

# chicago style image citation guidelines

## chicago

**chicago style image citation guidelines** **chicago** presents a comprehensive approach to acknowledging the visual sources that enrich academic and creative works. Properly citing images, whether they are photographs, illustrations, or digital media, is crucial for avoiding plagiarism, giving credit to creators, and allowing readers to locate the original works. This guide delves into the intricacies of Chicago style for image citations, covering both notes-and-bibliography and author-date systems, and addresses common scenarios like citing artworks, photographs from archives, and web images. Mastering these guidelines ensures scholarly integrity and enhances the credibility of your research.

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## Understanding the Importance of Image Citation in Chicago Style

The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) provides a robust framework for academic and professional writing, and its guidelines extend to the proper citation of visual materials. Images are not merely decorative; they often convey essential information, support arguments, or serve as primary source material. Failing to cite them appropriately can lead to accusations of academic dishonesty and diminish the scholarly value of your work.

In Chicago style, the primary purpose of citation, whether for textual or visual sources, is to provide readers with the necessary information to find the original source themselves. This transparency is fundamental to academic integrity. For images, this means identifying the creator, the title of the work, the date of creation, and the location where the image can be accessed or was accessed. Adhering to these principles ensures that your research is both ethical and credible, respecting intellectual property rights and fostering a culture of proper attribution.

## Core Components of a Chicago Style Image Citation

Regardless of which Chicago style system you employ (notes-and-bibliography or author-date), certain fundamental pieces of information are generally required to construct a

complete image citation. These components work together to provide a clear and traceable record of the image's origin.

## Essential Information for Image Citations

The following elements are typically included in a Chicago style image citation. The specific order and format may vary slightly depending on the system used and the nature of the image itself.

- **Creator:** The name of the artist, photographer, illustrator, or originating entity.
- **Title:** The title of the artwork, photograph, illustration, or the descriptive title of the image itself if no formal title exists.
- **Date:** The year the image was created or published.
- **Medium:** The materials used or the type of image (e.g., oil on canvas, gelatin silver print, digital illustration).
- **Dimensions:** The physical size of the original artwork, if relevant and available.
- **Collection/Location:** Where the original artwork is housed (e.g., museum, gallery, personal collection) or the archive where the photograph is stored.
- **Accession Number:** A unique identifier for the artwork within a collection.
- **Publication Information:** For images reproduced in books or journals, include the book/journal title, editor/author, publication date, page number, and publisher.
- **Online Source Information:** For images accessed online, include the website name, URL, and the date accessed.

## Citing Images in the Notes-and-Bibliography System

The notes-and-bibliography system, common in history and some humanities fields, utilizes footnotes or endnotes for citations within the text, supplemented by a bibliography at the end of the work. Image citations follow a similar pattern, requiring detailed information in the notes and a more condensed, alphabetized entry in the bibliography.

## Footnotes and Endnotes for Images

In your text, you will typically place a superscript number adjacent to the image or the sentence referencing it. The corresponding note will provide the full citation details. For an artwork, a note might look like this:

1. Johannes Vermeer, *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, c. 1665, oil on canvas, 44.5 cm × 39 cm, Mauritshuis, The Hague.

For a photograph found online, the note would include different details:

2. Ansel Adams, "Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico," 1941, gelatin silver print, The Ansel Adams Gallery, photographed January 1, 1941, accessed January 15, 2024, <https://www.anseladams.com/gallery/moonrise-hernandez-new-mexico>.

When an image is reproduced in a book or journal, the citation should reflect that publication:

3. Leonardo da Vinci, *Mona Lisa*, c. 1503–1506, oil on poplar panel, Musée du Louvre, Paris, reproduced in Walter Isaacson, *Leonardo da Vinci* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017), 301.

## Bibliography Entries for Images

The bibliography entry for an image should be alphabetized by the creator's last name (or the title if no creator is listed). It generally follows a more condensed format than the first note, omitting some redundant information. For an artwork:

Vermeer, Johannes. *Girl with a Pearl Earring*. c. 1665. Oil on canvas. Mauritshuis, The Hague.

For an online photograph:

Adams, Ansel. "Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico." 1941. Gelatin silver print. The Ansel Adams Gallery. Accessed January 15, 2024. <https://www.anseladams.com/gallery/moonrise-hernandez-new-mexico>.

For an image from a book:

Da Vinci, Leonardo. *Mona Lisa*. c. 1503–1506. Oil on poplar panel. Musée du Louvre, Paris. Reproduced in Isaacson, Walter. *Leonardo da Vinci*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017.

# Citing Images in the Author-Date System

The author-date system, prevalent in sciences and some social sciences, uses in-text citations that include the author's last name and the year of publication, along with page numbers if applicable. A reference list at the end of the document provides full bibliographic details for all sources cited.

## In-Text Citations for Images

In the author-date system, image citations are integrated differently into the text. If you are discussing an artwork, you might refer to it directly, followed by the artist and date in parentheses:

The composition of Vermeer's *Girl with a Pearl Earring* (Vermeer c. 1665) remains captivating.

For images obtained online or from other published works, the in-text citation typically includes the author (if known), the date, and potentially a figure number:

The striking image of the moonrise over New Mexico (Adams 1941) is iconic.

When referring to an image reproduced in a secondary source, the citation points to the original creator and the date of the original work, and the reference list entry will identify the secondary source.

## Reference List Entries for Images

The reference list compiles all sources cited in the text. For images, the entries are alphabetized by the creator's last name. The format aims to provide sufficient information for retrieval.

