

chicago style image citation style chicago

Chicago Style Image Citation Style Chicago: A Comprehensive Guide

chicago style image citation style chicago is a crucial aspect of academic and professional writing, particularly when incorporating visual materials. Understanding how to properly cite images in Chicago style ensures academic integrity, avoids plagiarism, and allows your readers to locate the original sources of your visual content. This guide will delve into the nuances of Chicago style image citation, covering everything from the fundamental components of a citation to specific scenarios for various image types and digital platforms. We will explore the differences between footnote/endnote and author-date citation systems within Chicago, and provide practical advice for citing artwork, photographs, and online images. Mastering the Chicago style image citation requirements will elevate the credibility and professionalism of your work.

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Understanding the Basics of Chicago Style Image Citation

Properly citing images within the Chicago Manual of Style (CMS) is essential for any researcher or writer who uses visual elements in their work. The Chicago style recognizes that images, like textual sources, have origins and creators, and therefore, deserve attribution. This process not only gives credit where credit is due but also enables your audience to verify the information presented and explore the visual material further. The overarching principle is to provide enough detail so that the image can be identified and located by someone else.

The Chicago style offers two primary systems for documentation: the notes and bibliography system (often referred to as footnote/endnote style) and the author-date system. Both systems have slightly different approaches to image citations, though the core information required remains largely consistent. Regardless of which system you employ, the goal is to be clear, consistent, and thorough. Failing to cite images correctly can have serious academic and professional repercussions, including accusations of plagiarism.

Key Components of a Chicago Style Image Citation

Whether you are using footnotes/endnotes or the author-date system, several key pieces of information are generally required for a comprehensive Chicago style image citation. These elements help to uniquely identify the image and its source, making it traceable for your readers. The exact order and formatting may vary slightly depending on the specific system and the nature of the image, but understanding these core components is fundamental.

The essential elements typically include:

- The creator's name (artist, photographer, designer, etc.).
- The title of the artwork or image.
- The date of creation.
- The medium or type of image (e.g., oil on canvas, photograph, digital illustration).
- The dimensions of the work (if relevant and available).
- The current location of the artwork (e.g., museum, gallery, archive, or personal collection).
- The accession number or collection identifier, if applicable.
- The source from which the image was accessed (e.g., book title, website URL, exhibition catalog).
- The date of access for online images.

Including as many of these details as possible will ensure your citation is robust and informative, adhering to the meticulous standards of Chicago style.

Footnote/Endnote Citation for Images in Chicago Style

The notes and bibliography system, common in humanities disciplines, uses numbered footnotes or endnotes within the text, with a corresponding bibliography at the end of the work. Image citations in this system follow a specific format within the notes and a slightly different structure in the bibliography.

In the footnote or endnote, the citation typically begins with the creator's name (first name first), followed by the title of the work in italics, the date of creation, the medium, and then the source information. The source information will include details about where the image was found, such as a book, exhibition catalog, or website, and importantly, the page number or URL if applicable. The date of access is crucial for online sources.

For example, a footnote might look like this:

1. Vincent van Gogh, *The Starry Night*, 1889, oil on canvas, 73.7 cm × 92.1 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York. Accessed September 20, 2023, <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/79802>.

In the bibliography, the order of the creator's name is reversed (last name, first name), and the

citation is presented in a slightly more condensed format, often without the date of access unless it's a standalone digital resource. The bibliography entry for the above example would appear similar to:
Van Gogh, Vincent. *The Starry Night*. 1889. Oil on canvas, 73.7 cm × 92.1 cm. Museum of Modern Art, New York. Accessed September 20, 2023. <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/79802>.

Author-Date Citation for Images in Chicago Style

The author-date system, more prevalent in social sciences, uses parenthetical in-text citations that include the author's last name and the year of publication, followed by a reference list at the end of the document. Image citations in this system adapt to this structure.

Within the text, an image would be followed by an in-text citation, typically in parentheses. For example, if you were discussing Van Gogh's *The Starry Night*, your in-text citation might be (Van Gogh 1889). When citing an image that is part of a larger work, you would include the page number or figure number, such as (Van Gogh 1889, fig. 3).

The reference list at the end of the document will contain full bibliographic information for all cited sources. For images, this list entry will include the creator's last name, first name, the title of the artwork (in italics), the date of creation, the medium, the institution where it is housed, and the source from which it was accessed (e.g., book title, website URL). The date of access is also important for online resources.

An entry in the reference list might appear as:

Van Gogh, Vincent. 1889. *The Starry Night*. Oil on canvas, 73.7 cm × 92.1 cm. Museum of Modern Art, New York. Accessed September 20, 2023. <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/79802>.

Citing Specific Types of Images in Chicago Style

The Chicago Manual of Style acknowledges that different types of visual materials require slightly varied citation formats. The core principles of identifying the creator, title, date, and source remain constant, but specific details may be added or adjusted.

When citing images, it's essential to consider whether the image is a primary source (e.g., an original artwork) or a secondary source (e.g., a reproduction of artwork in a book or on a website). The citation should reflect the format in which you encountered the image.

Artwork and Museum Collections

Citing artwork, whether it's a painting, sculpture, or other fine art, typically involves identifying the artist, the title of the piece (in italics), the year of creation, the medium, and the current location of the artwork. If the artwork is housed in a museum or gallery, you should include the name of the institution and the city. An accession number, if available, adds further specificity.

For a footnote/endnote:

2. Claude Monet, *Impression, Sunrise*, 1872, oil on canvas, 48 cm × 63 cm, Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris. © Musée Marmottan Monet.

