



REFERENCING COMMON SENSE

When you can't find a category that your item fits in:

This is approximately the Chicago Manual's rule of thumb¹ for setting up references.

(1) Explore the Index to figure out what kind of material this is, i.e. visual aids, audio-visual material, lecture, speech or presentation, unpublished materials, or whatever they offer as possible categories.

- Go to that category and follow the instructions.

(2) If there is no corresponding specific category, find a reasonably approximate category.

- Go to that category and follow the instructions.

(3) If your manual has nothing try another manual. Then approximate this to the standard basic format of referencing in your preferred style, i.e. APA.

(4) If no reasonable approximation can be found, use common sense. Build your own:

- Check the introductory subsections of the section on references.
- Find the basic standard reference type.
- Learn to recognize the basic standard features of a reference, i.e. where the author, title and date go, plus other necessary details for a reader to find the same material: the publisher and location, a website which is the approximate equivalent of a publisher location, etc. and in what style.
- Identify the author, title and year of the material. State where you got it: a website address? A course number?
- If a web document, include the full date you accessed it.
- If a document, issued on a given date, as part of a lecture, add the actual date.
- No title? Invent a reasonable, brief description to serve as a title.

(5) Evaluate the reference you have built.

- Have you included sufficient information for a reader to go in search of the original material and obtain it?
- Then you have everything that is necessary and sufficient for a reference.
- And stylistically, it won't be far wrong from what actually is prescribed once you find the actual category.

¹ A rule based on experience as opposed to a written rule or specific protocol; a heuristic as opposed to an algorithm. The phrase goes back a thousand years to setting the measure of an inch from the King's thumb. Predates the urban legend about it being a measure of a stick to beat wives with.