

*Doing the Actual Research and Citing Your Sources Using Turabian/Chicago  
Style*

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History 230: The American Civil War

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## Doing the Actual Research

The best research never ends. Start with your list of secondary and primary sources and begin to read. Just wading in is OK. After getting the sources together and doing general reading, it is best to carefully plan your research. Normally, research includes steps to define a topic, ask good questions, read, develop a thesis, find and evaluate the best works in support of your thesis, read more intently, take good notes, organize your findings, document your findings and publish your results. Unfortunately, students usually have lots of information on either end—developing your thesis, or writing the draft—but often do not have a clue about doing the actual research. This guide helps students with the tasks of note taking, organizing, and documenting your research.

Evaluating the best sources is the start of actual research. Look for secondary sources that are professional—from historians, universities, colleges, and government agencies. Avoid secondary sources from popular or social sources, from amateurs, from public or elementary schools, and from obviously biased organizations. The most useful secondary sources will come from historians whose research and writing credentials are clear. For example, your test book author, James McPherson, is a Pulitzer Prize winning writer and author of dozens of books on the Civil War era. All of the works listed in the guide to *Creating a Working Bibliography* are from reputable authors. Generally, good secondary sources have more recent

publication dates, at least within the last ten years. However, sometimes, it is helpful to your thesis to explore an older secondary source and compare it to new research. The better secondary sources avoid obvious bias and often address arguments counter to their own. Finally, the secondary materials you use should clearly note their sources.

Look for primary sources that are as close to the original as possible. A firsthand account of a battle is better than a second hand report. Primary sources should also have a clear author or creator. Primary sources are clearly biased in many cases, so you need to use them with that in mind. For example, the Official Records (OR) of Civil War battles have accounts from both Confederate and Union officers. As you might imagine, these accounts of the same battle differ greatly in most cases. Remember you are reading materials created by humans at the time. Such accounts might be biased with the author's intent, his or her personal viewpoints, or with unintentional misinformation. Always ask a few questions about each primary source. Who created it? When was it created? Why was it created? Try to understand the intent of the document creator. An autobiography is almost always "intentional" meaning that it was written to explain or detail a person's experience. Such an intentional work is biased. Yet, it can still be helpful—especially if compared to other sources. A letter from a soldier to his family that mentions the work of contrabands is less intentional. The original intention of the letter is personal communication, but it also contains some

unintentional information about contrabands. Usually primary sources noting statistics such as battle casualties are the least intentional sources. Look for primary sources with a known creator, an identifiable intention, and that supports your thesis.

As you work with these sources, note taking is essential. In the electronic age this should be done with some word processing software and a good note-taking form or template. A good note taking form should have space for subject, date recorded, dates, source, ideas, quotes, and comments. The Center for History and New Media at George Mason University has developed a free online tool for tracking historical research called Zotero ([http://: www.zotero.org](http://www.zotero.org)). However you take notes, be sure you keep careful and consistent information.

#### Citing Your Sources: Critical Information for Turabian/Chicago Style

Students find source citation difficult for several reasons. Students often do not understand why citation is so critical and how it will become a life skill if only mastered. Students are frequently bewildered by the array of different styles, and the options within those styles. Many students struggle with citations simply because they do not follow directions or use commonly available reference works. Students also fail to ask for clarification if directions are unclear. All of these issues can be easily mastered and students can gain a lifelong skill by careful review of this brief paper, and

effectively using either *The Chicago Manual of Style*; or *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Thesis, and Dissertations*.

Correctly cited sources indicate that you have studied the subject and have learned from someone else's work. Nearly all of human learning is based on the learning of those who preceded us. Professions, jobs and life skills rely heavily on the collective knowledge of our yesterdays. Engineers improve our physical/technical lives by reviewing engineering proofs of the past and making newer better solutions for today. Physicians and nurses make patients lives healthier by documenting and learning from previous patients. Bankers, technical workers, teachers, nurses, accountants, computer programmers and others rely on documented work—and we will benefit when professionals learn new ideas from that work. What good would it do if a scientist developed a new life saving drug and we had no “notes” about where the drug came from, or how to reproduce it? While we may not be creating new drugs or discoveries of the future—when we formally search information, document that search, answer questions with our observations, and tell others—we learn a universal skill.

In order to fully develop this skill, students must be academically honest. Academic honesty is at the core of the learning process. In this process we each agree that inside the academic community we will collect, read, and evaluate other people's work. Then we agree that we will give them credit for their labors. And finally we agree to try our best to learn

something new from our evaluation of others' work. This leads our communities to new and better ideas; and it leaves behind a clear trail of evidence, so others can agree, test, disagree, or change the ideas that shape our thinking and our world. There is a darker and more dangerous side of research. Students can easily and purposefully Google their way through an assignment, paper, or essay. Students can also accidentally use an idea, quotation, or paraphrase from another source and not record that source. —and such students are guilty of “stealing”. Since your professors can just as easily Google their way to your undocumented source, students are caught and punished. Students who do not cheat, nor buy papers online, nor copy, nor plagiarize are gleefully engaged in “academic honesty”. There are plenty of resources to help you on the road to academic honesty.

