

citing actors chicago style

citing actors chicago style is a fundamental skill for academic and professional writing, particularly when referencing performances, biographical details, or critical analyses of individuals within the theatrical or cinematic arts. Understanding the intricacies of the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) for citing actors ensures accuracy, credibility, and proper attribution. This comprehensive guide will delve into the nuances of citing actors using Chicago style, covering both the Notes-Bibliography system and the Author-Date system. We will explore how to cite various types of sources that feature actors, including film, television, theater, interviews, and secondary scholarship. Mastering these citation methods is crucial for any researcher or writer seeking to acknowledge the contributions of actors and the sources from which this information is derived, thereby upholding academic integrity and facilitating further research.

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Understanding Chicago Style for Citing Actors

Chicago style, encompassing both the Notes-Bibliography (NB) and Author-Date (AD) systems, provides a robust framework for acknowledging sources. When it comes to citing actors, the core principle remains the same: clearly and accurately identifying the source material that provides information about them. This means meticulously noting details such as the actor's name, the work they are associated with, the creator or director, the production company or distributor, and the publication or release date. The specific format will vary depending on whether you are using endnotes and a bibliography (NB) or in-text parenthetical citations and a reference list (AD).

The choice between the NB and AD systems often depends on the discipline or the specific requirements of a publication or institution. For humanities disciplines, such as literature, history, and art history, the NB system is commonly preferred due to its ability to provide detailed source information directly within the text. Conversely, the AD system is more prevalent in social sciences and some scientific fields, where brief in-text citations are favored for their conciseness.

The Notes-Bibliography System for Actors

The Notes-Bibliography system is characterized by the use of superscript numbers in the text that correspond to notes at the end of the paper (endnotes) or on the page itself (footnotes). These notes provide the full citation details. A bibliography at the end of the work then lists all sources cited, alphabetized by the author's last name.

Citing Film Performances in Notes

When citing a specific performance by an actor in a film, the note should include the actor's name, the film title, the director, the production company, and the year of release. For example, a note referencing an actor's role might look like this:

- 1. Meryl Streep, performance in *The Iron Lady*, directed by Phyllida Lloyd, production by Film4 Productions, 2011.

If you are referring to a specific scene or aspect of the performance, you might add further details to the note, such as the timestamp.

Citing Television Performances in Notes

Similar to film, citing an actor's television performance requires identifying the program, the specific episode (if applicable), the network, and the broadcast date. For a series, you might cite the show as a whole or a particular episode.

- 2. Bryan Cranston, performance in "Pilot," *Breaking Bad* (AMC, 2008).
- 3. Viola Davis, performance in *How to Get Away with Murder*, created by Peter Nowalk, production by ABC Studios, 2014-2020.

Citing Stage Performances in Notes

For stage actors, the citation needs to specify the play, the role, the theater company, the venue, and the dates of the performance. This can be more complex due to the ephemeral nature of live theater.

- 4. Mark Rylance as Hamlet, in *Hamlet*, directed by Tim Carroll, presented by the Shakespeare's Globe, London, 2011.

It is important to note that distinguishing between a professional production and a student or amateur one can influence the level of detail required. For professional productions, the caliber of the company and venue is usually significant.

Bibliography Entries for Actors

The bibliography entry will be a more condensed version of the note, formatted for alphabetical listing. For film and television, the entry typically begins with the title of the work, followed by production details. For stage performances, the play title might lead.

- Film: *The Iron Lady*. Directed by Phyllida Lloyd. Produced by Film4 Productions. 2011.

- Television: *Breaking Bad*. Created by Vince Gilligan. AMC, 2008–2013.
- Theater: *Hamlet*. Directed by Tim Carroll. Starring Mark Rylance. Shakespeare's Globe, London, 2011.

When the focus is specifically on an actor's contribution or biography, and you are citing a book or article about the actor, the citation will follow the standard book or article format, with the actor's name as the subject of the work.

The Author-Date System for Actors

The Author-Date system uses in-text parenthetical citations that include the author's last name and the publication year, with page numbers if directly quoting. A corresponding reference list at the end of the paper provides full bibliographic information for each source.

Citing Film and Television in Author-Date

In-text citations for films and television shows typically focus on the director or the production company as the authoring entity. The actor's name would appear within the text or as part of the description of the work being referenced.

For example, if you are discussing Meryl Streep's performance, you might write:

Meryl Streep delivered a powerful portrayal of Margaret Thatcher in *The Iron Lady* (Lloyd 2011).

The reference list entry would mirror the bibliography entry from the NB system but might be organized under the director's name or the production company.

- Lloyd, Phyllida, director. 2011. *The Iron Lady*. Film4 Productions.

