

chicago style examples for quoting television shows

Chicago Style Examples for Quoting Television Shows

chicago style examples for quoting television shows is a crucial skill for academics, researchers, and anyone aiming to incorporate dialogue, plot points, or thematic elements from the small screen into their written work. The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) provides a robust framework for citing various sources, and television, with its complex narrative structures and diverse formats, requires specific attention. This article will delve into the intricacies of properly citing television episodes, seasons, and series according to Chicago style, offering clear, actionable examples for both the Notes-Bibliography and Author-Date systems. We will explore the essential components of a citation, from episode titles and air dates to network and production company information, ensuring your academic integrity and the credibility of your research remain uncompromised.

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Understanding the Core Components of Television Citations

When citing television shows in Chicago style, several key pieces of information are essential for a clear and accurate reference. The Chicago Manual of Style emphasizes providing enough detail for your reader to locate the exact material you are referencing. This typically includes the name of the series, the episode title (if applicable), the season number, the episode number (sometimes optional but recommended for clarity), the original air date, the network or streaming service, and the production company. For a specific episode, the title is paramount, as it distinguishes it from other installments within the same series. Similarly, the original broadcast date helps pinpoint the exact version of the episode, especially important for shows that may have had different edits or syndication versions over time.

The network or streaming service is crucial for identification, as different platforms might host different versions or even different series with similar names. The production company can also be relevant for academic or media studies contexts. For older shows, understanding the original network and syndication history can be complex, but adhering to the most widely recognized original broadcast information is generally preferred. For contemporary streaming series, the platform itself is the primary identifier.

Notes-Bibliography System: Citing Television Shows

The Notes-Bibliography system in Chicago style uses footnotes or endnotes for citations within the text and a bibliography at the end of the paper. This system is often favored in the humanities and arts.

Citing a Specific Episode

To cite a specific episode of a television show using the Notes-Bibliography system, you will need to provide the episode title, series title, season and episode numbers, network, original air date, and production company. In a note, the format is generally as follows:

Episode Number. "Episode Title." Series Title, Season Number, Episode Number, Network, Original Air Date.

Here is a concrete example:

1. "The Rains of Castamere." Game of Thrones, season 3, episode 9, HBO, 2 June 2013.

In the bibliography, the entry will be slightly reordered and include the production company:

Series Title. Season Number, Episode Number. "Episode Title." Network, Original Air Date. Production Company.

Example for bibliography:

Game of Thrones. Season 3, Episode 9. "The Rains of Castamere." HBO, 2 June 2013. HBO Entertainment/Television 360/Groksenberger/Generator.

Citing an Entire Series

When referring to an entire television series without focusing on a specific episode or season, you can cite the series title, its run dates, and the network or streaming service. This is useful for broad discussions of a show's impact or development.

In a note:

Series Title, run dates, Network.

Example for a note:

The Twilight Zone, 1959–1964, CBS.

In the bibliography, the format is similar:

Series Title. Run Dates. Network. Production Company (if important).

Example for bibliography:

The Twilight Zone. 1959–1964. CBS. Cayuga Productions.

Citing a Season

Citing a particular season allows you to discuss thematic arcs or character development across multiple episodes without detailing each one individually. This is particularly relevant for serialized dramas.

In a note:

Series Title, Season Number, Season Run Dates, Network.

Example for a note:

Mad Men, Season 4, 2010, AMC.

In the bibliography:

Series Title. Season Number. Network, Production Company.

Example for bibliography:

Mad Men. Season 4. AMC, Lionsgate Television/AMC Studios.

Author-Date System: Citing Television Shows

The Author-Date system, often used in the sciences and social sciences, relies on in-text parenthetical citations that correspond to a reference list at the end of the paper. For television, the "author" is typically the creator or showrunner if a single individual is prominently associated, or the series itself if no single author is clear.

Citing a Specific Episode

In the Author-Date system, your in-text citation will include the author (often the creator) and the year of the episode's original broadcast. For television, as no single author is usually assigned in the traditional sense, the series title or creator is used as the "author" element in the reference list.

In-text citation example:

(Weinstein & Kelly 2013)

Reference list entry example:

Weinstein, George, and David Kelly, creators. 2013. "The Rains of Castamere." Game of Thrones, season 3, episode 9. HBO, June 2. Produced by HBO Entertainment.

Note: For shows with multiple prominent creators, you can list them. If no specific creator is readily identified or emphasized, you might use the series title as the author equivalent.

Citing an Entire Series

When referencing the series as a whole, the in-text citation typically includes the series title (or creator) and the span of its original broadcast dates.

In-text citation example:

(Rod Serling 1959–1964)

Reference list entry example:

Serling, Rod, creator. 1959–1964. *The Twilight Zone*. CBS. Produced by Cayuga Productions.

Citing a Season

For discussions focused on a specific season, the citation includes the creator and the year range of that season.

In-text citation example:

(Webber 2010)

Reference list entry example:

Webber, Matthew, creator. 2010. *Mad Men*, Season 4. AMC. Produced by Lionsgate Television.

