

chicago style indirect citation format

The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) is a widely respected style guide that offers comprehensive rules for academic and professional writing. A crucial aspect of academic integrity and scholarly communication is proper citation, and understanding the Chicago style indirect citation format is essential for avoiding plagiarism and giving credit to original sources. This article will delve deep into the nuances of the Chicago style indirect citation, covering its purpose, how to implement it in both notes and bibliography entries, and common pitfalls to avoid. We will explore the structure of parenthetical citations and footnotes/endnotes, as well as their corresponding bibliography entries, providing clear examples and explanations for various source types. Mastering this format will enhance the credibility and professionalism of your written work.

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Understanding Indirect Citations in Chicago Style

An indirect citation, also known as a secondhand source, refers to the practice of referencing a source that you have encountered through another source. In essence, you are citing a work that quotes or discusses a primary source, but you have not directly read or consulted the primary source yourself. The Chicago Manual of Style provides specific guidelines for how to handle these indirect citations to ensure clarity and accuracy in academic writing. It is important to note that while indirect citation is sometimes necessary, it is always preferable to consult the original source whenever possible.

The Purpose of Indirect Citations

The primary purpose of any citation, including indirect ones, is to provide your readers with the necessary information to locate the sources you have consulted. This upholds academic honesty by giving credit to the original authors and preventing plagiarism. When using an indirect citation, you are acknowledging that the information you are presenting was originally stated or researched by someone else, even if you are accessing it through a secondary account. The Chicago style indirect citation format specifically aims to guide readers to the secondary source where the information was found, and, if feasible, to the original source that was cited within the secondary one.

When Indirect Citation is Appropriate

There are several situations where employing an indirect citation might be necessary or even advantageous. These often arise when the original source is out of print, exceptionally difficult to obtain, written in a language the writer does not understand, or when the secondary source provides a particularly insightful analysis or quotation from the original. However, it is crucial to exercise caution and avoid over-reliance on indirect citations, as they can sometimes introduce errors or misinterpretations from the intermediary source.

The Risks of Indirect Citation

Using indirect sources carries inherent risks. The secondary source might misinterpret, misquote, or present the original author's ideas out of context. This can lead to the unintentional propagation of inaccuracies in your own work. Therefore, if the original source can be located, it is always best practice to cite it directly. The Chicago Manual of Style strongly encourages this direct engagement with primary materials.

Parenthetical Citations in Chicago Style

In the Chicago Manual of Style, there are two primary systems of citation: the notes-bibliography system and the author-date system. This article focuses on the notes-bibliography system, which is more common in the humanities. Within this system, parenthetical citations are used sparingly, primarily for referencing authors who are mentioned directly in the text, or for brief references when the author-date system is in use. However, for indirect citations in the notes-bibliography system, the preferred method involves footnotes or endnotes, followed by a corresponding bibliography entry.

Structure of Parenthetical Citations

When parenthetical citations are used in Chicago style (more common in the author-date system, but applicable for specific situations in notes-bibliography), they typically include the author's last name and the page number. For indirect citations using this system, the author of the work you consulted is listed, along with the page number. If you also know the original author and publication details, it can be included as well, but this is less common in the notes-bibliography system.

Common Parenthetical Citation Examples

While less common for indirect citations in the notes-bibliography system, a general parenthetical format would look like this: (Author Last Name, Page Number). For instance, if you encountered a quote by Smith within a work by Jones, and you were using a parenthetical system, it might appear as (Jones, 45), with further details in the bibliography. However, the notes-bibliography system prioritizes footnotes/endnotes for indirect citations.

Footnotes and Endnotes in Chicago Style

The notes-bibliography system, central to understanding the Chicago style indirect citation format, relies heavily on footnotes or endnotes. Footnotes appear at the bottom of the page where the citation occurs, while endnotes are compiled at the end of the document. Both serve the same purpose: to provide detailed citation information for the reader without disrupting the flow of the main text. For indirect citations, these notes are crucial for indicating that you did not consult the original source directly.

The Mechanics of Footnotes and Endnotes

A superscript Arabic numeral is placed in the text immediately after the relevant quotation or paraphrased information. This numeral corresponds to a footnote at the bottom of the page or an endnote in the endnotes section. The first time a source is cited, the full bibliographic information is provided in the note. Subsequent citations of the same source use a shortened form, typically the author's last name, a shortened title (if necessary), and the page number.

