

chicago style footnote citation rules

The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) offers two distinct systems for citing sources: the notes-bibliography system and the author-date system. This article focuses exclusively on the intricacies of the notes-bibliography system, specifically its footnote citation rules. Mastering these rules is crucial for academic integrity, ensuring proper attribution and allowing readers to easily trace your sources. We will delve into the fundamental structure of Chicago style footnotes, explore the nuances of citing various source types, and provide practical guidance for implementing these citation standards accurately. Understanding the specific requirements for books, articles, websites, and other materials is paramount for any writer adhering to the Chicago style.

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Understanding the Basics of Chicago Style Footnotes

The Chicago Manual of Style's notes-bibliography system is widely adopted across humanities disciplines and in many history publications. At its core, this system utilizes either endnotes or footnotes to provide citations for specific pieces of information within the text. Footnotes appear at the bottom of the page where the reference occurs, while endnotes are gathered at the end of the document. For this discussion, we will concentrate on the precise rules governing the creation and formatting of Chicago style footnotes.

The primary purpose of a footnote is twofold: to give credit to the original source of borrowed ideas, facts, or direct quotations, and to provide additional information or commentary that might disrupt the flow of the main text. This dual function makes the correct application of Chicago style footnote citation rules essential for clear and credible scholarship. Each footnote corresponds to a superscript Arabic numeral placed immediately after the relevant word, phrase, or punctuation mark in the body of the text.

Key Elements of a Chicago Style Footnote

While the specific details vary depending on the source type, all Chicago style footnotes share a common structural foundation. The fundamental goal is to provide enough information for a reader to locate the original source without being overly cumbersome. The first mention of a source in a footnote will typically be more detailed than subsequent mentions, a concept we will explore further.

Key elements commonly found in Chicago style footnotes include:

- Author(s)' full name(s) (first name first)
- Title of the work (italicized for books and journals, in quotation marks for articles and chapters)
- Publication details (city of publication, publisher, and year for books)
- Specific location within the source (page number(s) being referenced)
- For online sources, the URL and access date

The order and punctuation of these elements are critical to adhering to Chicago style footnote citation rules. Punctuation, such as commas, periods, and parentheses, plays a significant role in distinguishing between different pieces of bibliographic information.

Citing Books in Chicago Style Footnotes

Citing books is a cornerstone of academic writing, and the Chicago style provides clear guidelines for this. The first footnote citation for a book requires complete bibliographic information. Subsequent citations can be shortened, often referring to the author and a page number, or using "Ibid." if the source is the same as the immediately preceding one.

First Footnote Citation for a Book

When citing a book for the first time in a footnote, the format typically includes the author's full name, the title of the book (italicized), the publication information (city, publisher, year), and the specific page number(s) being referenced. For example:

1. Jane Doe, *The History of Citation Styles* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020), 45.

Subsequent Footnote Citations for a Book

After the initial full citation, subsequent references to the same book become more concise. The most common method is to use the author's last name and the page number. For example:

2. Doe, *History of Citation Styles*, 112.

Alternatively, if you are citing a different page of the same book immediately following a previous citation of that same book, you can omit the title and use:

3. Doe, 205.

Citing Journal Articles in Chicago Style Footnotes

Academic journals are a rich source of scholarly research, and Chicago style offers a specific format for citing articles published within them. The initial footnote citation will include details about the article itself and the journal it appears in.

First Footnote Citation for a Journal Article

The first footnote for a journal article typically includes the author's full name, the article title (in quotation marks), the journal title (italicized), the volume and issue number, the year of publication, and the page range of the article. The specific page number being cited is also included.

4. John Smith, "The Evolution of Academic Writing," *Journal of Scholarly Discourse* 25, no. 3 (2019): 150 (originally published in original journal pages 145-160).

Subsequent Footnote Citations for a Journal Article

Similar to books, subsequent citations of journal articles are shortened. This usually involves the author's last name, a shortened version of the article title (if necessary to distinguish it from other works by the same author), and the specific page number.

5. Smith, "Evolution of Academic Writing," 155.

Citing Websites and Online Sources in Chicago Style Footnotes

The digital age has introduced a vast array of online sources, and Chicago style provides guidelines for citing them. These citations often require specific elements to ensure the source can be located online.

First Footnote Citation for a Website

For a webpage, the citation generally includes the author (if known), the title of the page, the title of the overall website (if applicable and distinct from the page title), the name of the website publisher (if different from the author and site title), the publication or last modified date, and a URL. Crucially, an access date is also required.

6. Sarah Lee, "Understanding Online Citations," Writing Resources Hub, last modified October 15, 2023, <https://www.example.com/online-citations>. Accessed November 1, 2023.

Subsequent Footnote Citations for a Website

Subsequent citations for websites are typically shortened, often by using the author's last name and

the page title, or just the page title if no author is attributed. The URL and access date are usually omitted in subsequent notes unless the information has changed or is crucial for retrieval.

7. Lee, "Understanding Online Citations."

Citing Other Source Types in Chicago Style Footnotes

Beyond books and articles, Chicago style footnote citation rules cover a wide range of materials, including but not limited to chapters in edited volumes, newspapers, magazines, dissertations, and interviews. Each has its own specific format.

Chapters in Edited Volumes

When citing a chapter within an edited book, you'll need to include the chapter author, the chapter title, the book title, the editor(s), publication information, and the page numbers for the chapter and the specific reference.

