



Chicago Style

A Quick and Easy Guide

College research can be taxing; sometimes it seems like you're trapped in an endless cycle of having new information thrown at you just when you're starting to have everything all figured out. You've finally figured out the basics of citing sources, you've done papers in MLA format, and you even went out on a limb and did that sociology paper in APA format like your instructor asked. Now, just as you've gotten that figured out, your history instructor says he wants your paper to be in Chicago style, and he wants you to include footnotes. While it's easy to despair and give into the urge to just give up, step back and take a deep breath instead – you managed APA and MLA, so you can manage Chicago style. While it appears more complex than MLA or APA on the surface, Chicago style can still be broken down into three key parts, just like any other citation style:

- How the paper looks
- How the sources are cited
- How the citations are documented

The complete rules for Chicago style are defined by the *Chicago Manual of Style* (17th ed., 2017), and they are simplified in Turabian's *Manual for Writers* (9th ed., 2018). The nuance of Chicago style is well beyond the scope of this resource, but this guide provides an overview of the parts that community college students are most likely to use. It's also important to remember that your instructor may have specific requirements for how you format your paper, and those instructions should always take precedence over a generalized resource like this one.

Format (How the Paper Looks)

Chicago style has a fairly specific set of instructions for how a paper should look. This is how you should format your paper in Chicago style:

- Type and print your paper on white, letter-sized (8.5 x 11-inch) paper.
- Set the line spacing of your paper to double-spaced. (Do not double-space your paper by pressing the enter key at the end of each line.)
- Use the Palatino Linotype typeface in size 12 unless your instructor specifies otherwise.
- Set all margins to one inch. (This is the default setting in Microsoft Word.)

- Indent the first line of each body paragraph by half an inch. Do this by setting the paragraph indent in your word processing software; do not use the spacebar to create an indent.
- Create a plain page number in the header, using Arabic numerals and aligned to the right. Do not include the title page in your page numbering.
- Type the title at the top of the first main page (after the title page), centered.
- Capitalize each word in the title except for articles (“a,” “an,” and “the”), conjunctions (“and,” “but,” etc.), and prepositions (“to,” “in,” “of,” etc.).
- Use the same font for the title as the rest of your paper; don’t use bold or underlined text in the title.
- Use italic text only when giving the names of complete works such as books, or (sparingly) for emphasis.

Front Matter

Like APA format (and unlike MLA format), papers written in Chicago style must usually include a cover page with the paper’s front matter. Your instructor may not want a cover page; if this is the case, simply include your front matter at the top of the first page in accordance with your instructor’s guidelines.

The cover page for a Chicago style paper should be *single-spaced*, in the same font as the rest of the paper, and centered. It should include the following:

- In the top third of the page, type the title in all capital letters.
 - If there is a subtitle, put a colon after the title and create a *soft return* (by pressing Shift+Enter) to type the subtitle on a separate line, still in all capital letters.
- Near the bottom of the page, type your name, the *full* name of the class (in other words, you should not just write “HIS 121”; instead, write the full name of the class: “HIS 121: US History I”), and the *due* date (not the current date) of the paper with no abbreviations as month, day, year (for instance, “November 5, 2020”).
- Put each piece of information on a separate line using soft returns.

Footnotes (How the Sources Are Cited)

As with any other research format, papers formatted in Chicago style must acknowledge their sources of information. Unlike APA and MLA formats, however, Chicago style generally uses footnotes instead of parenthetical citations. You can easily insert footnotes in Microsoft Word by clicking on “Insert Footnote” under the “References” tab on the ribbon (ignore the “Citations and Bibliography” section; it will *not* cite your sources correctly). All footnotes should be single-spaced and should be in size 10, with a half-inch first-line indent for each footnote. The information you include in a footnote depends on

whether you're citing a particular source for the first time or a source you've already cited earlier in the paper.

Citing a Source for the First Time

If you're writing the first footnote for a particular source, include the following information in this order, as available, in the footnote:

1. Author's first and last name or corporate name (for example, "John Smith," "American Psychological Association"), followed by a comma
 - a. If there are more than three authors, use "et al." after the first three author names
2. The title of the article, in quotation marks and title case, followed by a comma
3. The title of the complete work, in italic text
 - a. The volume and issue number, after the titles of academic journals or other periodicals
4. The publication information, in parentheses
 - a. The city (and state/province, if the city is not well-known) of publication, followed by a colon
 - b. The publisher, followed by a comma
 - c. The publication date as specifically as possible (in order of month, day, year), followed by a comma
5. The page number
6. For online sources, the database name (if you retrieved your source from a database), followed by the DOI (if available, in URL form) or stable URL (that is, the web address).

A typical footnote for the first citation of a particular source might look something like this:

1. Steven M. Stanley, *Earth System History* (New York: W.H. Freeman and Company, 2009), 215.

If you're citing a peer-reviewed journal or some other type of periodical source, don't forget to include the volume and issue numbers, followed by the date in parentheses and a colon and then the page number (journals don't usually include any publisher information).

2. Ricardo T. Bangarino, "Households' Natural Disaster Preparedness: A View from a Second Class Municipality in a Developing Country." *EnvironmentAsia* 9, no. 2 (July 2016): 162. EBSCOhost, <https://doi.org/10.14456/ea.2016.20>

Some sources have very little information available. While it's usually better to find alternative sources in such cases, that's not always possible. If that happens, the simple rule is that you can't give information you don't have. In cases like that, your source might have a short footnote that looks something like this:

3. Human Rights Watch, *Israel: Excessive Force against Protesters*. (July 18, 2013). <https://www.hrw.org/news/2013/07/18/israel-excessive-force-against-protesters>.

