

Follow the Footnote

I discovered that at the end of some sentences there was a number, and if you looked at the foot of the page the reference was to what it was all about...

– Harry Belafonte, on reading W. E. B. DuBois¹

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TOO MANY HISTORY STUDENTS struggle with the citation practices that are central to the historical method. They document their sources incorrectly—or not at all—and don’t know what to do with the footnotes and endnotes they encounter in the scholarly texts they read. Like most non-academic readers, they likely regard the footnote, and the scholarly apparatus as a whole, as a pedantic obstruction to uninterrupted reading, or as an alienating blob of authors and titles. For students hoping to avoid accusations of intellectual dishonesty, footnotes are the unpleasant and fussy necessity that they believe will shield them from plagiarism charges. Beyond that, the point of the footnote remains mostly unclear, and is too easily dismissed—“the literary equivalent of purple kale leaves at the edges of the crudités platter,” as one essayist has lamented.²

It only adds to student confusion that while history teachers who do talk about citations rattle on about the Chicago style, their professors in other disciplines demand that they use MLA, APA, or a style specific to a particular journal. Librarians often promote Zotero, EndNote, and other research management tools that offer

automatic formatting of citations. But beginning writers who rely on grammar and spell check software might never learn how to spell correctly or employ grammatical concepts independently of those tools; similar pitfalls await students who are introduced to citation practices through citation management programs. Considering all the contradictory instructions and unexplained expectations they encounter, we shouldn't be surprised that our students' scholarly apparatuses are formally incoherent and internally inconsistent.

But the sloppy footnote or the garbled bibliography—a standard feature of many student research papers—isn't the biggest problem. If instructors never teach students about citation practices, students won't learn that footnotes offer a crucial window into historians' methods of building an argument and using evidence. Considering the ubiquity of research paper assignments in college classes in the humanities and social sciences, it's also a missed opportunity to show students how to do good scholarly research on their own.

In hopes of more clearly communicating to students the importance of citations, as both an intellectual practice and a research resource, we—a professor and a subject librarian, both historians by training—have devised an in-class exercise we call “Follow the Footnote.” The general outline of the exercise is simple: students spend a class session in the library with a scholarly article or chapter that they have already read, focusing their attention on the text's footnotes (or endnotes); they hunt down physical and digital copies of the sources cited; and finally, they analyze and debate the connections between the author's claims and the evidence for those claims, first in small groups and then as a class.

After many years of refining this exercise, primarily implementing it in undergraduate research methods courses and other research-intensive upper-level courses, we have become evangelists for “Follow the Footnote” and the multitude of lessons it imparts. It introduces students to the syntax of footnotes, helps them to understand citations as a system of communication, and gives them the tools to participate in that system. By requiring students to track down cited sources, it acquaints them with a range of research techniques. It stimulates their thinking about the connections between the claims that historians make and the evidence they use to make those claims. The exercise empowers students to be active agents in the research process by encouraging them to look to scholarly secondary sources not only

as points of entry into scholarly conversation, but also as avenues for research and further exploration, as suggested by young Harry Belafonte's discovery of the riches included in W. E. B. Du Bois' footnotes. It also provides them with a powerful tool for beginning and refining their own search for sources by enabling them to draw on the scholarly literature to identify relevant primary sources or source types. In sum, "Follow the Footnote" works toward demystifying a central component of the historical method, gives a clearer view of how historians "do history," and helps students identify points of entry into their own history "doings."

Making it Explicit

In his literary meta-rumination on the history of the history footnote, Anthony Grafton ascribes profound power to the historical citation. Footnotes are "the humanist's rough equivalent of the scientist's report on data," he writes; "they offer the empirical support for stories told and arguments presented. Without them, historical theses can be admired or resented, but they cannot be verified or disproved."³ But most college students come to their history classes without experience in paying attention to footnotes. Much of their historical education to date has presumably been imparted by textbooks, which, as Sam Wineburg writes in *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts*, lack the "constant reference to the documentary record" that a scholarly apparatus provides. Textbooks create the impression that what is in fact interpretive work is instead a "closed story."⁴ The cognitive shift away from textbook thinking (where scholarly texts are purveyors of unassailable truth claims) and toward a more complex and challenging view of history as an argument based on evidence, rarely happens easily or naturally.

