A Sample Chicago Style Paper

Joe Student

Expos 20: Why Shakespeare?

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This paper is formatted in Chicago style, which is a style often used in the Humanities. If you want to be taken seriously as a writer, your paper must be properly formatted. Doing so signals your membership in an academic field or profession. Before turning in a paper meant to be written in Chicago style, hold it up next to this one. If they do not look the same, then you have incorrectly formatted your paper. If, however, a professor provides specific guidelines for formatting a paper, you should follow them, even if they differ from what is described below (and you should resist the urge to tell your professor that his or her formatting guidelines are incorrect, even though they are).

Formatting

If you are submitting a hard copy, papers should be printed from a laser-quality printer on separate sheets of 8½ x 11 inch paper, stapled in the upper left-hand corner. Whether submitted as a hard copy or electronically, all Chicago-style papers should be typed in 12-point Times New Roman font with double-spaced lines. The entire paper – including the front matter (i.e., title, name, date, etc.) and the notes – should be in the same type and size of font, nothing bolded or otherwise stylized. Also, the entire paper – including the front matter, the notes, and any block-quotes – should be double-spaced. Margins on all sides should be one inch (not 1.25 inches, which is sometimes the default setting in some word processing programs). Paragraphs should be indented one-half inch and left-justified (not full-justified). Do not skip lines between paragraphs (which is the default setting in some word processing programs). It is standard to include only one space after periods that end sentences; however, double-spacing between sentences is okay. Finally, using the automatic function in your word-processing program, create a header. Put your last name and the page number in the upper right-hand corner of the header, one-half inch from the top and right-justified.

Front Matter

Chicago style puts front matter on a title page. All information on the title page should be centered but not bolded or otherwise stylized. The title should be centered a third of the way down the page. If you have a subtitle, end the title with a colon and place the subtitle on the line below the title. Capitalize the first letter of the first word of your title, the first word after a semicolon or colon if you use either one, and the first letter of all the other words except articles, conjunctions, and prepositions. After your title, skip several lines and write your name. Then skip a few more lines and include the course name, your professor’s name, and the date. Begin your paper at the top of the second page without anything before it.

Citations

Regardless of the style you’re using, you must remember to cite your sources, whether you are quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing, or utilizing ideas or information someone else has published. Chicago style cites sources using footnotes or endnotes (it doesn’t matter which you use: different journals and different professors prefer different formants). As such, Chicago-style documentation consists of two parts: (1) a numerical note in the text that refers readers to a footnote or endnote, and (2) a note that includes complete bibliographic information and commentary if needed.

To create a footnote or endnote, use your word processing program’s note function (in Microsoft Word, this is found under *Insert*, and then *Footnote…*).If you do so, your notes will remain tied to the place in the text to which they apply (e.g., if you add a new footnote at the start of the paper, note #1 will automatically become note #2). When using a source, you should make the author or title you’re referring to clear in your introduction of the quote or information. Once you’ve cited a text with a note that gives the full bibliographic information, subsequent references to that work can be cited in-text as long as it’s clear which work you’re referring to. For example, let’s say you wanted to quote Jeff Wilson on Chicago style. The first reference would require a note: “This paper is formatted in Chicago style, which is a style often used in the Humanities.”[[1]](#footnote-1) Subsequent references to Wilson could be cited in-text “as long as it’s clear,” Wilson says, “which work you’re referring to” (4). Note that, in footnoted quotes, punctuation comes inside the quote, but in subsequent in-text citations the punctuation comes after the parenthetical citation.

If a quotation is less than four lines, incorporate it in your text and enclose it in double quotation marks, as in the quotes in the previous paragraph. If a quotation is four lines or more, it should be block-quoted, meaning that it is displayed in a freestanding block of text, indented one inch, without quotation marks. For example, you might quote from this paper as follows:

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Note that a block quote is indented one-half inch from the left margin, and that, as in this sentence, your writing resumes flush left (not indented, which would signal the start of a new paragraph). Also note that, in a block quote, the end punctuation comes before the parenthetical citation.

Italicize the titles of books and other long works, such as web sites. Use italics, not underlining, throughout your paper: typographically, italics mean the same thing as underlining, and italics look better. Use quotation marks around the titles of periodical articles, short stories, poems, and other short works.

Like all styles, Chicago guidelines for citations are extremely detailed. Each citation must follow the format specified in the most recent edition of the *Chicago Manuel of Style*, which at the time of this writing is the 16th edition, published in 2010.[[2]](#footnote-2) Be very cautious of information about Chicago style that is available on the internet, as it is often outdated, incomplete, sloppy, or just wrong.

1. Jeffrey R. Wilson, “A Sample Chicago-Style Paper,” in *This is How to Write* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 235. As you can see in this note, Chicago-style conveys bibliographic information in footnotes and endnotes (as in the previous sentence), but it also allows for commentary in these notes (as in the current sentence). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Chicago Manual of Style Online is available through the library: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/home.html. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)