Citing Stage Performances in Author-Date

Similar to film and television, stage citations in the Author-Date system will focus on the playwright, director, or production company. The actor's name would be contextualized within the discussion.

If referencing a review of a play featuring a specific actor:

Critics lauded Mark Rylance's nuanced performance as Hamlet (Smith 2011, 45).

The reference list entry might be:

- Smith, John. 2011. "Rylance Shines as Hamlet." *Theater Monthly* 10 (3): 45–47.

Citing Actors in Books and Articles

When citing scholarly articles or books that analyze an actor's career, roles, or biography, the standard Author-Date format applies, with the author of the secondary source being the primary citation element.

For instance:

Biographical accounts often highlight Daniel Day-Lewis's intense preparation for his roles (Brown 2015, 112).

Reference List Entry:

- Brown, Sarah. 2015. *The Method and the Master: Daniel Day-Lewis's Career*. New York: Academic Press.

Citing Different Types of Media Featuring Actors

The variety of media where actors' contributions are documented necessitates flexibility in citation practices. Chicago style provides guidelines for most common formats, but consistency is key.

Citing Actors in Documentaries

Documentaries can feature actors either through archival footage of their performances or through interviews. When citing archival footage, treat it as a component of the documentary itself, noting the actor and the original work if discernible. For interviews, cite the documentary as the primary source and specify the interviewee.

- 5. Marlon Brando, interviewed in *The Godfather Legacy*, directed by Michael Apted, 2001.

Citing Actors in Online Platforms (Streaming Services, YouTube)

Citing content from online platforms requires including the URL and the date of access. For streaming services, the title of the show or film, the platform, and the release year are essential. For informal platforms like YouTube, be precise about the uploader and the specific content.

- 6. John Travolta, performance in *Pulp Fiction*, distributed by Miramax, 1994. Available at YouTube, accessed October 26, 2023.

Citing Actors in Podcast Appearances

Actors frequently appear as guests on podcasts. When citing such appearances, include the podcast title, episode title and number, host(s), and the publication date, along with the URL.

- 7. Tom Hanks, guest on *SmartLess*, hosted by Will Arnett, Sean Hayes, and John Maeda, episode "Tom Hanks," aired May 10, 2021.

Citing Actors in Performance

When the focus of your research is the actor's craft and their specific interpretation of a role, the citation needs to reflect this emphasis. This is particularly relevant for theatrical performances where the actor's presence is immediate and impactful.

Performance Reviews

Reviews are a rich source for understanding an actor's performance. When citing a review, you include the reviewer's name, the review title, the publication it appeared in, and the date. You would then discuss the actor's performance as described in the review.

- 8. Ben Brantley, "A King, Imperfect But Human," review of *King Lear*, *The New York Times*, November 28, 2019.

Biographies and Critical Studies of Actors

When relying on biographical works or critical analyses specifically dedicated to an actor, the citation directly credits the author of that work, but you will be referencing their analysis of the actor's career or performances.

- 9. David Thomson, *Have at It: Tales of Hollywood and the Movies* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2021), 188.

In this case, Thomson's book is the source, and it contains information about various actors, which you are citing.

Citing Actors in Interviews and Biographical Works

Direct interviews with actors or well-researched biographies offer invaluable insights. Proper citation ensures that the information is attributed to the correct source and context.

Personal Interviews

If you have conducted a personal interview with an actor, it is treated as unpublished material. You would typically include the interviewee's name, the fact that it was an interview, the date it took place, and the location if relevant. In the bibliography, it would be listed as "Personal interview with [Actor's Name]," followed by the date.

- 10. Personal interview with [Actor's Name], October 25, 2023.

Published Interviews

Published interviews, whether in magazines, newspapers, or books, follow the standard citation format for those media types, with the interviewer and interviewee clearly identified.

- 11. Oprah Winfrey, interviewed by George Stephanopoulos, "The Oprah Winfrey Show," ABC, April 27, 2003.

Biographical Entries in Encyclopedias or Databases

For information drawn from online encyclopedias or specialized databases (like IMDb Pro, though generally not for academic use without critical evaluation), cite them as you would any other electronic source, noting the title of the entry, the website name, and the URL.

- 12. "Tom Hanks." *Britannica Online*. Accessed October 26, 2023.
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Tom-Hanks>.

It is crucial to remember that Chicago style emphasizes clarity and completeness. Even when discussing actors, the source of the information—be it a film, a play, a book, or an interview—must be clearly identifiable and properly attributed.

