

chicago style paraphrasing citation format

The Chicago Style Paraphrasing Citation Format: A Comprehensive Guide

chicago style paraphrasing citation format is an essential skill for academic and professional writing, ensuring proper attribution of sources and avoiding plagiarism. This style guide, widely adopted in humanities, arts, and some social sciences, requires meticulous attention to detail in both in-text citations and the accompanying bibliography. Understanding how to effectively paraphrase and cite using Chicago style is crucial for maintaining academic integrity and building a credible argument. This comprehensive article will demystify the nuances of Chicago style paraphrasing, covering everything from the foundational principles to practical application in your writing. We will explore the differences between parenthetical and notes-bibliography systems, the essential components of a Chicago citation for paraphrased material, and common pitfalls to avoid.

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Understanding Chicago Style: Parenthetical vs. Notes-Bibliography

The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) offers two distinct citation systems: the Notes-Bibliography system and the Author-Date (or Parenthetical) system. While both aim to provide clear attribution, their application differs significantly, particularly when paraphrasing. The Notes-Bibliography system relies on superscript notes (footnotes or endnotes) in the text that correspond to a detailed bibliography at the end of the work. This system is prevalent in history, literature, and the arts. Conversely, the Author-Date system uses parenthetical in-text citations directly following the paraphrased material, which then link to a reference list. This system is more common in social sciences and natural sciences. For paraphrasing, the core principle of giving credit remains, but the mechanics of how you do it will depend on which of these two systems your discipline or publication requires.

Choosing the correct system is paramount. Misapplying the rules can lead to confusion for your reader and potential academic penalties. Always confirm which Chicago style is preferred for your specific assignment or publication venue. Both systems require a thorough understanding of how to integrate source material smoothly into your own prose while acknowledging its origin. The primary difference lies in the placement and format of the citation information, impacting how readers access the source details.

The Art of Paraphrasing in Chicago Style

Paraphrasing is more than just changing a few words; it involves restating an author's ideas, arguments, or information in your own words and sentence structure while retaining the original meaning. Effective paraphrasing demonstrates your comprehension of the source material and allows you to integrate it seamlessly into your own writing without disrupting the flow. When paraphrasing for Chicago style, the goal is to accurately represent the source's content without direct quotation, thereby showcasing your analytical skills.

Key to successful paraphrasing is a deep understanding of the original text. Before attempting to rephrase, read the source material carefully, identify the main points and supporting details, and then put the original text aside. As you write your paraphrase, focus on conveying the essence of the author's message using your vocabulary and grammatical constructions. It's crucial to avoid simply rearranging words or substituting synonyms; true paraphrasing requires a complete mental reformulation of the idea.

When to Paraphrase

Paraphrasing is often preferred over direct quotation for several reasons. It allows you to concisely summarize lengthy passages, integrate information smoothly into your own argument, and demonstrate your interpretation of the source material. Furthermore, it can help avoid over-reliance on direct quotes, which can make your writing sound fragmented or overly dependent on others' voices.

- To summarize lengthy passages concisely.
- To integrate ideas smoothly into your own prose.
- To demonstrate your understanding and interpretation of the source.
- To vary your sentence structure and writing style.
- To avoid overusing direct quotations.

Distinguishing Paraphrasing from Summarizing and Quoting

It's important to differentiate between paraphrasing, summarizing, and quoting. A paraphrase restates a specific passage or idea from a source in your own words, maintaining a similar length to the original. A summary, on the other hand, condenses the main points of a larger work or section into a much shorter form. Direct quotation involves using the author's exact words, enclosed in quotation marks and cited precisely. When using Chicago style, each of these requires specific citation practices.

In-Text Citations for Paraphrased Material (Notes-Bibliography System)

In the Notes-Bibliography system, paraphrased material is cited using a superscript number placed at the end of the sentence or clause containing the paraphrased information, just before the punctuation. This number corresponds to a footnote at the bottom of the page or an endnote at the end of the chapter or document. The first time a source is cited, the note will contain full bibliographic information. Subsequent citations of the same source will use a shortened form. For paraphrased material, the note should accurately reflect the content you've borrowed.

The crucial element here is that the note provides the specific location of the information if possible, even when paraphrasing. This might include a page number or a range of pages from which the idea was drawn. While you aren't using the exact words, the intellectual content originates from a particular spot in the source, and the citation should ideally guide the reader to that location.

First Reference Notes

The initial note for a paraphrased source in the Notes-Bibliography system is comprehensive. It includes the author's name, the title of the work, publication details (city, publisher, year), and the specific page number(s) where the paraphrased idea can be found. This full citation allows the reader to identify the source precisely and locate the relevant information.

For a book, a first reference note might look like this:

1. Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006), 99-101.

Subsequent Reference Notes

After the first full citation, subsequent notes for the same source are abbreviated. They typically include the author's last name, a shortened version of the title (if necessary to distinguish it from other works by the same author), and the page number(s). This streamlined format prevents redundancy while still providing sufficient information for identification.