Footnote/Endnote Structure for Indirect Citations

When citing an indirect source, the Chicago Manual of Style advises that you should indicate that the information comes from a secondary source. The standard practice is to include the author and title of the secondary source you consulted, followed by a phrase like "as cited in" or "quoted in," and then the author, title, and page number of the original source. This clearly guides your reader to both the source you read and the original material being discussed.

The general structure for an indirect citation in a footnote or endnote is as follows:

- Author of Secondary Source, "Title of Chapter or Article" (if applicable), in *Title of Book or Journal*, edited by Editor's Name (if applicable), page number(s) of secondary source. The phrase "as cited in" or "quoted in" will precede the details of the original source.
- Original Author, *Title of Original Book* (Place of Publication: Publisher, Year), page number(s) of original source.

Examples of Footnotes/Endnotes for Indirect Citations

Let's assume you encountered a quotation by John Smith in a book by Jane Doe. Smith's original work is titled "Theories of Ancient Civilizations" published in 1990, and Doe's book is "Modern Interpretations of History," published in 2020, on page 75. The quotation from Smith appears on page 30 of Doe's book.

- **First citation:** Jane Doe, "Modern Interpretations of History" (New York: Academic Press, 2020), 75, quoting John Smith, *Theories of Ancient Civilizations* (Chicago: University Press, 1990), 30.
- **Subsequent citation (shortened):** Doe, "Modern Interpretations of History," 75.

Another example could be citing a journal article by Smith found within a review article by Doe. If Smith's article is "Early Discoveries" in the *Journal of Archaeology* (2015) and Doe reviewed it in "Reviews of Recent Finds" in *Historical Quarterly* (2022) on page 50, referencing Smith's idea on page 52 of Doe's article:

- **First citation:** Jane Doe, "Reviews of Recent Finds," *Historical Quarterly* 65, no. 2 (2022): 50, citing John Smith, "Early Discoveries," *Journal of Archaeology* 30, no. 1 (2015): [original page number if known, otherwise omit].
- **Subsequent citation (shortened):** Doe, "Reviews of Recent Finds," 50.

Bibliography Entries for Indirect Citations

The bibliography is a comprehensive list of all sources cited in your work, presented alphabetically by the author's last name. For indirect citations, the bibliography entry primarily lists the secondary source that you actually consulted. While the footnote or endnote clearly indicates the original source, the bibliography entry focuses on the material that directly informed your research. The goal is to allow your readers to find the sources you read and used.

General Principles of Bibliography Formatting

Bibliography entries are typically presented in a hanging indent format, meaning the first line of each entry is flush with the left margin, and subsequent lines are indented. The order of information is crucial, and consistency is key. For indirect citations, the entry reflects the secondary source, with a note about the original source often included within the entry or, more commonly, handled solely within the notes.

Bibliography Entry Structure

The Chicago Manual of Style's approach to indirect sources in the bibliography emphasizes listing the source you directly accessed. Therefore, the bibliography entry will be for the author of the secondary work. The phrase "as cited in" or "quoted in" is generally reserved for the notes, not the bibliography entry itself, unless the original source is also cited within your bibliography for other reasons.

The structure for a bibliography entry of a secondary source that cites an original source would primarily focus on the secondary source:

- Author Last Name, First Name. *Title of Secondary Book*. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year.
- Author Last Name, First Name. "Title of Secondary Article." *Title of Journal* Volume, no. Issue (Year): Page Range.

Examples of Bibliography Entries for Indirect Citations

Using the previous examples:

For Jane Doe's book, "Modern Interpretations of History," which quoted John Smith:

- Doe, Jane. *Modern Interpretations of History*. New York: Academic Press, 2020.

Note that the bibliography entry does not typically include the original source's details directly in the main entry. This information is handled by the footnote/endnote.

For Jane Doe's review article in "Historical Quarterly":

- Doe, Jane. "Reviews of Recent Finds." *Historical Quarterly* 65, no. 2 (2022): 48–55.

Again, the focus is on the source you read. The indication that this source cites another is contained within the footnote or endnote itself.