For an artwork:

Vermeer, Johannes. c. 1665. *Girl with a Pearl Earring*. Oil on canvas. Mauritshuis, The Hague.

For an online photograph:

Adams, Ansel. 1941. "Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico." Gelatin silver print. The Ansel Adams Gallery. Accessed January 15, 2024.  
<https://www.anseladams.com/gallery/moonrise-hernandez-new-mexico>.

For an image from a book (where the book is the primary source for the image):

Da Vinci, Leonardo. c. 1503–1506. *Mona Lisa*. Oil on poplar panel. Musée du Louvre, Paris. In *Leonardo da Vinci*, by Walter Isaacson, 301. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017.

## Special Cases in Chicago Style Image Citation

Chicago style provides flexibility for citing various types of visual materials, acknowledging that not all images fit neatly into standard categories. Special considerations arise for images where the creator is unknown, for images in digital databases, or when citing images found on social media platforms.

### Images Without a Known Creator

When the creator of an image is unknown, the citation typically begins with the title of the work. For example, if citing an anonymous historical photograph:

#### **Notes-and-Bibliography:**

4. "View of the Chicago Riverfront." n.d. Black and white photograph, Chicago History Museum, Chicago.

#### **Bibliography:**

"View of the Chicago Riverfront." n.d. Black and white photograph. Chicago History Museum, Chicago.

#### **Author-Date:**

"View of the Chicago Riverfront" (n.d.) depicts the city's early development.

#### **Reference List:**

"View of the Chicago Riverfront." n.d. Black and white photograph. Chicago History Museum, Chicago.

## Images from Online Databases and Archives

Citing images from specialized online databases (like Getty Images, ARTstor, or institutional archives) requires including information about the database itself. This helps readers understand the context of access.

#### **Notes-and-Bibliography:**

5. Edward Hopper, "Nighthawks," 1942, oil on canvas, Art Institute of Chicago, accessed

January 15, 2024, ARTstor, <https://www.artstor.org/>.

### **Bibliography:**

Hopper, Edward. 1942. "Nighthawks." Oil on canvas. Art Institute of Chicago. Accessed January 15, 2024. ARTstor. <https://www.artstor.org/>.

## **Images Found on Social Media**

Images shared on social media platforms, such as Instagram or Twitter, can be cited if they are the best available source. Include the username of the poster, the content of the post, the platform name, the date of posting, and the URL.

### **Notes-and-Bibliography:**

6. @ChicagosFoodie, "Best deep dish in the city! ChicagoEats," Instagram photo, January 14, 2024, [https://www.instagram.com/p/C2Ct2W\\_O12Q/](https://www.instagram.com/p/C2Ct2W_O12Q/).

### **Bibliography:**

@ChicagosFoodie. "Best deep dish in the city! ChicagoEats." Instagram photo, January 14, 2024. [https://www.instagram.com/p/C2Ct2W\\_O12Q/](https://www.instagram.com/p/C2Ct2W_O12Q/).

When citing social media in the author-date system, it can be tricky if the poster doesn't use a formal name. Often, the username functions as the "author."

### **Author-Date:**

The vibrant street art scene is well-documented online (@UrbanArtChicago 2023).

### **Reference List:**

@UrbanArtChicago. 2023. "New mural on Wabash Ave!" Twitter post. October 20, 2023. <https://twitter.com/UrbanArtChicago/status/1715447470115534908>.

## **Frequently Asked Questions about Chicago Style Image Citation Guidelines**

### **Q: What is the difference between citing an image in a note and in a bibliography/reference list?**

A: In the notes-and-bibliography system, the note provides a full or shortened citation for the specific instance the image is used, while the bibliography entry is a more formal, alphabetized record of all sources. In the author-date system, the in-text citation is brief (author and date), and the reference list entry contains all the publication details.

## **Q: Do I need to cite every image I use?**

A: Yes, you must cite all images that are not your own original work or in the public domain. This includes photographs, illustrations, charts, graphs, and any other visual media used to convey information or support your arguments.

## **Q: How do I cite a painting that is part of a museum collection?**

A: You will need to identify the artist, the title of the painting, the date of creation, the medium, the dimensions (if relevant), the name of the museum where it is housed, and its location (city, country). If available, an accession number can also be included.

## **Q: What if I found an image on Google Images? Can I cite that?**

A: Google Images is a search engine, not a primary source. You should try to find the original source of the image. If you cannot find the original creator or publication details, you may cite the website where you found it, but it's always best practice to trace it back further.

## **Q: Is it necessary to include the URL for online images?**

A: Yes, for images accessed online, the URL is essential for allowing readers to locate the source. You should also include the date you accessed the image, as online content can change or disappear.

## **Q: How do I cite a figure that I created myself?**

A: If you created the figure (e.g., a chart or graph based on your own data), you generally do not need to cite it as a source. However, you should still label it as "Figure X" and you may want to add a note indicating that it was created by the author.

## **Q: What if the image is part of a presentation or lecture?**

A: If you are citing an image from a presentation or lecture, and it is not published elsewhere, you should cite it as a personal communication. This typically involves the speaker's name, the title of the presentation (if any), the date, and the location or medium (e.g., "presented at the University of Chicago, March 15, 2024").

## **Q: Do I need to cite images that are clearly transformative or used under fair use?**

A: Even when using an image under fair use principles, Chicago style generally requires attribution to the original creator. Fair use pertains to the legal right to use copyrighted material without permission for purposes such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, or research; it does not negate the need for citation.

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