

chicago style footnote example photograph

The Nuances of Chicago Style Footnote Examples for Photographs

chicago style footnote example photograph presentations require meticulous attention to detail to accurately attribute visual sources. Whether you're a student, researcher, or a professional creating academic work, understanding how to cite a photograph correctly according to the Chicago Manual of Style is crucial for maintaining academic integrity and avoiding plagiarism. This guide will delve into the intricacies of constructing proper Chicago style footnotes for photographs, covering various scenarios and essential components. We will explore the fundamental elements of a photograph citation, discuss how to handle different types of photographic sources, and provide clear examples to illustrate the application of these rules. Mastering these citation practices ensures your work is well-supported and credible.

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Understanding the Basics of Chicago Style Footnotes for Photographs

The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) provides a comprehensive framework for academic citation, and its guidelines for referencing visual materials like photographs are designed to be both clear and thorough. Footnotes, in the Chicago system, are typically used for first reference and then a shortened form for subsequent references, distinguishing them from endnotes which appear at the end of the document. When citing a photograph, the primary goal is to provide enough information for a reader to locate and verify the image's origin. This involves identifying the photographer, the subject matter, the date of creation, and the location where the photograph is housed or was published. The context of the photograph's use within your work also influences how you might introduce it in your text before the footnote.

Essential Components of a Chicago Style Photograph Footnote

A well-constructed Chicago style footnote for a photograph includes several key pieces of information, ensuring complete attribution. These components work together to create a clear and traceable record of the source. While variations exist depending on the specific type of photograph and its origin, the core elements remain consistent.

Photographer's Name

The individual who captured the photograph is the most critical piece of information. This is usually presented as First Name Last Name. If the photographer is unknown, this should be indicated.

Title of the Photograph

If the photograph has a specific title, it should be included. This title is typically italicized. If there is no formal title, a brief description of the image content should be provided instead.

Date of Creation

The year or specific date when the photograph was taken is essential. If the exact date is unknown, an approximate date or range should be used, clearly indicated as such.

Physical Description or Medium

For physical photographs, mentioning the medium (e.g., black and white print, color transparency) can be helpful.

Collection or Repository Information

If the photograph is part of a larger collection, the name of the collection and the institution housing it are vital. This includes museums, archives, libraries, or private collections.

Location Information (for Online Sources)

For digital images, the website URL where the photograph was accessed is required. It's also good practice to include the date of access for online materials, as their availability can change.

Page or Figure Number

If the photograph appears within a published work, the specific page number or figure number where it is located must be noted.

Chicago Style Footnote Example: A Published Photograph

When a photograph is found within a book, journal, or exhibition catalog, its citation in a Chicago style footnote requires referencing both the photograph itself and the publication it appears in. This layered approach ensures proper credit is given to both the photographer and the publisher or author of the work containing the image.

Let's consider a hypothetical example of a photograph by Ansel Adams in a retrospective book.

Footnote for a Photograph in a Book

The initial footnote would look something like this:

1. Ansel Adams, *Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico*, 1941, gelatin silver print, in Ansel Adams: *400 Photographs* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1988), 112.

In this example:

- "Ansel Adams" is the photographer.
- "*Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico*" is the italicized title of the photograph.
- "1941" is the date of creation.
- "gelatin silver print" describes the medium.
- "*Ansel Adams: 400 Photographs*" is the italicized title of the book.

- "(Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1988)" provides publication details: city, publisher, and year.
- "112" is the page number where the photograph is located.

For subsequent references to this same photograph within the same work, a shortened footnote form would be used:

2. Adams, Moonrise, Hernandez, 112.

Chicago Style Footnote Example: A Photograph from a Museum or Archive

Photographs housed in museum or archival collections are typically cited by providing details about the photograph itself, followed by the collection and institution. This ensures researchers can locate the original artifact.

Footnote for an Archival Photograph

Consider a photograph from the Library of Congress:

3. Dorothea Lange, Migrant Mother, Nipomo, California, March 1936, gelatin silver print, Farm Security Administration Collection, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Here's a breakdown:

- "Dorothea Lange" is the photographer.
- "Migrant Mother, Nipomo, California" is the title of the photograph.
- "March 1936" is the specific date of creation.
- "gelatin silver print" is the medium.
- "Farm Security Administration Collection" is the name of the collection.
- "Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C." specifies the repository and its location.

If a specific accession number or negative number is available, it should also be included for greater precision.

Chicago Style Footnote Example: An Online Photograph

Citing online photographs requires careful attention to URLs and access dates, as digital content can be ephemeral. The Chicago Manual of Style emphasizes providing sufficient information to access the image.

Footnote for an Online Photograph

Suppose you found a photograph on a museum's website:

4. Hiroshi Sugimoto, Theaters, n.d., digital image, "Hiroshi Sugimoto: Theaters," website of the Pace Gallery, accessed October 26, 2023, <https://www.pacegallery.com/artists/hiroshi-sugimoto/theaters/>.

Key elements here include:

- "Hiroshi Sugimoto" is the photographer.
- "Theaters" is the title of the series (or a descriptive title if the individual image lacks one).
- "n.d." indicates no date of creation is available.
- "digital image" specifies the format.
- "Hiroshi Sugimoto: Theaters" is the title of the webpage or section.
- "website of the Pace Gallery" identifies the hosting website.
- "accessed October 26, 2023" is the date of access.
- The full URL is provided.

It is important to note that for very well-known and stable online sources, the access date might be omitted in some interpretations of CMOS, but it is generally recommended for caution.

Chicago Style Footnote Example: A Photograph in a Newspaper or Magazine

Photographs in periodicals, like newspapers and magazines, are cited similarly to photographs in books, but the publication details will reflect the periodical.

