

chicago style footnotes example

The Chicago Manual of Style is a widely respected authority on academic and professional writing, and understanding its intricacies is crucial for producing polished, credible work. Among its most distinctive features are its footnote and endnote citation systems, which provide a clear and precise way to acknowledge sources. This article delves deeply into the practical application of these systems, offering a comprehensive guide to creating accurate Chicago style footnotes. We will explore the fundamental components of a footnote, examine common source types, and provide detailed examples for various materials, from books and journal articles to websites and archival documents. By mastering these elements, writers can enhance the clarity and authority of their research, ensuring proper attribution and allowing readers to easily verify information.

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Understanding Chicago Style Footnotes

The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) offers two primary citation systems: the NOTES and BIBLIOGRAPHY system and the AUTHOR-DATE system. This article focuses exclusively on the former, which utilizes footnotes or endnotes to cite sources. 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 the same purpose: to provide immediate or easily accessible source information for the reader and to avoid disrupting the flow of the main text with lengthy citations.

The core principle behind Chicago style footnotes is clarity and thoroughness. Each note should contain enough information for a reader to locate the original source without undue effort. This system is particularly favored in the humanities, such as literature, history, and the arts, where in-text commentary or extensive source explanation is common. The distinct advantage of footnotes lies in their immediacy; readers can instantly see where information originated without needing to flip to the back of the book or navigate separate pages.

Essential Components of a Chicago Style Footnote

Regardless of the source type, a Chicago style footnote generally includes several key pieces of information. The order and specific formatting of these elements are critical for adhering to the style guide. Understanding these components is the first step toward constructing accurate citations. Even a simple footnote requires careful attention to detail.

Author and Title Information

The note begins with the author's first name followed by their last name. This is a key difference from the bibliography, where the last name typically precedes the first. The title of the work is then provided, often italicized for books and articles within larger collections, or in quotation marks for shorter works like journal articles or chapters.

Publication Details

Essential publication details follow the title. For books, this includes the place of publication, the publisher's name, and the year of publication. For journal articles, it encompasses the journal title, volume number, issue number, and the year of publication, along with the page range of the article. For online sources, the website name and the URL are paramount.

Page Numbers

Crucially, a Chicago style footnote must include the specific page number(s) from which the cited information was drawn. This allows readers to find the exact location of the quote, paraphrased idea, or data within the source material. If citing a range of pages, a hyphen is used; if citing multiple discontinuous pages, commas separate the numbers.

Footnote Examples for Common Source Types

The true utility of understanding Chicago style footnotes comes from seeing them applied to various forms of sources. The following examples illustrate how to format citations for the most frequently encountered materials in academic and research writing.

Books

Citing a book in a footnote is a foundational skill. The format requires the author's first name first, followed by the title and then the publication details. This is how you would typically cite a complete book where you are referencing its content.

- First citation of a book: Jane Doe, *The History of the City* (New York: Academic Press, 2020), 45.
- Subsequent citation of the same book: Doe, *History of the City*, 102.
- Citation of a chapter in an edited book: John Smith, "Early Civilizations," in *Ancient Worlds: A Collection of Essays*, ed. Mary Brown (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 78-80.

Journal Articles

Journal articles are common in academic research, and their citation format differs slightly. The article title is typically placed in quotation marks, while the journal title is italicized. This distinguishes it from the citation of a book.

- First citation of a journal article: Robert Johnson, "The Impact of Technology on Education," *Journal of Modern Learning* 15, no. 2 (2021): 115.
- Subsequent citation of the same article: Johnson, "Impact of Technology," 120.
- Article accessed online: Sarah Lee, "Climate Change and Its Effects," *Environmental Science Quarterly* 22, no. 4 (2019): 305, <https://doi.org/10.1080/12345678.2019.1234567>.

Websites

Citing online sources requires careful attention to the information available. While URLs are essential, they are not always sufficient on their own. Providing the author or organization responsible for the content and the

date of publication or last update adds significant value.

- Website with a clear author: Emily White, "Understanding the Basics of SEO," Search Engine Watch, October 15, 2022, <https://www.searchenginewatch.com/basics-of-seo>.
- Website with an organization as author: The National Archives, "Digital Preservation Guidelines," last modified November 1, 2021, <https://www.archives.gov/preservation/digital-guidelines>.
- Web page with no date: Alex Green, "The Future of Artificial Intelligence," AI Today, accessed February 10, 2023, <https://www.aitoday.com/future-ai>.

Archival Materials

Archival citations can be more complex, often involving specific collection names, box numbers, and folder titles. The exact format can vary based on the archive's established practices, but Chicago style provides a framework.

- Manuscript collection: William Davis Papers, Box 10, Folder "Correspondence 1950-1955," Special Collections, University Library, 20.
- Unpublished letter: Letter from Eleanor Roosevelt to Adlai Stevenson, March 12, 1952, Eleanor Roosevelt Papers, Hyde Park, NY, Box 321, Folder "Stevenson."