The landmark book, Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, provides guidelines to writers in the liberal arts and especially history. It is virtually the same as the so-called Chicago style of documentation, and is very similar to that used in James M. McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction*. Another guide, *The Chicago Manual of Style*, now in the 17<sup>th</sup> edition, uses the same style as Turabian and is a fantastic resource for writers. There are also “quick” summary versions of these two style guides online. The online guides are helpful but incomplete, so use them with caution.

Research papers submitted with Turabian/Chicago style use two different places for citations. Each work, idea, quote, or source used (a book, article, web page, email, photograph, letter, etc.) is numbered and cited according to directions and listed in order used at the end of the paper in an *Endnotes* page. In addition to this list, the paper contains an alphabetical list of all sources called a *Bibliography*—also at the end of the paper, after the *Endnotes* section.

For some examples citing books, articles, newspapers, etc. see this online guide:

[http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian\\_citationguide.html](http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html)

Citing primary sources, especially those found online, can be trickier than printed sources. First do not be confused with the many types of online images. Use the original medium to describe the source. Since all are images found online calling them images is meaningless. You need to determine and describe their original type. The original medium is underlined in the examples below.

1. Photograph located online. (images might be jpg; png; or other files).
2. Transcribed letter located online (transcriptions might be docs; pdf's; or rtf files).
3. Scanned image of a letter located online. (images might be jpg; png; or other files).
4. Transcribed diary, autobiography, testimony located online.

5. Scanned image of diary, autobiography, or testimony located online.
6. Scanned image of a sketch, map, or pamphlet located online.
7. Re-recorded sound recording located online.

Images and other primary sources found online must be used carefully.

They must relate to and support your thesis and they must be cited correctly. Unless you are researching art, photography, or mapping and cartography it is highly unlikely that you would ever need to insert an image into your paper. The point of this use is to cite the image as a virtual representation of the original primary source. When citing a photograph use these pieces of information:

Last name, First name Middle initial. *Title of Work*. Format. City: Publishing Company, copyright date. Source, Collection. Medium, <http://...>(accessed date). Example:

O'Sullivan, Timothy, photographer. "[Incidents of the war. A Harvest of Death, Gettysburg, July 1863.]" Photograph. Washington, D.C.: Philip & Solomons, c1865. From Library of Congress: *Selected Civil War Photographs, 1861-1865*. [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/cwar:@field\(NUMBER+@band\(cwp+4a40875\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/cwar:@field(NUMBER+@band(cwp+4a40875))) (accessed January 9, 2006).

For an online transcription of a primary source you need this information:

Last name, First name Middle initial. *Title of Work*. Format. City: Publishing



Company, copyright date. Source, Collection. Medium, <http://...>(accessed date). Example:

Keller, Helen. *Helen Keller to John Hitz, August 29, 1893*. Letter. From Library of Congress, *The Alexander Graham Bell Family Papers, 1862-1939*. <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=magbell&fileName=215/21500147/bellpage.db&re>cNum=0 (accessed January 11, 2006).

### Asking for Help & Other Conclusions

Research today is more and more a team effort. While we are not working in teams you should consider me on your side and you should consider all of the research guides in the course as a part of your team. If you are unsure about the next move, the best source, or the right citation, ask! Good luck.

*Endnotes [note—single space, indent these]*

Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Thesis, and Dissertations*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), XX.

James M. McPherson, *Ordeal By Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction*. (Boston: McGraw Hill Higher Education, 2009), XX.

The University of Chicago Press Staff, ed. *The Chicago Manual of Style, 16<sup>th</sup> ed.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), XX

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The University of Chicago Press Staff, ed. <http://>

[www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)

## Appendix

### Letter Worksheet

1. Physical description of letter: type paper, writing (by hand, etc.), wear & tear, folds, letterhead logo, envelope included, other:
2. Author, creator of letter:
3. Rank, title, etc of creator:
4. Date of letter:
5. Addressee of letter:
6. Relationship of addressee to creator:
7. Best approximate geographical location of letter's creation:
8. Approximate length of letter in lines or words:
9. General topic of letter:
10. List three to four specific topics in the letter (use quotes):
11. Quote any specific lines that tells you something useful about the writer, the recipient, or the Civil War era:
12. Note anything else unique about the letter: