

chicago style footnote geographic citation

Mastering Chicago Style Footnote Geographic Citation: A Comprehensive Guide

chicago style footnote geographic citation is a crucial element for academic and professional writing, ensuring proper attribution and allowing readers to locate the specific sources that inform your work. Understanding the nuances of citing geographic information, whether it's a map, an atlas, a geographical database, or even a location mentioned within a text, is paramount for scholarly integrity. This article provides a detailed exploration of how to construct accurate and effective Chicago style footnotes for various geographic sources, covering everything from basic principles to specialized scenarios. We will delve into the specific components required for each type of citation, discuss common pitfalls to avoid, and offer practical tips for maintaining consistency throughout your document, ultimately empowering you to handle geographic citations with confidence and precision.

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Understanding the Fundamentals of Chicago Style Footnotes

The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) is a widely respected style guide that offers two primary citation systems: the notes-bibliography system and the author-date system. For this discussion, we will focus exclusively on the notes-bibliography system, which utilizes footnotes or endnotes. This system is prevalent in humanities fields like history, literature, and art history, where detailed source information is often essential for scholarly argument. Each footnote provides a concise citation for a specific piece of information or quote, while a corresponding bibliography at the end of the work lists all sources consulted.

Footnotes are essential for giving credit to original authors, preventing plagiarism, and enabling your readers to verify your research by locating your sources. They offer a way to include source details without interrupting the flow of your main text, unlike the author-date system. Mastering the construction of these notes, particularly for less common source types like geographic materials, is a hallmark of careful scholarship.

Basic Principles for Geographic Citations

Regardless of the specific type of geographic source, certain fundamental principles apply to Chicago style footnote geographic citation. The goal is always to provide enough information so that a reader can locate the exact source material. This typically includes the author or responsible party, the title of the work, publication details (publisher, year, and sometimes place of publication), and crucially, specific location identifiers such as page numbers, map numbers, or coordinates.

The level of detail required can vary based on the source and its accessibility. For unique or rare geographic documents, more extensive descriptive information might be necessary. Conversely, for widely available and easily identifiable sources, a more streamlined citation might suffice. Always prioritize clarity and the ability for a reader to find the exact information you are referencing.

Elements of a Geographic Footnote

A typical Chicago style footnote for a geographic source will include several key elements, though their order and specific form may adapt to the source type. These core components are:

- **Author or Responsible Entity:** This could be an individual cartographer, a government agency, a surveying firm, or an organization responsible for the geographic data.
- **Title:** The full title of the map, atlas, or database, often italicized.
- **Publication Information:** Publisher, place of publication, and year of publication. For online sources, this might include the website name and access date.
- **Location Identifier:** This is vital for geographic sources and can include page numbers, plate numbers, map coordinates, grid references, or specific file names.
- **Date of Creation/Revision (if applicable):** Especially important for dynamic datasets or historical maps.

Citing Maps and Atlases in Chicago Style

Maps and atlases represent distinct categories of geographic sources, each requiring specific attention

to detail in their citation. The fundamental difference lies in their format: a single map versus a collection of maps bound together.

Footnotes for Cartographic Resources

When citing a standalone map, the footnote should clearly identify the map's title, the entity responsible for its creation, and its publication details. If the map is part of a larger collection or published as a standalone piece, the citation will reflect that. For instance, a topographic map produced by a national mapping agency will have a different citation structure than a historical map reproduced in a book.

The primary objective is to pinpoint the exact map being referenced. This often involves including the specific edition or series name if applicable. For example, a footnote might look like this:

1. United States Geological Survey, "San Francisco South," 1:24,000 topographic map, 1997.

Elements of a Map Footnote

Key information to include for a map footnote:

- The name of the cartographer or the issuing agency (e.g., National Geographic Society, Ordnance Survey).
- The full title of the map, italicized.
- The scale of the map (e.g., 1:10,000, 1 inch to 1 mile).
- The year of publication or creation.

- The publisher or distributor.
- Any specific series or sheet number.

Citing Atlases and their Components

Atlases, being collections of maps, present a slightly more complex citation challenge. You may be citing the atlas as a whole, or a specific map within the atlas. Chicago style differentiates between these. When citing an atlas generally, you treat it much like a book. However, if you are referencing a particular map within an atlas, you will need to specify that map and its location within the atlas, typically by page number or plate number.

A citation for an atlas might appear as:

2. National Geographic Atlas of the World, 10th ed. (Washington, DC: National Geographic Society, 2018).

If referencing a specific map within that atlas:

3. "Asia," National Geographic Atlas of the World, 10th ed. (Washington, DC: National Geographic Society, 2018), plate 78.

The inclusion of the specific map title or identifier within the atlas is crucial for precise referencing.

Geographic Databases and Digital Maps

The proliferation of digital geographic information systems (GIS) and online mapping services has introduced new forms of geographic citation. Chicago style provides guidelines for referencing these

dynamic and often evolving digital resources.

Footnotes for Online Geographic Data

Citing online geographic data requires careful consideration of how the information is accessed and its permanence. When referencing a specific dataset, a web map, or a layer within a GIS application, you need to provide enough information for the reader to find the exact data, even if it changes over time.

Key elements for digital geographic citations include the author or owner of the data, the title of the dataset or map layer, the name of the website or platform where it is hosted, the URL, and the date of access. Given the ephemeral nature of online content, the access date is particularly important.