Other Source Types

Chicago style can accommodate a wide array of source materials, including interviews, films, and reports. The underlying principle remains the same: provide sufficient information for retrieval.

- Interview: Interview with Maria Garcia, conducted by author, October 5, 2022, personal collection.
- Film: *The Documentary Film*, directed by John Doe, cinematography by Jane Smith (Hollywood: Film Productions, 2021).

- Report: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, *GDP Growth Trends* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 2019), 15.

Shortened Footnotes: When and How to Use Them

Once a source has been cited in full in a footnote, subsequent references to the same source can be shortened. This practice streamlines the citation process and prevents redundancy while still providing enough information for identification. The key is to include enough detail to distinguish the source from others previously cited.

The typical format for a shortened footnote includes the author's last name, a shortened version of the title (if it's a book or article), and the specific page number. For sources with multiple authors or very long titles, the editor's name or a more abbreviated title might be used, but consistency is paramount. The goal is to make it easily recognizable to the reader as a reference to a previously identified work.

- Shortened footnote for a book: Doe, *History of the City*, 150.
- Shortened footnote for a journal article: Johnson, "Impact of Technology," 135.
- Shortened footnote for a website: White, "Basics of SEO."

It is important to note that even with shortened footnotes, if the new citation refers to a different page than the previous one, that new page number must be clearly indicated. If the previous citation was to a specific chapter or section, and the new one is to a different part, the shortened form should still reflect that specificity.

The Role of the Bibliography

While footnotes provide immediate source attribution, a bibliography is also a crucial component of the Chicago style Notes and Bibliography system. The bibliography, typically placed at the end of the document, is an alphabetical

list of all the sources consulted and cited in the text. Unlike footnotes, the bibliography entries are usually presented in author-last-name-first format.

The bibliography serves as a comprehensive reference guide for the reader, allowing them to explore the research further. It also provides a holistic view of the author's research landscape. Every source cited in a footnote or endnote should generally appear in the bibliography, though the reverse is not always true – some sources may be consulted but not directly cited, and these may or may not be included depending on the author's intent and the assignment's requirements.

Common Mistakes to Avoid in Chicago Style Footnotes

Navigating the nuances of any citation style can lead to errors. Being aware of common pitfalls can help writers produce more accurate and professional work. Attention to detail is key in preventing these mistakes.

- Incorrect order of names: Forgetting to reverse the author's name (first name first) in footnotes, as opposed to the bibliography.
- Missing publication details: Omitting the publisher, place of publication, or date for books, or volume/issue numbers for journals.
- Incorrect punctuation: Using commas instead of periods, or vice versa, in citation elements, or improperly using quotation marks and italics.
- Inconsistent formatting: Varying the format for similar source types throughout the document.
- Forgetting page numbers: Failing to include specific page references, especially for direct quotes or paraphrased material.
- Using "ibid." incorrectly: Misapplying "ibid." (meaning "in the same place") to sources that are not immediately consecutive.

Adhering to the guidelines for Chicago style footnotes, including using

shortened forms correctly and ensuring a comprehensive bibliography, contributes significantly to the credibility and academic rigor of any written work. Precise citation is not merely a formality; it is a fundamental aspect of academic integrity and effective communication.

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

A: The primary difference lies in their placement. Footnotes appear at the bottom of the page where the reference is made, while endnotes are compiled in a numbered list at the end of the document. Both contain the same citation information.

Q: When should I use a full footnote versus a shortened footnote?

A: A full footnote is used the first time a source is cited. Subsequent references to the same source can use a shortened footnote, which typically includes the author's last name, a shortened title, and the page number.

Q: Do I need to include the URL for every online source in a Chicago style footnote?

A: While it's good practice to include the URL for online sources, it's most crucial when the source might be difficult to locate otherwise. For stable online sources with DOIs, the DOI is preferred over a URL.

Q: How do I cite a source that has multiple authors in a Chicago style footnote?

A: For two authors, list both names: Jane Doe and John Smith. For three or more authors, list the first author's name followed by "et al." in the footnote, but list all authors in the bibliography.

Q: What is the correct format for citing a newspaper article in a Chicago style footnote?

A: A newspaper article citation typically includes the author (if known), the article title in quotation marks, the newspaper title in italics, the date of publication, and the page number. Example: John Doe, "Local Election Results," *Chicago Tribune*, November 7, 2022, A1.

Q: Should I italicize book titles and journal titles in footnotes?

A: Yes, in Chicago style footnotes, book titles and journal titles are generally italicized. Article titles and chapter titles within larger works are typically enclosed in quotation marks.

Q: How do I cite a source that has no publication date?

A: For sources lacking a publication date, use "n.d." (for no date) in place of the year. Example: Jane Doe, *The Unknown History* (New York: Unknown Press, n.d.), 50.

Q: What is the purpose of the bibliography in the Chicago style Notes and Bibliography system?

A: The bibliography provides an alphabetical list of all sources cited in the text, allowing readers to easily find and consult the original works. It offers a comprehensive overview of the research.

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