Best Practices for Citing Actors Chicago Style

Adhering to a consistent and accurate citation practice is paramount when citing actors. This involves meticulous attention to detail and understanding the purpose of each citation. Always strive for the most specific source available, especially when discussing nuanced aspects of an actor's performance or biography.

Consider the following best practices:

- **Be specific:** When referencing a performance, note the specific role, the production, and the creative team involved.

- **Note the medium:** Clearly distinguish between film, television, theater, and other media.
- **Identify the authoring entity:** For films and plays, this might be the director or playwright; for biographical works, it is the author of the work.
- **Include essential publication details:** Always provide the title, publisher, and year of publication for books and articles, and production/broadcast details for media.
- **Use URLs and access dates for online sources:** Ensure that readers can locate and verify online materials.
- **Maintain consistency:** Once you choose a citation system (NB or AD), apply it uniformly throughout your work.
- **Consult the official manual:** For any complex or unusual cases, refer to the latest edition of The Chicago Manual of Style.

By implementing these guidelines, writers can ensure their citations of actors are not only compliant with Chicago style but also contribute to the overall academic rigor and trustworthiness of their work. This attention to detail elevates the discussion of actors from mere mention to a fully sourced and verifiable analysis.

FAQ

Q: How do I cite an actor's performance in a film using the Chicago Notes-Bibliography system?

A: In a note, you would typically cite the actor, their role, the film title (italicized), the director, the production company, and the year of release. For example: 1. Leonardo DiCaprio as Jordan Belfort, performance in *The Wolf of Wall Street*, directed by Martin Scorsese, production by Red Granite Pictures, 2013.

Q: What information should I include when citing a stage actor in Chicago style?

A: For stage actors, you need to cite the play title (italicized), the role the actor played, the director, the theater company or venue, and the performance dates if available. For instance: 2. Ian McKellen as Gandalf, in *The Hobbit*, directed by Peter Jackson, presented by the Royal Shakespeare Company, Stratford-upon-Avon, 2007.

Q: How does citing an actor differ between the Chicago Notes-

Bibliography and Author-Date systems?

A: In the Notes-Bibliography system, you use endnotes or footnotes for detailed citations and a bibliography for a list of all sources. In the Author-Date system, you use brief in-text parenthetical citations (e.g., Smith 2020, 45) and a reference list that provides full bibliographic details for each source.

Q: When citing a book about an actor's career, who is considered the author in Chicago style?

A: The author of the book is considered the primary author for citation purposes. You cite the book by its author, title, and publication details, and then discuss the actor's career as presented in that book. For example: Brown, Sarah. 2015. *The Method and the Master: Daniel Day-Lewis's Career*. New York: Academic Press.

Q: How should I cite an actor's interview published in a magazine using Chicago style?

A: You would cite the interviewer and interviewee, the title of the interview (if it has one), the magazine title (italicized), the volume and issue number, the date, and the page numbers. For notes: 3. Tom Hanks, interviewed by David Letterman, "A Conversation with Tom Hanks," *Rolling Stone*, no. 900 (July 15, 2002): 55-60.

Q: Is there a specific way to cite an actor's appearance in a documentary?

A: If the actor is interviewed, cite it as an interview within the documentary. If their performance is shown through archival footage, cite the documentary and mention the actor and their role within the documentary's context. For example, a note might read: 4. Meryl Streep, appearing in archival footage from *Kramer vs. Kramer*, in *Meryl Streep: The Search for Character*, directed by Barbara Kopple, 2004.

Q: What if I am citing an actor's role in a television series episode?

A: You would cite the actor, their role, the episode title (in quotation marks), the series title (italicized), the network, and the original air date. For notes: 5. Sterling K. Brown as Randall Pearson, performance in "The Long Jump," *This Is Us*, NBC, March 7, 2017.

Q: How do I cite an actor who has multiple roles in different productions within the same paper?

A: Ensure each mention of the actor is tied to the specific production and role through the appropriate citation format for that medium. Be clear and consistent in distinguishing between their

various contributions to avoid confusion.

Q: Can I cite an actor's profile on a website like IMDb using Chicago style?

A: While IMDb is a useful resource for gathering information, academic writing typically requires citing more authoritative sources. If you must cite IMDb, treat it as a website, providing the actor's name as the title of the entry, the website name (IMDb), and the URL, along with the date of access. However, it's generally advisable to find and cite the primary or scholarly sources upon which IMDb's information is based.

Q: What are the key elements to remember when citing any actor-related source in Chicago style?

A: The core elements to remember are the actor's name, the specific work or performance being referenced, the creators or producers of that work, the publication or release details, and the source from which you obtained the information (e.g., the author of a book, the director of a film). Clarity, accuracy, and consistency are paramount.

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