

chicago style social science interview citation

chicago style social science interview citation is a critical aspect of academic integrity and effective communication within the social sciences. Understanding how to properly document interviews lends credibility to your research and allows readers to verify your sources. This comprehensive guide delves into the nuances of citing interviews in Chicago style, a widely adopted citation method in fields like sociology, anthropology, political science, and history. We will explore the essential components of an interview citation, variations for different types of interviews, and common pitfalls to avoid. Mastering this citation format ensures your work adheres to scholarly standards, enhancing the rigor and impact of your social science research.

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Understanding the Core Components of a Chicago Style Interview Citation

The Essential Elements for a Chicago Style Social Science Interview Citation

When constructing a Chicago style social science interview citation, several key pieces of information are vital to accurately identify and locate the source for your reader. At its most basic, a citation for an interview needs to clearly state who was interviewed, who conducted the interview, when it took place, and its format (e.g., personal communication, published article, archival recording). The specific details required can vary depending on whether the interview is unpublished, published, or part of a larger collection, but the foundational principles remain consistent: clarity, accuracy, and traceability.

For unpublished interviews, often treated as personal communications, the citation typically includes the name of the interviewee, the date of the interview, and the interviewer's name. The location or method of communication (e.g., "interview by author," "email interview") is also important. Published interviews require more extensive bibliographic information, including the title of the work where the interview appears, the author or editor of that work, publication details such as the journal or book title, volume, issue, date, and page numbers. Understanding these core components is the first step toward mastering this citation style.

The Interviewee and Interviewer

The identity of both the person interviewed (the interviewee) and the person conducting the interview (the interviewer) is paramount. In Chicago style, you will generally list the interviewee's full name. For unpublished interviews, the interviewer is typically identified as the author of the citation, using their full name. This distinction is crucial for attribution and for readers to understand the origin of the information presented.

Date and Location/Medium of the Interview

The date on which the interview was conducted is a non-negotiable element of any citation. This allows readers to contextualize the information provided, understanding its timeliness. Furthermore, the medium or location of the interview is essential. Was it conducted in person, over the phone, via email, or through a video conference? Specifying this helps the reader assess the potential for nuance or misinterpretation. For unpublished interviews, explicitly stating "interview by author" or similar phrasing clarifies the relationship between the researcher and the source.

Format and Accessibility of the Interview

The format in which the interview exists—whether as a personal conversation, a transcript, a recorded audio or video file, or a published text—dictates the subsequent details needed in the citation. If the interview is unpublished and accessible only to the researcher (e.g., a personal conversation or a private email exchange), it is often cited as personal communication. Published interviews, on the other hand, are treated as published works and require full bibliographic details. Oral history projects and archival interviews have their own specific citation conventions, often involving repository names and collection identifiers.

Citing Unpublished Interviews (Personal Communications)

When to Use the Personal Communications Format

Unpublished interviews are typically cited as personal communications when they have not been formally published or made available to the public in a widely accessible format. This includes interviews conducted by the author of the paper, private conversations, telephone interviews, or email exchanges that are not part of a public archive or publication. The principle here is that the reader cannot independently access or verify the source, so the citation must provide enough detail for the author to be contacted if permission is granted.

Formatting Personal Communications in Notes and Bibliography

In Chicago style, unpublished interviews treated as personal communications are usually cited in the notes, and often omitted from the bibliography unless they are extensively used or crucial to the work. The note typically includes the interviewee's name, followed by the interviewer's name and the date of the interview. For instance, a note might read: "Interview with Jane Doe by John Smith, March 15, 2023." If the interviewer is the author of the work, it would be simplified to: "Interview with Jane Doe, March 15, 2023." The bibliography entry, if required, would be more detailed if there's a transcript or recording available, but for a simple personal communication, it might be omitted or very brief.

