

chicago style indirect quotation guide

The Chicago Manual of Style is a comprehensive guide for academic and professional writing, and understanding its nuances for indirect quotations is crucial for clear and accurate attribution. A Chicago style indirect quotation guide is essential for anyone working with source material, ensuring that borrowed ideas, paraphrased thoughts, and summarized arguments are properly integrated into their own work without plagiarism. This article will delve deep into the specifics of handling indirect quotations according to Chicago style, covering when to use them, how to introduce them, and the importance of clear citation. We will explore the differences between direct and indirect quotes, the grammatical structures involved, and the necessary bibliographic information. By the end of this guide, you will possess a thorough understanding of how to effectively incorporate indirect quotations in your Chicago style papers, theses, dissertations, and publications, enhancing both the credibility and clarity of your writing.

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Understanding Indirect Quotations in Chicago Style

An indirect quotation, also known as reported speech or paraphrase, conveys the substance of another person's words or ideas in your own phrasing. Unlike a direct quotation, which uses the exact words of the original source enclosed in quotation marks, an indirect quotation is a summary or restatement. In Chicago style, the primary goal when using indirect quotations is to accurately represent the original idea while clearly indicating its source. This distinction is fundamental to academic integrity, preventing accidental plagiarism and giving credit where it is due. Mastering the art of the indirect quotation is as vital as understanding direct quotation rules, as it allows for smoother integration of source material into your own narrative flow.

Chicago style offers flexibility in how indirect quotations are presented, but consistency and clarity remain paramount. The author's intention, the context of the original statement, and the specific academic discipline often influence the best approach. Whether you are paraphrasing a complex theory, summarizing a historical event, or reporting the findings of a study, the principles of accurate representation and proper citation apply universally. This section lays the groundwork for understanding the core principles governing indirect quotations within the extensive framework of The Chicago Manual of Style.

When to Use Indirect Quotations

Indirect quotations are invaluable tools for writers seeking to integrate source material seamlessly into their own prose. They are particularly useful when the precise wording of the original source is not essential, but the idea or information itself is. For instance, if a source presents a lengthy explanation of a concept, paraphrasing it in your own words can often make the information more accessible to your audience and better fit the argumentative flow of your paper. This allows you to maintain your voice while still drawing upon the expertise and findings of others. Furthermore, using indirect quotations can help you avoid over-reliance on direct quotes, which can sometimes disrupt the rhythm and coherence of your writing.

Another significant advantage of employing indirect quotations is their ability to condense information. When a source contains a great deal of detail that is not all relevant to your specific point, a well-crafted indirect quotation can extract the core idea efficiently. This is crucial for maintaining conciseness and focus in your arguments. It demonstrates a deeper understanding of the source material, as you are not just copying words but internalizing and re-articulating the concepts. Therefore, recognizing when an indirect quotation is more appropriate than a direct one is a key skill for any researcher or writer aiming for sophisticated engagement with their sources.

Summarizing or Explaining Complex Ideas

When dealing with intricate theories, abstract concepts, or detailed explanations, indirect quotations are often the preferred method for conveying the essence of the original author's contribution. Rather than reproducing a dense passage verbatim, paraphrasing allows you to distill the core meaning into simpler, more digestible terms that align with your own writing style and your reader's comprehension level. This process requires a thorough understanding of the source material, ensuring that your interpretation accurately reflects the original author's intent without distortion or oversimplification.

For example, if a philosopher discusses a nuanced ethical dilemma, you might use an indirect quotation to explain their proposed resolution to the problem. This not only demonstrates your grasp of the philosophical argument but also integrates the idea smoothly into your own line of reasoning. It is important, however, to ensure that your paraphrase captures the critical elements of the original argument. If specific terminology is vital or if the original phrasing carries a particular weight, a direct quotation might be more appropriate. The decision hinges on whether the clarity and conciseness gained through paraphrasing outweigh the potential loss of nuance or specific linguistic impact.

Condensing Information for Brevity

In academic and professional writing, conciseness is often a virtue. Indirect quotations are excellent for summarizing lengthy passages or condensing multiple ideas from a single source into a more manageable statement. This is

particularly helpful when you need to provide background information or context without bogging down your narrative with extensive verbatim quotes. By skillfully paraphrasing, you can extract the most pertinent information and present it efficiently, thereby respecting your reader's time and maintaining the momentum of your argument.