Citing Indirect Sources When the Original is Unavailable

In situations where the original source is truly unobtainable, the Chicago style indirect citation format provides a clear method to acknowledge this. The "as cited in" or "quoted in" phrasing in the footnote or endnote is essential here. It explicitly informs your reader that you are relying on a secondary account and have not directly engaged with the primary material. This is a critical distinction for maintaining scholarly rigor and transparency. It's important to reiterate that this should be a last resort rather than a common practice.

Navigating Multiple Authors and Complex Sources

Chicago style offers specific guidance for citing works with multiple authors, edited volumes, and other complex source types, which also applies to indirect citations. When the secondary source itself has multiple authors or editors, their names should be listed according to the standard Chicago format in both the notes and bibliography. Similarly, if the original source you are indirectly citing is a chapter in an edited book or a journal article, ensure all relevant publication details for that specific component are included in the note, as far as they are available from the secondary source.

For indirect citations involving complex original sources, the note might become quite detailed. For example, if Doe quotes a chapter by Smith from an edited collection:

- Jane Doe, *Modern Interpretations of History* (New York: Academic Press, 2020), 75, quoting John Smith, "The Nature of Ancient Pottery," in *Essays on Historical Artifacts*, ed. Robert Jones (London: British Museum Press, 2005), 120.

The bibliography entry would still primarily list Doe's book. The complexity is managed within the notes to maintain clarity.

Key Takeaways for Chicago Style Indirect Citations

Mastering the Chicago style indirect citation format involves understanding a few core principles. Always prioritize consulting the original source if possible. When indirect citation is necessary, use footnotes or endnotes to clearly indicate this. The note should specify the secondary source you read and, crucially, include the phrase "as cited in" or "quoted in" followed by the details of the original source. The bibliography entry should list the secondary source that you actually consulted. By adhering to these guidelines, you ensure accuracy, transparency, and academic integrity in your writing.

FAQ

Q: What is the primary difference between a direct and an indirect citation in Chicago style?

A: A direct citation provides information from a source that you have personally read and consulted. An indirect citation, on the other hand, references information from a source that you have encountered through another source, meaning you have not read the original material directly.

Q: When should I use an indirect citation in my Chicago-style paper?

A: You should use an indirect citation when the original source is unavailable, out of print, or when the secondary source you are using provides a particularly valuable interpretation or quotation from the original that is difficult to find elsewhere. However, it is always best practice to consult the original source if at all possible.

Q: How do I format an indirect citation in a footnote or endnote according to Chicago style?

A: In Chicago style's notes-bibliography system, an indirect citation in a footnote or endnote typically includes the author and title of the secondary source you consulted, followed by "as cited in" or "quoted in,"

and then the author, title, and page number of the original source. For example: Jane Doe, *Modern History* (2020), 45, quoting John Smith, *Ancient Civilizations* (1995), 112.

Q: What information should be included in the bibliography entry for an indirect citation?

A: For an indirect citation, your bibliography entry should primarily list the secondary source that you actually consulted. The details of the original source are typically omitted from the main bibliography entry and are instead fully presented in the footnote or endnote.

Q: Can I use the phrase "see" for indirect citations in Chicago style?

A: While the phrase "see" can be used in Chicago style to direct readers to a related source, for indirect citations, the phrases "as cited in" or "quoted in" are more precise and are the preferred terminology to indicate that you have not consulted the original source directly.

Q: What happens if I cannot find the page number of the original source when using an indirect citation?

A: If you cannot find the page number of the original source, you should omit it from the citation. However, if you can locate the original work, making an effort to find the specific page number is highly recommended for accuracy and completeness.

Q: Does the Chicago style author-date system handle indirect citations differently than the notes-bibliography system?

A: Yes, while the core principle of indicating a secondhand source remains, the formatting differs. In the author-date system, parenthetical citations might look like (Smith, as cited in Doe, 2020, 45). The bibliography entry would still focus on Doe, with the indication of the indirect source being handled within the parenthetical or a note. However, the notes-bibliography system is more common for indirect citations using the "as cited in" phrasing.

Q: What are the potential pitfalls of relying too heavily on indirect citations?

A: Relying too heavily on indirect citations can lead to the propagation of errors or misinterpretations made by the secondary source. It can also diminish the depth and originality of your research, as you are not engaging directly with the primary material. It is always best to consult original sources whenever

feasible.

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