Key Information for Database Citations

For geographic databases or online mapping platforms, consider these citation components:

- Name of the organization or individual that created/hosts the data.
- Title of the dataset, map layer, or web map, italicized.
- Name of the platform or website (e.g., Google Maps, ArcGIS Online, OpenStreetMap).
- The URL where the data can be accessed.
- The date you accessed the information.
- Any specific version or date of the data if indicated.

For example, a citation for a GIS layer might appear as:

4. Esri, "World Topographic Map," Esri, accessed May 15, 2023,
https://services.arcgisonline.com/arcgis/rest/services/World_Topo_Map/MapServer.

When citing a specific location or feature from a dynamic online map service:

5. "Eiffel Tower," Google Maps, accessed May 15, 2023,
<https://www.google.com/maps/@48.8584,2.2945,17z>.

Citing Specific Locations Mentioned in Text

Sometimes, your writing might reference a specific geographic location without directly quoting from a map or atlas. In such cases, you still need to provide a citation if the location is not common knowledge or if its specific context within a source is important.

Referencing Named Places and Territories

If you are discussing a city, region, or geographical feature based on information from a text, the citation will typically refer to that text. However, if you are relying on the existence or attributes of a place as presented in a geographic work, you should cite that work. For instance, if you are using a historical atlas to determine the boundaries of a territory at a specific time, you would cite the atlas.

The citation would then follow the standard format for the source type (book, article, etc.) but might include a specific geographic reference within its description. The key is to attribute the information about the location to its source.

When to Cite a Geographic Location

You should cite a geographic location when:

- You are using specific details from a map, atlas, or geographic database (e.g., coordinates, distances, elevations).
- You are discussing the historical or political boundaries of a place as defined by a particular source.
- You are relying on a geographic source to define or identify a place.
- The location is not commonly known or its context in your argument requires specific attribution.

Common Challenges and Best Practices

Citing geographic information can present unique challenges, often stemming from the nature of the sources themselves. Maps can be updated, digital data can change, and the responsibility for creation may be distributed.

Ensuring Accuracy and Consistency

The paramount principle is accuracy. Double-check all details: names, dates, titles, and especially location identifiers. Inconsistencies in your citations can undermine the credibility of your work and frustrate your readers. Develop a system for tracking your geographic sources and ensure that your footnotes align with your bibliography entries.

Consistency is equally vital. Apply the same citation rules throughout your document. If you use one format for maps and another for digital databases, stick to those formats. This creates a professional and polished presentation.

Avoiding Common Errors in Geographic Citations

Several common errors can occur when citing geographic material:

- **Missing Location Identifiers:** Failing to specify page numbers, map numbers, or coordinates.
- **Vague Source Descriptions:** Not providing enough detail to distinguish between different editions or versions of a map or dataset.
- **Incorrectly Attributing Authorship:** Confusing the creator of the geographic data with the publisher of a derivative work.
- **Outdated URLs:** Not including access dates for online resources, which can lead to broken links.
- **Inconsistent Formatting:** Mixing up italics for titles, punctuation, and the order of elements.

By being mindful of these potential pitfalls and adhering to the principles outlined in this guide, you can ensure your Chicago style footnote geographic citation is both accurate and effective, serving as a robust testament to your research and scholarly rigor.

FAQ

Q: How do I cite a historical map found online in Chicago style?

A: For a historical map found online, you would typically cite the creator or repository of the original map (if known), the title of the map, the name of the website or archive, the URL, and the date of access. For example: "Jean-Baptiste Bourguignon d'Anville, 'Nouvellement dressée et divisée par Election [...]', c. 1740, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Gallica, accessed May 15, 2023, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53051346p>."

Q: What is the difference between citing a map and citing an atlas in Chicago style?

A: When citing a map, you focus on the individual map's title, creator, and publication details. When citing an atlas, you typically cite the atlas as a whole, similar to a book, including its title, edition, publisher, and year. If you reference a specific map within the atlas, you would include the map's title or number and its page or plate number within the atlas citation.

Q: Do I need to cite a commonly known geographic feature like the Amazon River?

A: You generally do not need to cite a widely known geographic feature if you are merely mentioning its existence or general location, as this is common knowledge. However, if you are using specific data about the river (e.g., its length, discharge rate, or historical naming conventions) from a particular source, you must cite that source.

Q: How do I cite a Google Maps location in a Chicago style footnote?

A: To cite a specific location on Google Maps, you would typically include the name of the place, "Google Maps," the date of access, and the URL. For instance: "'Central Park,' Google Maps, accessed May 15, 2023, <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Central+Park/@40.7828647,-73.9654486,13z>."

Q: What if the geographic data I am using is dynamic and frequently updated?

A: For dynamic geographic data, the date of access is crucial. You should also try to identify if there is a specific version number or date associated with the dataset you are using. Include this information along with the URL and access date. If the platform provides a persistent identifier (like a DOI for a dataset), use that if available.

Q: Should I include the scale of a map in my Chicago style footnote?

A: Yes, including the scale of a map is highly recommended, especially for cartographic resources, as it provides important context about the map's detail and scope. For example: "United States Geological Survey, 'Yosemite Valley,' 1:24,000 topographic map, 2010."

Q: What are the essential elements for citing a government-produced geographic dataset?

A: For government-produced geographic datasets, you need to identify the responsible government agency, the title of the dataset (often italicized), the publication or release date, any relevant accession numbers or identifiers, and the URL if accessed online, along with the access date. Example: "U.S. Census Bureau, 'TIGER/Line Shapefiles,' 2022, accessed May 15, 2023, <https://www.census.gov/geographies/mapping-files/time-series/geo/tiger-line-file.html>."

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