For a bibliography or reference list entry:

Monet, Claude. *Impression, Sunrise*. 1872. Oil on canvas, 48 cm × 63 cm. Musée Marmottan Monet,

Paris. © Musée Marmottan Monet.

If you are reproducing a piece of artwork from a book or exhibition catalog, your citation should reflect that secondary source, including the book/catalog title, editor/author, publication details, and page number, in addition to the artwork's original information.

Photographs and Archival Images

Citing photographs requires attention to the photographer, the subject matter, the date the photograph was taken, and the collection or archive where it is held. Archival materials often have specific collection names and box or item numbers that are crucial for accurate identification.

For a footnote/endnote, a photograph might be cited as:

3. Dorothea Lange, *Migrant Mother*, Nipomo, California, March 1936, photograph, gelatin silver print, 33.6 x 25.3 cm, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., FSA/OWI Collection, LC-USF34-T01-004640-E.

In the bibliography or reference list:

Lange, Dorothea. *Migrant Mother*, Nipomo, California. March 1936. Photograph, gelatin silver print, 33.6 x 25.3 cm. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C. FSA/OWI Collection, LC-USF34-T01-004640-E.

It is vital to include all identifiers provided by the archive, as these are often the only means for others to locate the specific image.

Online Images and Digital Media

Citing images found online or in digital media presents unique challenges, primarily due to the ephemeral nature of digital content and the ease with which it can be altered or removed. Chicago style emphasizes providing a stable URL and the date of access.

When citing an image from a website, include the creator's name (if known), the title of the image or page, the website name, the publisher (if different from the website name), the date of publication or last update (if available), and the URL. Crucially, you must include the date you accessed the material.

For a footnote/endnote:

4. "The Great Wave off Kanagawa." Artist: Katsushika Hokusai. Wikimedia Commons. Accessed September 20, 2023.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hokusai_The_Great_Wave_off_Kanagawa.jpg.

For a bibliography or reference list:

"The Great Wave off Kanagawa." Artist: Katsushika Hokusai. Wikimedia Commons. Accessed September 20, 2023.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hokusai_The_Great_Wave_off_Kanagawa.jpg.

If the image is embedded in a larger article or publication online, you would cite the article or publication first, and then the image within that context.

Best Practices for Chicago Style Image Citation

Adhering to the Chicago style image citation guidelines requires diligence and attention to detail. Beyond understanding the basic formats, certain best practices can significantly enhance the quality and credibility of your work. Consistency is paramount; once you choose a citation system (footnotes/endnotes or author-date), stick to it throughout your document.

Here are some key best practices:

- **Prioritize Original Sources:** Whenever possible, cite the original source of an image rather than a reproduction. If you are discussing a painting, cite the painting itself and its location, not just a picture of it in a book unless you are specifically analyzing the reproduction.
- **Be Specific with URLs:** For online images, provide the most direct URL to the image or the page where it is located. Avoid generic links to the homepage of a website.
- **Include All Available Information:** The more information you can provide about an image, the better. If you have the dimensions, medium, accession number, or any other identifying details, include them.
- **Document Your Access Date:** For all online sources, including images, always record the date you accessed the material. This is critical because web content can change or disappear.
- **Check for Permissions:** While not strictly part of the citation format, remember that copyright laws still apply. Ensure you have the necessary permissions to reproduce images, especially for publication.
- **Consult the Manual:** For complex or unusual cases, always refer to the latest edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style* or consult with your instructor or editor.

By incorporating these practices, you will not only meet the requirements of Chicago style but also demonstrate a thorough and responsible approach to using visual sources in your writing.

Frequently Asked Questions about Chicago Style Image Citation Style Chicago

Q: What is the difference between citing an image in a footnote versus the bibliography in Chicago style?

A: In the footnote/endnote system of Chicago style, the creator's name appears first (first name, then last name), and the citation includes more descriptive phrases like "Image courtesy of." In the bibliography, the creator's name is reversed (last name, first name), and the citation is generally more concise and presented as a full entry.

Q: Do I need to cite every image I use in Chicago style, even if it's from a widely known source?

A: Yes, according to Chicago style, you must cite all images you use, regardless of how well-known the source might be. This includes images from popular websites, well-known artworks, or commonly referenced photographs. Proper attribution is always required.

Q: How do I cite a screenshot I took myself from a website for my Chicago style paper?

A: If you create a screenshot yourself, you are the creator. You would cite it by indicating that it is a screenshot and providing the source website's URL and the date of access. You might also include a brief description of the content shown in the screenshot.

Q: What if I can't find the creator or date for an image I want to cite in Chicago style?

A: If the creator or date is unknown, you should indicate this in your citation. For example, you might use "n.d." for "no date" and "Anonymous" or "Unknown creator" if that information is truly unavailable after a diligent search. Always provide as much information as you can find.

Q: Does Chicago style require me to cite images that are used for purely decorative purposes?

A: While Chicago style emphasizes citing all visual material, the necessity of a full citation for purely decorative images that do not convey substantive information might be waived in some contexts, particularly in less formal academic papers or publications. However, for clarity and to err on the side of caution, it is generally best practice to cite all images. Always check specific guidelines from your instructor or publisher.

Q: How do I cite an image that I found on social media in Chicago style?

A: Citing images from social media requires careful attention. Include the username of the poster, the title of the post (if any), the platform (e.g., Twitter, Instagram), the date of the post, and the URL. Also, include the date of access. Be aware that privacy settings on social media can affect accessibility.

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