What better way, then, to encourage this intellectual transformation than by giving students the tools to probe footnotes for the information they provide? The epiphanic moment of the Follow the Footnote exercise happens when a student holds in hand, simultaneously, both a scholarly text making a historical claim *and* a primary or secondary source that the scholar has used to support that claim. The footnote manifests the direct connection between the two texts, and provides an opportunity for the student to understand, in concrete and practical terms, that the citation is where historians show their

work—not merely as an ethical practice, but so that readers can learn to access the evidence and perhaps come to their own conclusions.

The Follow the Footnote exercise propels students toward higher levels of historical thinking. The exercise’s capacity to introduce students to some of the core competencies and learning outcomes suggested by the American Historical Association’s Tuning Project, however, only suggests part of its merit. The Reference and User Services Association’s Information Literacy Guidelines and Competencies for Undergraduate History Students specifically identifies “Min[ing] references from secondary sources and us[ing] appropriate tools to locate them” as one of five key competencies in the broader frame of identifying and locating historical research tools.⁵

A recent article in *The New York Times* recalls a high school English teacher’s response to the publication of a book titled *None Dare Call It Treason* in 1964. A Cold War text in the McCarthyite vein, it claimed communist infiltration at every level of government and civic life, and was made to seem scholarly and sound by its 800 footnotes. The teacher responded to the book’s popularity among his students by bringing his class into the library and instructing them to follow the book’s footnotes. They discovered misquotations, distortions, and the perpetuation of lies and hoaxes; they realized the book—to use today’s parlance—was fake news.⁶ In our current information environment, it is more important than ever that students develop the skills, and the sensibility, that will lead them to dig deeper into the claims made by news outlets and advertisements—and on social media. Following footnotes helps students to develop that sensibility.

But first, they need to be made familiar with the form and grammar of the footnote. If we don’t do this, we shouldn’t be surprised that so few of our students develop any proficiency. They can’t differentiate between monographs or articles from scholarly journals, nor can they recognize a short-form citation if they’re not initiated into the system. Each discipline’s citation practice has its own signifiers, which function a bit like a basic language. When we are insufficiently explicit in helping our students decipher the Chicago Manual’s system, it is as if we are asking them to interpret a text that’s been written in an unfamiliar code, and asking them to write in that code themselves.

There is nothing intuitive about the reading or writing of footnotes. For those of us who engage with historical scholarship for a living,

these skills might seem natural and straightforward, or at least fairly easy to master. It's worth keeping in mind, however, that most academic historians figured out how to follow other scholars' citations, and construct our own, over years of advanced study with minimal instruction. We gained this knowledge through practice, and were particularly motivated to do so by our intellectual and vocational aspirations. Unfortunately, we then fail to give our own students explicit and straightforward instruction, assuming that they will develop this knowledge just like we did. As Leah Shopkow points out in her essay about tacit learning and historical argument, history faculty need to appreciate that undergraduate history students have not yet "joined the historical community of practice," and instructors therefore need to "teach epistemic moves in history more deliberately and clearly."⁷ But the practice of reading or creating a scholarly apparatus is not the kind of "tacit knowledge" that, as Michael Polanyi wrote, is "more than we can tell"—meaning the process is difficult to explain and most likely to be learned by doing.⁸ Though the rules of the Chicago style are formalistic, and attention to detail is required, they're in no way mysterious, and they're easy to learn.

Take, for example, the semi-colon, which separates multiple text references in a single citation. The semi-colon is regularly employed in scholarly notes, and both *The Chicago Manual of Style* and Kate Turabian's manual briefly explain the purpose and model the practice of using semi-colons.⁹ But undergraduates who are learning how to write research papers rarely use those advanced texts. Mary Lynn Rampolla's *Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, frequently assigned in undergraduate research courses, provides a comprehensive set of documentation models in the Chicago style.¹⁰ But every footnote and endnote in this guide proffers only a single source; even a student who reads Rampolla cover to cover would come away unfamiliar with the common practice of concatenating several sources in a single citation. Without clear explanation of the semi-colon's purpose, a footnote citing multiple sources becomes undecipherable.

Additionally, students at all levels may come to history courses without significant experience with using a library's catalog and databases to find scholarly sources. Footnote mining encompasses and reinforces a number of library-based competencies: how to distinguish between source types; how to look up sources in the library catalog and in pertinent databases; how to use call numbers

to find books; and, consequently, how to browse the stacks. In this exercise, the opportunity to develop hands-on experience using library resources to find cited sources also gives students heightened confidence in using library resources to find relevant materials. The searching skills the budding historians practice during the exercise literally serve to put the source materials into their hands, ready for interpretation and evaluation.