Consider a historical account that spans several pages detailing a specific event. If your focus is on the event's impact rather than the intricate blow-by-blow, you can use an indirect quotation to summarize the key actions and decisions that led to the outcome. This demonstrates your ability to synthesize information and extract its essential meaning. It is crucial, however, to avoid the temptation to oversimplify to the point of misrepresentation. Your paraphrase should remain faithful to the spirit and facts of the original source, even as you shorten and rephrase it.

Integrating Source Material Smoothly

Direct quotations, while powerful, can sometimes interrupt the flow of your writing, especially if they are lengthy or use language that differs significantly from your own. Indirect quotations, on the other hand, can be woven more seamlessly into your prose, allowing you to maintain a consistent voice and argumentative trajectory. This is because you are rephrasing the borrowed idea in your own words and sentence structures, which naturally fits better with the surrounding text. The goal is to have the source material serve your argument without drawing undue attention to itself.

For instance, when introducing a researcher's findings that support your thesis, you might use an indirect quotation to explain what they discovered. This allows you to frame their work within your own argument, highlighting its relevance and connecting it to your broader discussion. A smooth integration means that the reader encounters the source's idea without a jarring shift in style or tone. It signifies that you have truly internalized the information and are now using it as part of your own intellectual contribution.

Introducing Indirect Quotations

The introduction of an indirect quotation is as important as the quotation itself. It sets the context, attributes the idea to its original source, and signals to the reader that they are about to encounter information that originates from elsewhere. In Chicago style, this introduction typically involves a signal phrase that names the author and often includes a verb indicating how the information is being presented (e.g., "argues," "explains," "notes," "states"). The goal is to make the attribution clear and unambiguous, ensuring proper academic integrity and allowing readers to locate the original source if they wish to consult it.

The choice of introductory verb can subtly influence how the borrowed idea is perceived. Verbs like "argues" or "contends" suggest a more forceful assertion, while "suggests" or "observes" imply a more tentative or descriptive statement. Selecting the appropriate verb helps maintain the original nuance of the source material while integrating it into your own analysis. This careful introduction is the first step in correctly using and

citing indirect quotations according to Chicago style guidelines.

Using Signal Phrases

Signal phrases are the connective tissue between your own writing and the ideas you are borrowing indirectly. They serve as a clear indicator that the following statement or idea is not your original thought but comes from an external source. A typical signal phrase in Chicago style includes the author's name, followed by a verb that introduces the quotation, and sometimes the title of the work if it helps clarify the source. For example, one might write, "According to Smith, the study found that..." or "Jones explains that the historical context led to..."

The effectiveness of a signal phrase lies in its clarity and conciseness. It should be straightforward and avoid ambiguity. When paraphrasing, the signal phrase is essential because there are no quotation marks to mark the borrowed material. The reader relies entirely on the signal phrase and the subsequent citation to understand that the information is attributed. The verb chosen for the signal phrase should accurately reflect the nature of the author's contribution—whether they are asserting, analyzing, describing, or suggesting something. This precision is key to maintaining academic honesty and providing accurate representation of source material.

Attributing Ideas to Authors

Accurate attribution is the bedrock of academic integrity, and this principle extends rigorously to indirect quotations. When you paraphrase or summarize an idea from a source, you must clearly state who originally put forth that idea. This is typically achieved through the use of signal phrases that explicitly name the author. For example, instead of just presenting a paraphrased point, you would preface it with something like, "As historian Sarah Lee argues in her book..." This direct acknowledgment leaves no room for doubt about the origin of the information. Failure to attribute indirectly quoted material is a form of plagiarism, even if unintentional.

It is also important to consider how much attribution is needed. If you are drawing several consecutive points from the same source, you do not need to re-attribute every single sentence. However, once you shift to discussing a different idea or move to a new source, a new signal phrase and citation will be necessary. The principle is to ensure that at any given point in your text, the reader can readily identify the origin of the ideas being presented. This continuous clarity is what defines ethical scholarly practice and adheres to Chicago style's stringent requirements.

Grammatical Considerations for Indirect Quotations

When incorporating indirect quotations, grammatical accuracy is paramount. While you are rephrasing the original source in your own words, the sentence structure and grammatical rules of your own writing must be followed

meticulously. This includes ensuring that the verb tense is appropriate for reported speech and that the overall sentence remains coherent and grammatically sound. Unlike direct quotations that are often encased verbatim, indirect quotations require a more integrated grammatical approach, blending the source's idea with your own sentence construction.