Here are common elements for citing personal communications in notes:

- Interviewee's Full Name
- "Interview by [Interviewer's Full Name]" (if not the author)
- Month Day, Year of Interview
- [Brief description of format, e.g., personal interview, phone call, email]

Citing Published Interviews

Interviews in Books and Edited Collections

When an interview is published within a book or an edited collection, it is treated as a chapter or a specific contribution within that larger work. The citation needs to identify the interviewee, the title of the interview (if it has one), the editor(s) or author(s) of the book, the book's title, and standard publication information like the publisher, year, and page numbers where the interview can be found. If the interview is the primary focus of the book, the citation will reflect that.

For example, a note might cite: "Interview with John Doe, in *A Life in Politics*, ed. Mary Jones (New York: University Press, 2022), 45-60." The corresponding bibliography entry would be more comprehensive, listing the editor, book title, publication details, and the fact that it contains an interview.

Interviews in Periodicals (Journals and Magazines)

Interviews published in academic journals or popular magazines follow similar principles to interviews

in books, but with the specific details of periodical publication. You'll need to identify the interviewee, the title of the interview (if applicable), the author of the article that presents the interview (if different from the interviewer), the name of the journal or magazine, volume and issue numbers, date of publication, and the page range. For instance, a note could read: "Interview with Dr. Eleanor Vance, conducted by Robert Lee, *Sociology Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (Spring 2023): 112-125."

The bibliography entry will reflect all these details, making it easy for a reader to locate the original publication. The use of italics for journal titles and the correct formatting of volume and issue numbers are crucial for adherence to Chicago style.

Online Published Interviews

The citation of online published interviews requires attention to the specific platform where the interview is hosted. This could be a website, a blog, or an online journal. Key information includes the interviewee, the interviewer (if applicable), the title of the interview or article, the name of the website or publication, and the date of publication or last update. Most importantly, a stable URL or DOI (Digital Object Identifier) should be provided to ensure the reader can access the interview. When citing online sources, the retrieval date is generally not required unless the content is likely to change frequently, which is less common for published interviews.

Citing Interviews from Archival Sources

Locating and Identifying Archival Interviews

Archival interviews are unique because they are typically part of a larger collection of historical documents held by a specific repository. When citing these, you must provide enough information for someone to find the interview within that collection. This includes the name of the interviewee, the interviewer, the date of the interview, the title of the collection, the name of the repository (e.g., university library, historical society), and any specific collection or box numbers that help pinpoint the material. The format of the interview (e.g., audio recording, transcript) should also be noted.

Formatting Archival Citations in Notes and Bibliography

A note citation for an archival interview might look like this: "Oral History Interview with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., conducted by Rev. Andrew Young, June 10, 1965, Series 3, Box 12, John Doe Papers, University Archives, Anytown University." The bibliography entry will contain similar information, organized according to Chicago's bibliographic conventions, often starting with the collection name or the name of the individual whose papers are being cited.

Key components for archival interview citations include:

- Interviewee's Full Name
- Interviewer's Full Name (if known)
- Date of Interview
- Title of Collection
- Name of Repository
- Specific Identifier (e.g., Box Number, Folder Number, Item Number)

Citing Interviews from Oral History Projects

Understanding Oral History Projects

Oral history projects are systematic endeavors to collect and preserve personal accounts of historical events and experiences. Interviews conducted as part of these projects are often curated, transcribed, and made accessible through dedicated archives or institutions. Citations for these interviews need to reflect their origin within such a structured project, acknowledging the collecting institution and the project name if applicable.

Citing Oral History Transcripts and Recordings

When citing an oral history interview, whether it's a transcript or a recording, you'll identify the interviewee, the interviewer, the date of the interview, the title of the oral history project, and the repository where it is housed. For example, a note might read: "Interview with Maria Garcia, conducted by Robert Chen, July 20, 2019, Latino Voices Oral History Project, Special Collections, Central City Library." If a transcript or recording has a specific title, that should be included as well.

The bibliography entry will be more detailed, typically listing the project name first, followed by the interviewee, interviewer, date, and repository information. Accession numbers or specific item numbers are vital for precise referencing in academic work.