Before the Exercise

Preparation for the Follow the Footnote session requires two steps. One takes place in the classroom: students are introduced to the purpose, form, and syntax of footnotes. In our version of the exercise, an introductory handout (**Appendix A**) explains the purpose of citations, introduces them to the Chicago style's syntactical system, and presents a set of models from books, articles, and websites. Students then take a brief quiz (**Appendix B**) on that information, are asked to formulate a few footnotes on the board, and correct each other's efforts. In the process, students develop a basic level of prior knowledge that will help them to recognize the components of footnotes and navigate them more easily in the setting of the exercise.

The second (and arguably more important) preliminary step is choosing a scholarly text that will provide students with plentiful opportunities to find the sources cited. This choice will necessarily be dictated by the resources available in the library. The footnotes should refer to a significant number of easy-to-locate sources: scholarly books that are in the library's collection, either physically or digitally; articles that are on the shelves in bound volumes or are readily downloadable through online journal databases such as JSTOR or America: History and Life; and, if desired, digitally accessible primary sources. An article focused on local history may offer more success with primary source footnote mining, if subscription content databases containing local content (through, for example, ProQuest's Historical Newspapers collections) are accessible through the university library. Though we have not done this ourselves, an article relying heavily on a local archival repository's collections could productively be used for a similar exercise, though it would require close collaboration with the appropriate archivist. Such an exercise would present an excellent

opportunity to teach archival literacy, and could incorporate hands-on instruction that moves students from the citation to finding aid and calling up and locating the cited item.¹¹

Another reason for vetting the text is to identify potentially problematic footnotes—typos, incorrect citations, and so on. It is worthwhile to have students discover that even published scholarship contains errors, and for them to see the difficulties that incorrect citations can cause for other researchers. With some advance vetting, instructors will be prepared to offer suggestions for how to develop workarounds when stuck. Additionally, the session proceeds more smoothly if the footnotes are not overly dense. While multiple-source footnotes can provide useful teaching moments, long footnotes can present a stumbling block and might overwhelm students without much experience with this practice.

By the time the class assembles for the exercise, an article will have been mindfully chosen; that article will have been read by the students; and the class will already have had a brief discussion of citation purpose and syntax. They are now ready to start following footnotes.

The Exercise

We cannot stress enough the importance of doing this exercise in a library classroom, where students are working at computer workstations or laptops. Being in the library gives them easy access to the stacks, and having the books at hand and the articles pulled up on their computers enhances the interpretive work and the final discussion. An instructor at our university once proposed reconfiguring Follow the Footnote as a take-home exercise, where students would individually complete a worksheet and bring their answers to class. This variation would be far less effective. The peer-learning process, which is so central to the exercise, would likely be lost. The discussion that ends the class would also suffer, since their search strategies would not be fresh in their minds. Further, students would not be able to share their findings without checking out books or downloading relevant articles. Most important, the students benefit from having expert assistance immediately at hand—in our case, in the form of both professor and librarian free-floating around the room, assisting with search and interpretation questions and helping to brainstorm problem-solving techniques.

In the library classroom, students receive an activity handout (**Appendix C**) and break into small groups of two or three. Each group is asked to choose one or more footnotes from the assigned article and to locate some of the sources cited. All groups are required to find at least one physical book, one scholarly journal article from an online database, and one newspaper article. For many students, the very process of finding a book in the stacks or using an online journal database will be entirely unfamiliar, and some amount of instruction is required. While we do provide some pre-exercise instruction on secondary-source research, we have cut down the amount of lectured direction. Students are additionally directed to an online course guide created by the librarian (<https://research.library.gsu.edu/footnotes>) custom-designed for this exercise to provide instruction on searching for books, scholarly articles, historical newspapers, and historical periodicals.¹² After brief preparation, we set the students out on the exercise, knowing that many will need help with interpreting the footnotes and locating the cited resources. We have come to realize with Manu Kapur, who writes of “productive failure” in the context of math instruction, that “not overly structuring the problem-solving activities of learners...[and] permitting students to struggle and possibly even fail, can be a productive exercise.”¹³

The blend of individual work, peer collaboration, and expert tutelage, in this lively low-stakes environment, offsets the sense among students that this knowledge should be tacit or obvious. They see that their classmates are similarly struggling and learning, and they even brainstorm together as they discover that some sources are easier to find than others.¹⁴ A footnote including a short version of a title fully cited earlier can be challenging even for experienced researchers, since it often means scanning through references for the full citation. Peer collaboration and expert instruction combine to give the students the happy “I found it!” moments that this exercise is designed to facilitate, and which are among the real pleasures of doing historical research at any level. We have also made unexpected discoveries about what kinds of research excites certain students: in a recent session, several students were curious enough about the hand crank movable shelves where our library’s bound periodicals are kept that they made an extra trip into the stacks to find more articles.