In this example, which comes from an article on a special-interest organization's website, there is no specific author, so the authoring organization's name is given. The article doesn't belong to a larger publication, so it is considered a complete work on its own and therefore italicized. The only other information available is the date of publication and the URL.

Citing a Previously Cited Source

If you've already footnoted a source in your paper, you don't need to include all of that information every single time you cite it. After you've cited a source once, you use a simplified citation for any other times you use that particular source. For a simplified footnote, all you need is the author's last name, a shortened version of the title, and the page number from the source. For example:

4. Bangarino, "Natural Disaster Preparedness." 158.

Citing Scripture

Since Chicago style is often the style of choice for religion instructors, it is not altogether unusual for Chicago-style papers to include references to the Bible, the Qur'an, or other religious texts. Remember that religious sources such as scripture should always be used to *explain* a religious viewpoint, and never to *press* a political point. Remember too that it's usually a bad idea to make catch-all statements about scripture such as "the Bible clearly says..." or similar, since there are usually many different scholarly interpretations of any given part of scripture. For example:

WRONG: Same-sex marriage should be illegal because Leviticus 18:22 forbids it.

RIGHT: Some Christians believe same-sex marriage to be wrong because of their interpretations of Leviticus 18:22.

In the above example, the sentence labeled "right" is simply an explanation of why some people believe the way they do. The sentence labeled "wrong," however, is both academically dishonest (as it does not reflect a contextual view of even the verse in question) and a flawed argument (since secular laws do not rely on scripture for substance).

If you need to cite scripture, doing so is a simple matter of citing book, chapter, and verse. For the first citation, give the full name of the translation (for example, "New Living Translation"), and in subsequent citations from the same translation, use the abbreviation (for example, "NLT").

For instance:

One central belief to Christianity is that Jesus grants salvation to believers, who "will not perish but have eternal life."⁵

5. John 3:16, New Living Translation.

For the Qur'an, do the same, but cite as "Qur'an" followed by surah and verse. For example:

Most Muslims believe that it is wrong to force their religious beliefs onto others, because they believe the righteous will come to those beliefs on their own, since "truth stands out clear from error."⁶

6. Qur'an 2:256

For other sacred texts (such as the Vedas or the Book of Mormon), simply use the name of the text with that religion's standard conventions for citing it.

Bibliography (How the Citations Are Documented)

Although the in-text citations of Chicago style are considerably more comprehensive than those of the APA and MLA formats, a paper in Chicago style still needs a list of references at the end so all the complete source information is indexed in one place.

That list of references, known as the **bibliography**, should be formatted like this:

- The bibliography should be on its own page (or pages), not with the main text.
 - Don't create a separate document for your bibliography unless your instructor requires it. Use a page break (Ctrl+Enter) instead.
- The title "Bibliography" should appear at the top of the page, centered.
- The header and font should match the rest of the paper, but the bibliography should be *single-spaced* unless your instructor requests otherwise.
- The entries in the bibliography should be listed alphabetically.
- Each entry should be treated as its own "paragraph" for formatting purposes, with a half-inch *hanging indent*.
 - Create the hanging indent with the paragraph tools or rulers in your word processing software. Never use the spacebar to indent text.

Each entry in the bibliography should look more or less like the footnote where it first appears, but with the following changes:

- The author should be written with last name first (for example "Smith, John" as opposed to "John Smith").
 - For multiple authors, use the last name first for only the first author. After that, use first name first with each author.
 - If your source has more than ten authors, list only the first seven, followed by "et al." (even if you listed fewer in the footnotes).

- Do not enclose the publication information in parentheses (except the date for journals).
- Include the access date in parentheses after the URL (not needed for a DOI).
- Include the full range of page numbers for articles as opposed to the citation-specific page number.

For a book:

FOOTNOTE:

1. Steven M. Stanley, *Earth System History* (New York: W. H. Freeman and Company, 2009), 215.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- Stanley, Steven M., *Earth System History*. New York: W.H. Freeman and Company, 2009.

For a journal article:

FOOTNOTE:

2. Ricardo T. Bangarino, "Households' Natural Disaster Preparedness: A View from a Second Class Municipality in a Developing Country." *EnvironmentAsia* 9, no. 2 (July 2016): 162. EBSCOhost, <https://doi.org/10.14456/ea.2016.20>

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- Bangarino, Ricardo T. "Households' Natural Disaster Preparedness: A View from a Second Class Municipality in a Developing Country." *EnvironmentAsia* 9, no. 2 (July 2016): 158-164. EBSCOhost, <https://doi.org/10.14456/ea.2016.20>

For a web article:

FOOTNOTE:

3. Alejandra Borunda, "The Science Connecting Wildfires to Climate Change." *National Geographic Science* (National Geographic, September 17, 2020).
<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/2020/09/climate-change-increases-risk-fires-western-us/>

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- Borunda, Alejandra. "The Science Connecting Wildfires to Climate Change." *National Geographic Science*. National Geographic, September 17, 2020.
<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/2020/09/climate-change-increases-risk-fires-western-us/> (Accessed September 21, 2020).

The Bible and the Qur'an don't need to be included in the bibliography, but they do need to be footnoted appropriately if you use them in your paper.