A subsequent note for the same book would appear as:

2. Pollan, *Omnivore's Dilemma*, 155.

When Page Numbers are Essential

Even when paraphrasing, including specific page numbers is often crucial in the Notes-Bibliography system. This is because the reader is being directed to a particular part of the original text where the idea you've paraphrased is discussed or developed. While a paraphrase doesn't use the original

wording, the concept itself is tied to a specific locus within the source material. Omitting page numbers can make it difficult for readers to verify your interpretation or explore the original context.

In-Text Citations for Paraphrased Material (Parenthetical System)

The Parenthetical (Author-Date) system, as used in Chicago style, places the citation directly within the text, enclosed in parentheses. For paraphrased material, this typically includes the author's last name, the year of publication, and the page number. This information is placed at the end of the sentence or clause containing the paraphrased idea, immediately before the period or other terminal punctuation. This parenthetical citation links directly to a full bibliographic entry in the reference list at the end of your work.

The inclusion of the page number is vital for paraphrasing in this system, just as it is in the notes system. It allows readers to pinpoint the exact location of the original idea in the source material, facilitating verification and further research. Without page numbers, the citation is incomplete and less useful.

Basic Parenthetical Structure

The standard format for a parenthetical citation for a paraphrased source is (Author Last Name Year, Page Number). For example, if you paraphrase an idea from Michael Pollan's book published in 2006, and the idea is found on pages 99-101, the citation would look like this: (Pollan 2006, 99-101).

Variations for Multiple Authors or Editors

When dealing with multiple authors or edited volumes, the parenthetical citation format will adjust accordingly. For two authors, both names are included: (Smith and Jones 2019, 45). For three or more authors, only the first author's last name is used, followed by "et al.": (Adams et al. 2021, 112). For edited works, the editor's name is used, often with an "ed." or "eds." designation:

- For works with two authors: (Davis and Miller 2018, 78)
- For works with three or more authors: (Garcia et al. 2020, 201)
- For edited works: (Chen, ed., 2017, 33)
- For edited works with multiple editors: (Williams and Brown, eds., 2019, 150)

When to Omit the Year or Page Number

In some specific instances, you might omit certain elements from the parenthetical citation. If the author and year are mentioned in the text itself, you can omit them from the parentheses. For example, "As Pollan argues in his 2006 work..." would require only the page number: (Pollan, 99-101). However, omitting the page number for paraphrased material is generally discouraged as it hinders the reader's ability to locate the source of the idea.

Crafting Bibliography Entries for Paraphrased Sources

Regardless of whether you use the Notes-Bibliography or Parenthetical system, a comprehensive bibliography or reference list is required. This list provides complete publication details for all sources cited in your work, allowing readers to locate them easily. The format of the bibliography entry will depend on the type of source (book, journal article, website, etc.), but it must contain all necessary information for full identification.

For books, the entry typically includes the author's full name, the full title of the book (italicized), publication information (city, publisher, year), and sometimes edition information. For journal articles, it includes the author(s), article title, journal title (italicized), volume and issue numbers, date, and page range. The key is consistency and accuracy in presenting the bibliographic data.

Bibliography Entry for a Book

A typical bibliography entry for a book used in Chicago style would follow this structure: Author Last Name, First Name. Title of Book. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication.

Example for a book:

Pollan, Michael. *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*. New York: Penguin Press, 2006.

Bibliography Entry for a Journal Article

For a journal article, the format includes author(s), article title, journal title, volume and issue, date, and page numbers. The journal title is italicized, and the article title is enclosed in quotation marks.

Example for a journal article:

Smith, Jane, and John Doe. "The Impact of Social Media on Political Discourse." *Journal of Communication Studies* 45, no. 2 (2018): 123-145.

Bibliography Entry for Online Sources

Citing online sources requires including as much identifying information as possible. For websites, this typically involves the author (if available), title of the specific page or article, name of the website, publication or last updated date, and the URL. It is also advisable to include an access date.

Example for a web page:

National Park Service. "About Us." National Park Service. Last modified September 10, 2023.
<https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/index.htm>.

Common Paraphrasing and Citation Errors to Avoid

When working with the Chicago style paraphrasing citation format, several common errors can undermine the credibility of your work and lead to accusations of plagiarism. Being aware of these pitfalls can help you avoid them. These often stem from a misunderstanding of what constitutes proper paraphrasing or incorrect application of citation rules.

One of the most frequent mistakes is insufficient paraphrasing, often called "patchwriting," where you only change a few words or rearrange sentence structures without truly restating the idea in your own voice. Another common error is failing to cite at all, assuming that because the words are your own, the idea doesn't need attribution. Inaccurate citations, such as incorrect page numbers or missing publication details, also present significant problems.

Patchwriting and Insufficient Paraphrasing

Patchwriting occurs when you present someone else's work as your own by making only minor alterations to the original text. This can include changing a few words, altering the order of clauses, or using synonyms without fundamentally changing the sentence structure or conveying the idea in a new way. True paraphrasing requires a more thorough reformulation of the source material.