Once the students have located their cited texts, they then assess, in their small groups, how the article’s author used them as evidence

to support the argument. For the last portion of the session, they present some of these assessments to the class as a whole. Examples of possible question prompts include: Is the citation referencing a whole book or article—and why would an author do that? Does the author cite a shorter range of pages within a secondary source, a single paragraph or sentence, or a visual representation of data, such as a chart or a table? If so, how does the author's use of the cited source employ the source's original claim? When the author cites a primary source, such as a newspaper article, does he or she summarize and paraphrase the source, quote it verbatim, or use some combination of the two?

On occasion, students sense discrepancies between the cited source's intent and the use to which it was put. In one instance, students discovered that an image from an early twentieth-century newspaper, which had been both referenced and reproduced, was cropped in such a way that omitted important symbolic elements. Leaving those elements in, it seemed clear to the class, would have required a more complex interpretation of the primary source than the scholarly article offered. In other instances, students have uncovered typographical and content errors, as well as examples of poor paraphrasing that at times shade into mild plagiarism. These discoveries spur valuable conversations about the accepted conventions of practice in historical scholarship (and how they might change over time) and demonstrate to students how important it is that citations be accurate and reliable.

Far more frequently, however, the author represents the cited source's original claim with sufficient accuracy. By engaging and critically evaluating the citations, students retrace the scholar's use of the source, which exposes them to the interpretive nature of historical analysis. This is an empowering realization, though for a student who thinks of historical scholarship as an authoritative transmission of indisputable fact, it can also be somewhat destabilizing. Yet this fosters a more nuanced and sophisticated approach to the reading and writing of history. At an advanced level, students can learn from this exercise that they have the ability and the resources not only to locate, but also to interpret scholarly and historical material for their own independent research projects.

In a variation of this exercise in which the librarian taught with a different instructor (during a longer class session), the students

spontaneously began to use the citations in the book chapter used for the exercise to find resources for their own research projects. While this version of the exercise focused less on students' assessment of the sources' role in supporting the chapter's argument, these students built on the librarian's emphasis in a prior session on secondary-source references as starting points for finding secondary and primary sources relevant to their own class research projects. In this case, the chapter assigned to them was also key, as their individual projects were meant to focus on a topic related to the assigned reading. This meant that both the content of the reading and its specific references contributed to the students' individual research efforts. Following the footnotes not only helped to consolidate their understanding of the chapter and the construction of its argument, but also sent them directly—and literally—to texts that functioned both as intellectual building blocks for the chapter *and* for their own research.

Analyzing a scholar's use of a primary source allows students to observe that argument-making in process, and to consider the various strategies for citing and incorporating primary-source evidence into their own projects. At the same time, using a peer-reviewed secondary source's footnotes to identify primary sources is to draw on the expertise of the scholar towards developing one's own knowledge of the range and types of primary sources available. Recognizing that scholarship is a conversation is a crucial lesson for students in all disciplines. Attending to a scholar's footnotes is a powerful way for students to enter that conversation. Not only do they see the argument-building in process, they also learn of the existence of those particular building blocks. Students struggling to find primary sources relating to a particular topic can benefit from scrutinizing the references in a relevant secondary source; students unsure of what kinds of primary sources might be of value to them can expand their awareness of source types by studying footnotes. For example, even if they are not writing about a particular locale, learning to search both for and in local newspaper collections can also teach students the value of tracking down newspapers relevant to their research.

Conclusion

The Follow the Footnote exercise serves multiple pedagogical purposes, all of which are valuable to history instructors and

instructional librarians. It introduces students to a range of valuable historical-research skills in a low-stakes environment open to questions and discovery. It acquaints them with the language and practice of citation so they can become better readers of scholarly work. It gets students into the stacks—often, for the very first time—and gives them an opportunity to navigate the shelves with a sense of purpose. It familiarizes them with online resources, and asks them to contemplate the relative scholarly value of physical and digital technologies. It also provides students with a powerful tool for identifying primary sources and source types for their own research, a tool that can enable students to move past the panicky moment of, “I need primary sources, where do I begin?” Footnote mining, especially in tandem with secondary-source searching instruction, gives history students concrete beginning points for primary-source identification, whether for specific primary sources or for primary-source *types*—e.g., students may ask, “How do I find newspapers?” rather than struggling with the more undifferentiated term “primary sources.” On a broader level, following footnotes enables students to learn their way into scholarly conversation, as a group, through practical interaction with individual citations and discussion about how sources contribute to an author’s argument.¹⁵