8. Michael Brown, "The Impact of Digitalization," in *Studies in Modern Media*, ed. Emily Green (New York: Academic Publishing House, 2021), 78-99.

Newspaper and Magazine Articles

Citing newspaper and magazine articles requires the author (if known), the article title, the publication name (italicized), the date of publication, and the page number(s).

9. David White, "Local Election Results," *The City Chronicle*, November 1, 2023, A1.

Subsequent Citations and the "Ibid." Rule

The efficient handling of subsequent citations is a hallmark of the Chicago notes-bibliography system. The abbreviation "Ibid." (from the Latin *ibidem*, meaning "in the same place") is used when a footnote citation is for the exact same source as the immediately preceding footnote.

Using "Ibid." Correctly

If footnote 5 cites Doe, *History of Citation Styles*, page 112, and footnote 6 cites the same work on page 112, then footnote 6 would simply be:

10. Ibid.

If footnote 6 cites the same work but a different page (e.g., page 205), it would be:

11. Ibid., 205.

It is important to note that "Ibid." should only be used when the preceding footnote is the exact same

source. If there is even one intervening footnote referencing a different source, you must revert to the shortened citation format (e.g., Author, Title, Page).

Formatting and Placement of Footnotes

The physical presentation of footnotes is as important as their content. Adhering to strict formatting and placement guidelines ensures professionalism and clarity for the reader.

Placement

Footnotes are numbered sequentially throughout the document. Each footnote number in the text should correspond to a footnote at the bottom of the page where the reference appears. If a footnote extends beyond the space available at the bottom of a page, it should continue on the next page, but this is generally discouraged by maintaining conciseness in your notes.

Formatting

The first line of each footnote is typically indented, and subsequent lines are flush with the left margin. The footnote number in the text is superscripted and placed after punctuation. The footnote number at the beginning of the footnote text is also superscripted and followed by a period.

Example of footnote formatting:

1. Jane Doe, *The History of Citation Styles* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020), 45.
2. Ibid.

Common Pitfalls in Chicago Style Footnote Citation

Even experienced writers can sometimes stumble when applying Chicago style footnote citation rules. Awareness of common errors can help prevent them.

Inconsistent Use of Punctuation

One of the most frequent errors is inconsistent punctuation. Pay close attention to the placement of commas, periods, and parentheses as specified by the Chicago Manual of Style. For instance, the comma after the author's name in the first footnote, and the period at the end of each footnote, are crucial.

Incorrect Order of Elements

The order of author, title, publication details, and page numbers is not arbitrary. Deviating from the

prescribed order can make citations difficult to understand and locate. Always refer to the official CMOS guidelines for the precise sequence.

Overuse or Misuse of "Ibid."

As mentioned, "Ibid." is a powerful tool for conciseness, but it is easily misused. Ensure that it is only employed when referencing the immediately preceding source, and be aware that some style guides or instructors may prefer full shortened citations instead of "Ibid." for clarity.

By understanding and diligently applying these Chicago style footnote citation rules, writers can ensure their work is both academically sound and easily navigable for their readers, fostering credibility and intellectual honesty.

FAQ

Q: What is the main difference between footnotes and endnotes in Chicago style?

A: In the Chicago Manual of Style's notes-bibliography system, footnotes are placed at the bottom of the page where the reference appears in the text. Endnotes, conversely, are compiled and presented at the end of the document, typically on a separate page. Both serve the same citation purpose but differ in their physical location.

Q: How do I cite a source I found online that has no author listed?

A: When citing a webpage with no author, you begin with the title of the page. Follow this with the title of the overall website (if distinct), the publisher (if known and different from the site title), the publication or last modified date, and the URL. Crucially, include the date you accessed the page.

Q: When should I use "Ibid." in my Chicago style footnotes?

A: "Ibid." is used when a footnote citation refers to the exact same source as the immediately preceding footnote. If the page number is also the same, you simply write "Ibid.". If the page number differs, you follow "Ibid." with a comma and the new page number (e.g., Ibid., 55).

Q: What is the difference in formatting between the first and subsequent footnotes for a book in Chicago style?

A: The first footnote citation for a book includes the author's full name (first name first), the italicized title, the publication information (city, publisher, year), and the specific page number. Subsequent footnotes are shortened, typically using the author's last name, a shortened title (if necessary), and the page number, or simply the author's last name and page number if the title is clear from context.

Q: How do I cite a chapter from an edited book in Chicago style footnotes?

A: For a chapter in an edited book, the first footnote citation includes the chapter author's full name, the chapter title in quotation marks, "in," the italicized book title, followed by "ed." or "eds." and the editor(s)' full name(s), the publication information (city, publisher, year), and the page range for the chapter and the specific page number being cited.

Q: Do I need to include the URL and access date for every online source in Chicago style footnotes?

A: For the initial citation of an online source, you must include the URL and the access date. For subsequent citations of the same online source, the URL and access date are typically omitted unless they are essential for locating the specific version of the source being referenced, or if the content has significantly changed since the initial access.

Q: How do I format the footnote number in the text and at the beginning of the footnote?

A: The footnote number in the text is a superscript Arabic numeral placed immediately after the relevant word or punctuation. At the beginning of the footnote itself, the number is also superscripted and followed by a period, after which the citation information begins.

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