Forgetting to Cite

It is a critical error to forget to cite any information, idea, or data that is not common knowledge or your own original thought. This applies equally to paraphrased material and direct quotations. When in doubt, it is always better to cite. The purpose of citation is to acknowledge the intellectual contributions of others, not just to avoid plagiarism, but to allow readers to trace your research and learn more about the topic.

Inaccurate or Incomplete Citations

Inaccurate citations, whether in the text or in the bibliography, can be just as problematic as forgetting to cite. This includes errors in author names, titles, publication dates, page numbers, or the URL for online sources. Incomplete citations, where essential information is missing, also hinder readers from locating the source. Diligent proofreading of all citations is essential.

Misinterpreting Source Material

When paraphrasing, there's a risk of misrepresenting the author's original meaning. This often happens when you don't fully understand the source material or when you take ideas out of context. Always ensure your paraphrase accurately reflects the author's intended message. If your paraphrase significantly alters the meaning, it may be considered misrepresentation, even if cited correctly.

Advanced Chicago Style Paraphrasing Scenarios

While the core principles of Chicago style paraphrasing are straightforward, certain situations can present unique challenges. These might involve paraphrasing from sources with complex authorship, citing multiple sources for a single idea, or dealing with different types of media. Navigating these complexities requires a nuanced understanding of the Chicago Manual of Style.

For instance, paraphrasing from an interview or a lecture requires specific citation methods. Similarly, when an idea is synthesized from several sources, you must ensure each contribution is acknowledged appropriately. The key is to maintain clarity and accuracy in attributing all borrowed ideas, regardless of the source's format or complexity.

Paraphrasing from Interviews and Lectures

When paraphrasing from unpublished interviews or lectures, the citation will depend on whether the material is recorded or transcribed, and whether it has been formally published. Generally, you will include the interviewee's or speaker's name, the date of the interview or lecture, and the specific page number or timestamp of the relevant information if available. In the bibliography, this might be listed as a personal communication or an unpublished work.

Citing Multiple Sources for a Single Idea

If an idea you are discussing is supported by or draws from multiple sources, Chicago style allows for multiple citations within a single parenthetical or note. In the Notes-Bibliography system, you would list the notes sequentially. In the Parenthetical system, you would list the citations separated

by semicolons within the parentheses, usually ordered alphabetically by author's last name.

Example of multiple parenthetical citations:

(Adams 2021, 55; Chen 2017, 112; Davis and Miller 2018, 80)

Paraphrasing from Audiovisual Material

Paraphrasing from films, documentaries, or audio recordings follows similar principles. You need to identify the creator, title, and provide a specific timestamp or scene reference in your in-text citation. The bibliography entry will include details about the work, such as director, producer, title, release date, and any relevant distributors or archival information.

The Chicago style paraphrasing citation format is a detailed yet accessible system for academic integrity. By mastering the nuances of paraphrasing and understanding the specific requirements of either the Notes-Bibliography or Parenthetical system, writers can confidently integrate source material into their work. Diligence in creating accurate in-text citations and comprehensive bibliography entries is not merely a formality; it is a testament to scholarly practice and a vital component of effective communication. Continuous reference to the Chicago Manual of Style and careful proofreading will ensure adherence to its esteemed standards.

FAQ

Q: What is the main difference between the two Chicago citation systems for paraphrasing?

A: The primary difference lies in how citations are presented in the text. The Notes-Bibliography system uses superscript numbers for footnotes or endnotes, while the Parenthetical (Author-Date) system uses in-text parenthetical citations (Author Year, Page). Both systems require a bibliography at the end of the work.

Q: Do I need to include page numbers when paraphrasing in Chicago style?

A: Yes, generally, you must include page numbers when paraphrasing in Chicago style, regardless of which system you use. This allows readers to locate the specific part of the source where the idea was originally presented, aiding in verification and further research.

Q: What is patchwriting in Chicago style paraphrasing?

A: Patchwriting, also known as insufficient paraphrasing, occurs when you make only minor changes to the original text, such as substituting a few words or rearranging sentence parts, without truly restating the idea in your own voice and sentence structure. This is considered a form of plagiarism.

and must be avoided.

Q: How do I cite a paraphrased idea that comes from multiple sources in Chicago style?

A: When an idea is drawn from multiple sources, you will list all relevant citations. In the Notes-Bibliography system, you would typically create separate notes for each source or combine them if the information is highly integrated. In the Parenthetical system, multiple citations are placed within the same parentheses, separated by semicolons, often alphabetized by author's last name.

Q: What information is essential for a bibliography entry of a paraphrased book in Chicago style?

A: For a book, a Chicago style bibliography entry requires the author's full name, the full title of the book (italicized), the place of publication, the publisher, and the year of publication. For paraphrased material, it is also crucial that the in-text citation (note or parenthetical) includes the specific page number(s) from which the idea was drawn.

Q: Can I omit the author's name from a parenthetical citation if I mention it in the text?

A: Yes, in the Parenthetical (Author-Date) system, if you mention the author's name within the text of your sentence, you can omit it from the parenthetical citation. However, you must still include the year of publication and, crucially for paraphrased material, the page number. For example: "As Johnson argues (2020, 45)..."

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