

RES 6: Chicago Style Quick Guide

What is Chicago style?

Chicago style gets its name from *The Chicago Manual of Style*, a manual published by the University of Chicago that details publishing, grammar, and documentation practices—especially for liberal arts such as history and anthropology. This means that Chicago Style determines the required layout for things such as in-text citations and the bibliography page of research papers in such courses. This guide provides some Chicago style citation basics. You may find more detailed instructions about Chicago formatting in your writing handbook.

Why do citations matter?

Whenever you refer to someone's words or ideas, whether you are paraphrasing, summarizing, or quoting, you have a responsibility to your readers to cite your source. If you do not cite your source's words or information, you are plagiarizing. Whether intentional or accidental, plagiarism has consequences (see [MTSU's definition of plagiarism](#)). Understanding your citation style can go a long way toward helping you write responsibly.

Footnotes

Writers use **in-text citations** when they make reference to someone else's ideas through paraphrasing, summarizing, or quoting. In-text citations in Chicago format are done by using superscript numbers that correspond to **footnotes**. Those footnotes typically contain:

- The author's name
- The title of the source
- The facts of publication (location and name of publisher)
- The page number(s) referenced

These footnotes are listed in the order that they appear in the text and will appear at the bottom of your page. For example:

Jorge Zampano, in a news article from 1879 references the modern architecture of the Navidson house.¹

1. Jorge Zampano, "New Modern House Built In New York," *The New York Times* (New York, NY), Mar. 7, 1879.

If the source has no author and is still reliable, do not list an author name in your notes or bibliography. If the source does not have page numbers, do not list page numbers. Citations for web sites must include URLs. If you are using the same source multiple times in a row, you do not need to include the full citation twice. Instead, you may use "Ibid." For example:

An anonymous scholar once argued that the Civil War did not have any one single cause.⁶ That critic instead proposed several social and economic causes of the war.⁷

6. *A Wartime Analysis* (Philadelphia: Pamphleteer Publishing, 1969).

7. Ibid.

Bibliography

Unlike footnotes, the **Bibliography** section alphabetically lists every source you use while composing the text. The purpose of the Bibliography is to provide a roadmap to your sources so that other scholars or researchers can find them. This means that, as a writer, you need to provide as much information as you can about where and how to find a source.

A bibliographic citation will be different in a number of ways from the corresponding footnote for the same source, so don't just copy and paste one into the other. Some major differences include the format of the author's name (in a bibliography, the last name is listed first), the order that publication details appear, and the way the list is organized and indented.

Note: Citation generators like EasyBib are tempting to use and may even be helpful in getting started, but be aware that technology can cause mistakes. Furthermore, not all generators are up to date with current editions. Always double check your citations.

Scholarly sources include a variety of media, and each type of source has its own citation format. To find the formatting guidelines for the particular type of source you are working with, consult:

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 8th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

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