearean plays when quoting verse in Chicago style?

A: Shakespearean verse is typically cited by act, scene, and line number, rather than page number. For example: Hamlet, act 3, scene 1, lines 56-59. The play title is italicized.

Q: Should I include original punctuation at the end of a line when quoting poetry inline?

A: Yes, if the original poetic line ends with punctuation such as a comma or period, you should include it within the quotation marks before the forward slash that indicates the line break.

Q: How do I handle stanza breaks in block quotations of poetry in Chicago style?

A: Stanza breaks in block quotations are generally indicated by an extra line of vertical space between stanzas, mirroring the original poem's formatting.

[Chicago Style Examples For Quoting Poetry](#)

Chicago Style Examples For Quoting Poetry

Related Articles

- [chicago style for performance art](#)
- [chicago style for dissertation writing](#)
- [chicago style for conciseness in linguistics writing](#)

[Back to Home](#)