Footnote for a Newspaper Photograph

Consider a photograph from The New York Times:

5. Annie Leibovitz, "Portrait of a President," *The New York Times Magazine*, November 15, 2020, 45.

This citation includes:

- "Annie Leibovitz" is the photographer.
- "Portrait of a President" is the title of the photograph or article it accompanies.
- "*The New York Times Magazine*" is the italicized title of the periodical.
- "November 15, 2020" is the publication date of the magazine.
- "45" is the page number.

If the photographer is not credited, you would start with the title of the photograph and the publication details.

Chicago Style Footnote Example: A Personal Photograph

If you are using a photograph that you yourself have taken, the citation practice is different. You do not need to cite your own work in footnotes, as it is considered original material. However, if you are using a photograph taken by someone else that you have access to personally (e.g., a family photo), you would treat it as a private collection.

Footnote for a Personal Photograph (not your own)

For a photograph from a family album:

6. John Smith, family portrait, circa 1985, gelatin silver print, private collection of Jane Doe, Anytown, USA.

This acknowledges:

- "John Smith" as the photographer.
- "family portrait" as a descriptive title.
- "circa 1985" as an approximate date.
- "gelatin silver print" as the medium.

- "private collection of Jane Doe, Anytown, USA" indicates the owner and general location.

Handling Specific Photographic Elements in Footnotes

Beyond the basic components, certain specific elements of a photograph might require additional attention in your Chicago style citations to ensure clarity and completeness.

Unknown Photographer or Date

When the photographer or the exact date of a photograph's creation is unknown, this should be explicitly stated in the footnote. For an unknown photographer, you would typically start with the title of the photograph. For an unknown date, use "n.d." (no date). If an approximate date is known, use "ca." (circa) followed by the estimated year or range.

Reproductions of Artwork

If a photograph is a reproduction of a work of art (e.g., a photograph of a painting), you would cite the photograph itself as the source, but you might also want to acknowledge the original artwork in your text or a note. The primary citation would be for the photograph used.

Photographs as Part of a Larger Visual Work

When a photograph is part of a larger visual work, such as a film or a presentation, the citation would focus on how you accessed that work and where the photograph appears within it, if discernible.

When to Cite a Photograph: Identifying Citable Visuals

The decision to cite a photograph hinges on its use within your academic or professional work. Generally, any visual source that provides information, context, or evidence, and is not considered common knowledge or your own original creation, warrants a citation. This includes images that illustrate a point, provide historical context, or are the subject of your analysis. Always err on the side of caution; if you are unsure whether to cite an image, it is better to do so.

Criteria for Citing a Photograph

- The photograph provides factual information relevant to your argument.
- The photograph is a primary source for your research.
- The photograph is not commonly known or readily available in public domain without specific attribution.
- You did not create the photograph yourself.
- The photograph is used for illustrative purposes beyond simple decoration.

The Importance of Consistency in Photograph Citation

Maintaining consistency in your citation style is paramount in any academic or professional document. Whether you are citing multiple photographs or a single image, applying the Chicago style rules uniformly throughout your work ensures a professional presentation and simplifies the reader's ability to trace your sources. Inconsistent citations can detract from the credibility of your research and may lead to accusations of sloppiness or even academic dishonesty. Always refer back to the Chicago Manual of Style or a reliable guide derived from it to ensure your practices are up-to-date and accurate.

FAQ

Q: What is the difference between a footnote and an endnote for a photograph in Chicago style?

A: In Chicago style, footnotes appear at the bottom of the page where the reference is made, while endnotes are compiled at the end of the document. Both serve a similar purpose of providing citation information, but footnotes are generally preferred for direct referencing within the text, offering immediate access to source details.

Q: How do I cite a photograph where the photographer is anonymous?

A: If the photographer of a photograph is anonymous, you would begin the footnote with the title of the photograph. For example, if the photograph is titled "Street Scene," the citation would start with "Street Scene." You would then proceed with other available details like the date, location, and repository.

Q: What if a photograph has no specific title?

A: If a photograph lacks a formal title, you should provide a brief, descriptive phrase that accurately identifies the image's content. This description should be enclosed in quotation marks if it is not a formal title, or italicized if it represents a descriptive title for a series or collection. For instance, you might use "Boy with Balloon."

Q: How should I cite a photograph that is part of a personal collection but I don't know the photographer?

A: If you are citing a photograph from a personal collection and the photographer is unknown, you would start with a descriptive title or phrase for the image. Then, you would indicate that it is from a private collection, including the name of the owner and their general location if relevant. For example: "Family Picnic, circa 1990, gelatin silver print, private collection of the Miller Family, Chicago, IL."

Q: Do I need to cite a photograph if it's in the public domain?

A: Even if a photograph is in the public domain, it is good practice to cite its source, especially if you accessed it through a specific archive, museum, or website. This helps your readers locate the original work and understand its provenance. However, the citation format might be simplified if the image is widely and freely available without requiring specific permissions.

Q: What if the photograph I'm using is a digital scan of an old print? How is that cited?

A: When citing a digital scan of an old print, you essentially cite the source where you accessed the digital version. This would include the website URL, the name of the institution or archive providing the scan, and the date of access. If the original print's details (photographer, date, etc.) are provided by the source, include those as well. For example: "Ansel Adams, Yosemite Valley, 1950, photograph, digitized by the National Archives, accessed October 26, 2023, [URL]."

Q: Should I include the dimensions of a photograph in my Chicago style footnote?

A: The inclusion of dimensions in a Chicago style footnote for a photograph is generally reserved for when the physical size of the print is particularly relevant to your analysis or when citing an artwork in an exhibition catalog or collection where dimensions are standard cataloging information. For most standard uses, dimensions are not required.

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