

Chicago Style: The Author-Date System



There are TWO basic documentation systems in Chicago:

- A. **Notes & Bibliography** (also called the “humanities system” because it is favored by writers in literature, history, and the arts)
- B. **Author – Date** (favored by writers in the physical, natural and social sciences)

The Author – Date System:

- Uses in-text citations that include the author’s last name, publication date of the work cited, and page number(s) (if applicable).
- Paper is followed by a list of references, where the full details of each source appear.

In-text citations:

All of Eurasia was affected by climatic oscillations during Pleistocene glacials and interglacials (Frenzel 1968). ...Behavioral observations can provide useful insights into evolutionary relationships, as Morris and Morris (1966, 1-24) first tried to show for the giant panda.

- * note that there is no comma between the author’s last name and the date.
- * note that there *is* a comma between the date and the page number(s)

Entries in reference list:

Frenzel, B. 1968. The Pleistocene vegetation of northern Eurasia. *Science* 161:637-49.

Morris, R., and D. Morris. 1966. *Men and pandas*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Note these aspects of the reference list entries for this system:

- Only the authors’ first initials are given
- The date appears immediately after the authors’ names and is *not* enclosed in parentheses
- Only the first word in the titles and subtitles of articles, journals, and books is capitalized. Every other word begins with a lowercase letter except proper nouns such as “Eurasia.”
- Titles of articles are not placed in quotation marks. Titles of books and journals are italicized.

How to use this system:

As with any documentation system, close consultation with a good reference guide is essential to using the system correctly. We recommend the following which go into detail about the precise format of in-text citations and reference list entries for all types of sources. Examples of the Author-Date system in both these guides are labeled “T” for in-text citation and “R” for reference list entry.

- Chicago Manual of Style, 15th ed. (available at Writing Center & library reference desk)
- Chicago Manual Online Quick Guide:
http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

Examples taken from The Chicago Manual of Style, 15th edition.