Common Issues and Best Practices in Chicago Style Interview Citation

Ensuring Accuracy and Completeness

The most common pitfall in citing interviews is incompleteness or inaccuracy. Researchers must double-check names, dates, titles, and publication details. For unpublished interviews, ensuring the interviewee's consent to be cited is a matter of ethical practice as well as citation accuracy. Always err on the side of providing more detail rather than less, especially when dealing with unpublished or archival materials.

Consistency in Note and Bibliography Entries

Chicago style uses both footnotes/endnotes and a bibliography. It is imperative to maintain consistency between these two citation forms. If an interview is cited in a note, a corresponding entry should generally appear in the bibliography, unless it's a very brief personal communication. The format of the note and bibliography entry for the same source should align with Chicago's specific guidelines for each, with the bibliography entry being more comprehensive.

Handling Difficult-to-Locate Sources

Sometimes, interviews are conducted informally or are part of collections that are not well-cataloged. In such cases, providing the most detailed information available is crucial. If a specific box number is unknown but a folder name is available, use that. If the exact date is uncertain, provide an approximate year or season. The goal is to give the reader the best possible chance to locate the source, even if it's challenging. When in doubt, consult style guides or seek guidance from librarians or instructors.

Ethical Considerations for Interview Citations

Beyond mere accuracy, ethical considerations are paramount when citing interviews. This includes respecting the privacy of interviewees and obtaining informed consent, especially when dealing with sensitive topics or personal information. Always ensure that your citation practices do not inadvertently compromise an interviewee's privacy or put them at risk. Clearly indicating whether an interview is personal communication or has been published helps manage reader expectations regarding accessibility and privacy.

Best practices include:

- Obtaining explicit consent from interviewees for their information to be cited.
- Clearly differentiating between personal communications and published interviews.
- Protecting anonymity if promised to an interviewee.
- Ensuring all necessary details are present for verification.

- Maintaining consistency between notes and bibliography.

Q: What is the primary difference between citing a personal interview and a published interview in Chicago style?

A: The primary difference lies in accessibility and detail. Personal interviews, often treated as personal communications, are usually cited briefly in notes and may not appear in the bibliography, as they are not publicly available. Published interviews, conversely, are cited with full bibliographic details (author, title, publication, date, page numbers) because readers can access them independently.

Q: Do I need to include the interviewer's name if I conducted the interview myself?

A: Yes, if you are citing an interview you conducted yourself, you should indicate this clearly. In notes, it's often presented as "Interview with [Interviewee's Name], [Date]." In the bibliography, if a transcript or recording is available, your name will appear as the author of that specific item.

Q: How do I cite an interview that was conducted via email in Chicago style?

A: An email interview is typically treated as personal communication. In your notes, you would cite it as: "[Interviewee's Full Name], email interview by [Your Full Name], [Month Day, Year]." If a transcript of the email exchange exists, it can be cited more formally, similar to other unpublished interview materials.

Q: What is the best way to cite an interview that is part of a published oral history collection?

A: For an interview within a published oral history collection, you will cite the interviewee, the interviewer (if known), the date, the title of the oral history project, and the name of the institution housing the collection. The specific format will resemble other published works, including details like volume and page numbers if available.

Q: Should I include a DOI or URL for online published interviews?

A: Yes, absolutely. For any interview published online, providing a stable URL or, preferably, a DOI (Digital Object Identifier) is essential. This allows your readers to easily locate and access the interview source, ensuring the reliability of your citation.

Q: What if I don't have the exact date of an archival interview?

A: If the exact date of an archival interview is unknown, provide the most specific information available. This could be the year, the season (e.g., "Fall 2022"), or an approximate date range. Always be transparent about the level of certainty regarding the date.

Q: How do I handle interviews where anonymity was promised to the interviewee?

A: If anonymity was promised, you should not use the interviewee's name. Instead, use a descriptive pseudonym or a role (e.g., "Participant A," "Former Employee"). Ensure your citation practices fully respect the terms of anonymity agreed upon.

Q: Is it necessary to cite interviews if I only mention them briefly?

A: Yes, any information directly obtained from an interview, even if mentioned briefly, requires proper citation. Failing to cite an interview, regardless of its length or prominence, is a form of academic dishonesty.

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