Common Challenges and Solutions in Television Citation

Citing television shows can present unique challenges, especially with the evolving landscape of media production and distribution. One common hurdle is dealing with series that have been revived or rebooted, sometimes under a different network or with new creative teams. In such cases, it is crucial to be precise about which iteration of the series you are referencing. If you are citing the original run, ensure your citation reflects that. For a revival, explicitly state the new run dates and network. For example, "The X-Files, original run 1993–2002, Fox; revival 2016–2018, Fox."

Another area that requires careful consideration is citing shows exclusively available on streaming services. Since these shows often lack traditional air dates and networks in the same way broadcast television does, the citation should clearly indicate the streaming platform. The primary information to include will be the series title, episode title (if applicable), season and episode number, the streaming service, and the year of release for that particular episode or season. For instance, for a Netflix original, you might cite it as: "Stranger Things, season 4, episode 1, 'The Hellfire Club,' Netflix, 2022." The production company is also often included for comprehensive citations.

The inclusion of episode numbers can be a point of contention. While not always strictly mandatory in every citation style or context, it is highly recommended for clarity, especially when discussing specific plot points or dialogue. If an episode has a distinct title, that is the primary identifier. However, if multiple episodes share similar themes or titles, or if the numbering is consistent and helps distinguish episodes within a season, including it makes your citation more precise and robust. For example, "The Office (US),

season 5, episode 24, 'Company Picnic,' NBC, 2009."

The Chicago Manual of Style encourages accuracy and provides flexibility to accommodate new media formats. Always aim to provide the most precise information available, ensuring your reader can easily locate the source material. When in doubt, consult the latest edition of the Chicago Manual of Style or your instructor's specific guidelines.

For both systems, consistency is key. Whichever format you choose, apply it uniformly throughout your work. The goal is to create clear, unambiguous references that lend authority and credibility to your research, allowing your audience to follow your arguments seamlessly.

Key Takeaways for Accurate Television Citation

Accurate citation of television shows in Chicago style hinges on attention to detail and a clear understanding of the elements required for each system. Whether you are using the Notes-Bibliography or Author-Date system, remember to consistently include essential information such as the series title, episode title, season and episode numbers, original air date or release year, network or streaming service, and production company. Precision in these details ensures your readers can easily identify and locate the specific content you are referencing.

For the Notes-Bibliography system, notes provide immediate context, while the bibliography offers a comprehensive list. For the Author-Date system, in-text citations guide the reader to a full reference list. Both methods serve the same purpose: to uphold academic integrity and allow for verification of your sources. Always prioritize clarity and provide enough information to avoid ambiguity, especially when dealing with the complexities of modern media production and distribution, such as streaming exclusives and series revivals.

By familiarizing yourself with the guidelines for citing television, you can effectively integrate this rich medium into your academic work, strengthening your arguments and demonstrating a thorough understanding of your source material. Remember to consult the latest edition of the Chicago Manual of Style or specific institutional guidelines when undertaking your research.

Q: What is the difference between citing a TV episode and a TV series in Chicago style?

A: Citing a TV episode requires specific details like the episode title, season and episode number, original air date, and network. Citing an entire TV series typically involves the series title, its run dates, and the primary network or streaming service it aired on. The former is for referencing specific content, while the latter is for broader discussions of the show's impact or evolution.

Q: Do I need to include the production company when citing a TV show in Chicago style?

A: Including the production company is often recommended by the Chicago Manual of Style for thoroughness, especially in academic contexts or when discussing the creative forces behind a show. While not always strictly mandatory for every citation, it adds valuable information that can help identify the specific version or iteration of a series.

Q: How do I cite a TV show that originally aired on broadcast but is now available on a streaming service?

A: When citing a show that has moved to streaming, prioritize the original broadcast information (network, air date) as the primary source. However, if you are referencing specific episodes or seasons only available through the streaming service, you should then include the streaming platform and its release year for that content to ensure accuracy.

Q: What if a TV episode doesn't have a specific title?

A: If a TV episode lacks a distinct title, you can still cite it by its series title, season, and episode number, along with the network and air date. In the Notes-Bibliography system, you might simply use "Episode [Number]" in place of the title. The key is to provide enough information for the reader to locate the intended content unambiguously.

Q: How does the Chicago style handle citing TV shows with multiple seasons and reboots?

A: For TV shows with multiple seasons, you will specify the season number in your citation. For reboots or revivals, it's crucial to distinguish them from the original series. This typically involves noting the new run dates, the new network or streaming service, and any significant changes in creative direction or cast in your citation.

Q: Is it necessary to include the exact original air date for every TV episode citation?

A: Including the exact original air date is highly recommended for precise citation in Chicago style, particularly for the Notes-Bibliography system. It helps pinpoint the specific version of an episode, which can be important for shows that have undergone edits, syndication changes, or have different versions available.

Q: How should I format the creator's name when citing a TV show in the Author-Date system?

A: In the Author-Date system, if a specific creator or showrunner is widely recognized and central to the series, their name can be used as the author. You would then cite them in the reference list, often noting "creator" after their name, and use their name and the show's relevant year in your in-text parenthetical citation. If no single creator is prominent, the series title might be used as the author equivalent.

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