Documenting Electronic Sources

For every source in your paper, you must provide complete bibliographical information so your reader will know where you got the information. This allows your readers to find the sources in order to evaluate your interpretation of them or read more extensively from them to gain a deeper understanding of the topic. There are numerous ways to document sources, and most academic disciplines have their own preferred methods and style manuals to guide the way. While each historian is different and opinions are in a constant state of flux, the most widely used manual for historians continues to be The Chicago Manual of Style.¹

*The Chicago Manual of Style* uses a system of footnotes or endnotes for documentation, along with a bibliography. Kate Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* and Mary Lynn Rampolla’s *A Pocket Guide to Writing History* are also widely used by historians, since they are both based on the Chicago system of documentation.² Most historians, feeling the system imprecise and prone to misunderstandings, do not accept parenthetical documentation as promoted by the Modern Language Association. However, as with all issues about writing, you should consult your professor’s guidelines for documentation and follow them. The following examples, based on the Chicago system, are simply models. They should not take the place of using the appropriate style manuals for your classes, especially since the examples treat only the most common citations. Please direct any questions you have to your professor or the HL.

★ *Note*: The first example in each case is the note form, footnote or endnote, and the second example in each case is the bibliography form. Take notice of the differences between the two forms in word order, punctuation, spacing, and format.

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★ You may limit your citations of a Web site to the notes, unless it is critical to your argument or frequently cited (or both)

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Online Encyclopedias

★ WIKIPEDIA: is NOT a viable source for formal History papers.
   o Entries are not checked for historical accuracy.
   o AVOID using Wikipedia in a history paper.

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★ Only cite in the notes
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42 Heather Stur, e-mail to author, 18 August 2014.

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★ Be sure to depend on material from academically accredited institutions.
★ When you use electronic sources suppress the hyperlinks.