The way you introduce and embed the indirect quotation within your sentence will dictate the grammatical flow. Often, indirect quotations will follow reporting verbs like "said," "stated," "explained," "argued," "suggested," "claimed," and "reported." The tense of these verbs can vary depending on whether you are reporting something that happened in the past or describing a general truth. Understanding these grammatical nuances ensures that your writing is not only accurate in terms of content attribution but also stylistically polished and grammatically correct, adhering to the high standards of Chicago style.

Verb Tense in Reported Speech

The verb tense used in reporting speech, which forms the basis of indirect quotations, is a key grammatical consideration in Chicago style. Typically, when reporting speech or ideas from a past source, the reporting verb itself will be in the past tense (e.g., "Smith stated that..."). However, the tense of the verb within the reported clause (the indirect quotation itself) often shifts to reflect the original tense, but with a specific rule: if the original statement was in the present tense and expresses a general truth or fact, it often remains in the present tense even when reported in the past. For example, if the original source said, "The Earth is round," you would report it as, "Smith stated that the Earth is round."

If the original statement was in the past tense and you are reporting it in the past, the reported clause's verb will often shift to the past perfect tense. For instance, if the original source said, "The company launched its product last year," you might report it as, "Jones explained that the company had launched its product the previous year." However, this past perfect shift is not always mandatory if the context makes the timeline clear. The primary goal is to ensure clarity and accuracy in conveying the original meaning. Chicago style emphasizes logical consistency and readability, so while these are general rules, context and clarity should always guide your grammatical choices.

Sentence Structure and Flow

When incorporating an indirect quotation, the way it is grammatically embedded within your sentence significantly impacts the overall flow and readability of your text. Unlike direct quotations, which are often set apart, indirect quotations are meant to blend in. This means that your sentence structure must accommodate the paraphrased idea smoothly. You might introduce the indirect quotation with a subordinate clause, a participial phrase, or simply as the object of a reporting verb.

For example, instead of writing, "The author says. The data shows a significant trend," you would integrate it more fluidly: "The author notes that the data shows a significant trend." This creates a more cohesive and

sophisticated sentence. Pay attention to how the pronoun references, verb agreements, and conjunctions connect the indirect quotation to the rest of your sentence. A well-integrated indirect quotation should feel like a natural extension of your own thought, seamlessly supported by the external source. This requires careful attention to sentence construction to ensure grammatical correctness and stylistic elegance.

Citing Indirect Quotations: Author-Date System

The Chicago Manual of Style offers two primary citation systems: the notes and bibliography system and the author-date system. When using the author-date system for indirect quotations, the process is straightforward and prioritizes in-text citations for immediate reference. Every time you paraphrase, summarize, or otherwise report an idea from a source indirectly, you must follow it with an in-text citation. This citation typically includes the author's last name, the year of publication, and, importantly for indirect quotations, a page number or range of page numbers where the information can be found in the original source.

The purpose of this in-text citation is to allow your readers to quickly locate the full source information in your reference list, which appears at the end of your work. Even though you are not using the exact words of the author, Chicago style requires you to provide a specific location (page number) if possible, as it aids in verification and allows readers to delve deeper into the original context. This practice upholds academic integrity by ensuring transparency about the origin of all ideas presented in your work.

In-Text Citations for Author-Date

In the Chicago author-date system, in-text citations for indirect quotations are concise and appear directly after the paraphrased material. The standard format is (Author Last Name Year, Page Number). For instance, if you are paraphrasing an idea from John Smith's book published in 2020, and the idea is found on page 45, your citation would look like this: (Smith 2020, 45). If the information spans multiple pages, you would use a range: (Smith 2020, 45-47). The page number is crucial, even for paraphrased content, as it helps readers pinpoint the specific idea in the original source and demonstrates that you have consulted the material directly.

You can also introduce the author within your sentence, in which case the year and page number follow: "According to Smith (2020, 45), the economic trends were undeniable." This approach can sometimes improve the flow of your writing. Regardless of placement, the author's last name, publication year, and page number are essential components of the in-text citation for indirect quotations in the author-date system. These citations directly correspond to the full bibliographic entries in your reference list.

Creating a Reference List

The reference list in the Chicago author-date system provides comprehensive

details for all the sources cited in your text. Each entry in the reference list must correspond to an in-text citation and should be alphabetized by the author's last name. For an indirect quotation, the reference list entry will contain all the necessary bibliographic information to allow a reader to find the source. This typically includes the author's full name, the full title of the work (italicized for books and journals), and publication details such as the place of publication, publisher, and year for books, or journal title, volume, issue, and page range for articles.

For example, a book entry might appear as: Smith, John. 2020. *The Economic Landscape of the 21st Century*. New York: Academic Press. An article entry might look like: Jones, Sarah. 2021. "Historical Trends in Urban Development." *Journal of Urban Studies* 50, no. 3: 123-145. The consistent and accurate construction of your reference list, directly linked to your in-text citations, is fundamental to fulfilling Chicago style requirements and ensuring scholarly rigor.

Citing Indirect Quotations: Notes and Bibliography System

The Chicago Manual of Style's notes and bibliography system, commonly used in the humanities, relies on footnotes or endnotes for citations, with a comprehensive bibliography at the end of the work. When using indirect quotations in this system, you will typically follow the paraphrased material with a superscript footnote or endnote number. This number corresponds to a detailed citation in the corresponding note, which includes specific page references. The bibliography at the end provides a full list of all sources consulted, formatted according to Chicago style conventions.

The advantage of this system for indirect quotations is that it allows for more detailed explanatory notes if needed, while keeping the main text uncluttered by citations. However, it requires careful management of note numbers and corresponding entries. The principle remains the same: clear attribution and provision of locatable source information. Even though you are paraphrasing, the expectation is that you have consulted the source directly and can point to the precise location of the idea.

Footnotes or Endnotes

In the Chicago notes and bibliography system, indirect quotations are cited using footnotes or endnotes. After the paraphrased text, a superscript Arabic numeral is placed. This numeral corresponds to an entry in the footnotes (usually at the bottom of the page) or endnotes (collected at the end of the chapter or document). The note for an indirect quotation will include the author's name, the title of the work, and crucially, the page number(s) where the paraphrased information is found. For instance, a note might read: 1. Sarah Lee, *The Rise of the Modern City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019), 78.

If you cite the same source multiple times, subsequent citations to that source can be shortened. The first citation in full gives all the necessary information. For instance, the second time you cite Sarah Lee's book on page

95, the note might read: 2. Lee, *Rise of the Modern City*, 95. This system ensures that the reader can easily trace your ideas back to their origin, even when those ideas are presented in your own words. The inclusion of the page number is vital for indirect quotations, signifying that you have engaged with the specific passage containing the idea.

Compiling a Bibliography

The bibliography in the Chicago notes and bibliography system serves as a comprehensive list of all sources that have been cited in your work, either directly or indirectly. It is typically organized alphabetically by the author's last name. Each entry in the bibliography provides full bibliographic details, allowing readers to locate the original sources. For indirect quotations, the bibliography entry will contain all the essential information, much like in the author-date system's reference list.

For example, a book entry in the bibliography might be formatted as: Lee, Sarah. *The Rise of the Modern City*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019. An article entry would include the article title, the journal title (*italicized*), volume, issue, year, and page range. The key is that every source that has been referenced in your notes, including those from which you derived indirect quotations, must be represented in the bibliography. This ensures complete transparency and credit to the original authors, a cornerstone of academic integrity and Chicago style citation.

Avoiding Common Errors in Indirect Quotations

While indirect quotations offer flexibility, several common errors can undermine their effectiveness and accuracy. One of the most frequent pitfalls is failing to attribute the idea clearly, which can lead to unintentional plagiarism. Another is misrepresenting the original author's meaning through careless paraphrasing or oversimplification. It is also important to avoid "patchwriting," which involves making only minor changes to the original wording and sentence structure, essentially creating a thinly veiled direct quotation. Adhering to Chicago style guidelines helps mitigate these risks.

Furthermore, grammatical errors, incorrect tense shifts, and improper citation formatting can all detract from the credibility of your work. Readers expect clarity and precision, especially when dealing with sourced information. By understanding these common mistakes and actively working to avoid them, you can ensure that your use of indirect quotations is both ethically sound and stylistically polished, enhancing the overall quality of your academic or professional writing.

Plagiarism and Patchwriting

A significant concern when using indirect quotations is the risk of plagiarism, particularly through "patchwriting." Patchwriting occurs when you take another author's words or sentence structures and make only minor alterations - such as changing a few words or rearranging the order - without

truly rephrasing the idea in your own voice. This is still considered plagiarism because the original structure and phrasing are too close to the source. Chicago style, like all academic citation styles, demands that you convey the source's idea in your own unique sentence construction and vocabulary.

To avoid patchwriting, it is recommended to first read and understand the source material thoroughly. Then, put the source aside and try to explain the idea in your own words, as if you were explaining it to someone who has not read the original. Once you have drafted your paraphrase, compare it to the original to ensure you have accurately captured the meaning but have not inadvertently retained too much of the original phrasing or structure. Always follow your paraphrase with a clear citation to give credit to the original author.

Inaccurate Representation of Source Material

One of the most critical aspects of using indirect quotations is maintaining fidelity to the original author's meaning. It is easy, in the process of paraphrasing, to inadvertently distort, oversimplify, or misinterpret the source material. This can happen due to a misunderstanding of complex concepts, a focus on a narrow aspect of a broader argument, or simply through careless wording. An inaccurate representation, even if unintentional, undermines the credibility of your work and can mislead your readers.

To prevent this, always strive for a deep understanding of the source before you attempt to paraphrase it. Consider the author's overall argument, the context of the specific passage, and any nuances in their language. When you write your indirect quotation, read it aloud and compare it critically against the original text. Ask yourself: Does my paraphrase accurately reflect the author's intended meaning? Have I captured any essential qualifications or limitations they expressed? By being meticulous in your paraphrasing and diligent in your comparisons, you can ensure that your indirect quotations are both accurate and ethically sound.

The Importance of Accurate Attribution

Accurate attribution is the cornerstone of ethical scholarship and professional writing. When you use indirect quotations, you are drawing upon the intellectual labor of others. Failing to properly credit these sources, whether through direct quotation or indirect quotation, constitutes plagiarism, a serious academic offense. Chicago style, with its rigorous citation requirements, emphasizes the critical need for transparency regarding the origin of ideas, data, and arguments. Even when you rephrase information in your own words, the underlying idea belongs to the original author.

Proper attribution not only prevents plagiarism but also strengthens your own work. It demonstrates that you have engaged with existing scholarship, that your arguments are supported by evidence, and that you are participating in an ongoing intellectual conversation. By meticulously citing all your sources, including those from which you derive indirect quotations, you lend credibility to your own research and allow your readers to explore the

original materials further, fostering a more robust and trustworthy academic environment. The clear and consistent application of Chicago style's citation rules for indirect quotations is paramount in achieving these goals.

FAQ

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

A: A direct quotation uses the exact words of the original source, enclosed in quotation marks. An indirect quotation, also known as a paraphrase or reported speech, conveys the idea or information from the source in your own words and sentence structure, without quotation marks. Both require proper citation according to Chicago style.

Q: Do I need to cite an indirect quotation if I have paraphrased the information?

A: Yes, absolutely. Chicago style mandates that all ideas, facts, and information taken from a source, whether through direct quotation or indirect quotation (paraphrasing), must be cited. Failing to do so constitutes plagiarism.

Q: How specific should page numbers be when citing indirect quotations in Chicago style?

A: Chicago style generally requires specific page numbers for indirect quotations whenever possible. Even though you are not using the author's exact words, the page number(s) in your citation (e.g., (Smith 2020, 45) or in a footnote/endnote) help readers locate the specific passage in the original source that contains the paraphrased idea.

Q: Can I slightly reword a sentence from a source and call it an indirect quotation?

A: No, that is typically considered patchwriting and is a form of plagiarism. A true indirect quotation involves significantly rephrasing the original idea in your own words and sentence structure. Minor changes to wording or sentence order are not sufficient.

Q: When using the Chicago author-date system, what is the standard format for an in-text citation for an indirect quotation?

A: The standard format is (Author Last Name Year, Page Number). For example, (Miller 2021, 112). If the information spans multiple pages, use a range: (Miller 2021, 112-115).

Q: In the Chicago notes and bibliography system, how do I cite an indirect quotation in a footnote or endnote?

A: You would place a superscript number after the paraphrased text. The corresponding footnote or endnote would include the author's name, the title of the work, and the specific page number(s) where the information is found. For a first citation, it's typically: 1. John Miller, *Theories of Modern Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021), 112.

Q: What is the purpose of the reference list or bibliography when citing indirect quotations?

A: The reference list (for author-date) or bibliography (for notes and bibliography) provides the full bibliographic details for all sources cited in your work. This allows readers to easily find and consult the original sources for further research or verification.

Q: Is it acceptable to combine ideas from multiple sources into one indirect quotation?

A: While you can synthesize information from multiple sources, each distinct idea or significant piece of information drawn from a specific source should be attributed. If you are presenting a synthesized idea based on several authors, you should cite each author whose contribution is represented in that synthesis, potentially in separate citations within the same sentence or in close proximity.

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