As we have revised and refined the Follow the Footnote exercise, we have recognized its value as an avenue of instructor/instructional librarian collaboration. We have also especially appreciated how well it integrates the teaching of both content *and* skills. As Daniel T. Willingham and others have made clear, skills like critical thinking and advanced analysis cannot be learned or practiced independent of content knowledge.¹⁶ Following footnotes introduces students to research and analytic practices within the context of scholarly work that they have already read—in other words, content that they already know. Digging deeper into the text’s citations and arguments reinforces students’ comprehension of that content. Their knowledge of the content creates a framework for the challenging concepts of historiography and historical research to which they are being newly introduced. Follow the Footnote gives students the tools to develop their understanding of how historians “do history,” and a sense of how they might do it themselves.

Appendix A: Introductory Handout for “Follow the Footnote”

The Footnote

What Are Footnotes?

Footnotes are the signature of scholarly work, the “hyperlink” of academic writing. They draw your eyes away from the main text to the bottom of the page or the end of the text, where further “data” and information awaits (though when they are at the end of the text, they are called endnotes).¹ This extra information is kept out of the way for a reason: it would break up the flow of a sentence or paragraph. As a reader, you may well be accustomed to just gliding past footnote markers all the time. From a reader’s perspective, it is easier to follow an argument if you are not constantly glancing at footnotes (or worse still, endnotes).

So why bother with notes at all, if they’re designed to be ignored most of the time? One of the foremost functions of footnote references is to keep scholars honest—to demonstrate that there is *evidence* for their assertions. Just imagine history books without footnotes: authors could assert whatever they liked, without readers having any idea whether theirs is a reasonable interpretation.

Critical readers are glad to have the opportunity to glance at the footnotes now and then to figure out, “How does the writer *know* this?” Has the author consulted an archival document, or an eyewitness, or some other historian’s work? In other words, the information in the footnotes allows the reader to check your claims, to trace your steps, and, if s/he cares enough, to base a rebuttal upon the materials you consulted.

When Do I Need to Use Footnotes?

In your work, footnotes are used mainly to indicate which primary and secondary sources you have used. Scholars use footnotes for other purposes as well—to direct readers to other relevant books and articles, and to indicate that the writer is familiar with a range of scholarly work on the topic. This is beyond the call of duty for undergraduate papers.

Most of the time, you will be writing on topics you have only been researching for a few weeks. So it might seem that *every sentence* you write demands a footnote. After all, you are probably worried about plagiarism. Plagiarism is indeed highly dishonest, but it is almost never accidental. If you deliberately cover up your sources and steal the work of others without attribution, there are

1. In this footnote, I wish to tell you that I have benefited greatly from a handout on “Footnotes in Research Papers” that my friend and colleague Dr. Astrid M. Eckert at Emory University put together. I have borrowed aspects of her handout, with her permission.

grave consequences. If, on the other hand, you conscientiously document your sources and provide a detailed record of where you have “been” in your research, you will steer clear of trouble.

Generic information does *not* demand a footnote. For example, you should not document a sentence such as this: “National Prohibition made the manufacture and sale of beverage alcohol illegal.” This falls under the category of general knowledge. The same applies to details that may not be on everyone’s fingertips, but that can easily be traced in standard reference works. However, if you were to write an entire paragraph summarizing another author’s claim that the 1929 stock market crash happened because of National Prohibition, you need to include a footnote at the end of that paragraph, indicating which secondary works you have consulted in writing such an interpretation (because that’s what it is: an *interpretation*).

There are certain instances when you will *always* have to include a footnote:

(1) Always Use a Footnote for Direct Quotes. Whenever you use someone else’s exact phrasing—even a brief string of three or four words—you must enclose this in quotation marks. There are two subcategories here.

(a) At times, you will quote an expert in the field—a historian who has pondered these matters longer than you and has articulated their claim in a powerful way. That’s perfectly acceptable. However, you should be careful not to rely *too* heavily on the words of others. If half of your page is covered with quotes from other writers, it will diminish the originality of your analysis. And it might appear to the reader (who happens to grade your paper) as if you were too lazy to put things into your own words. As a rule of thumb, do not quote the words of other scholars when they are recounting basic, mundane information.

(b) Often, you will be quoting straight from the proverbial horse’s mouth, using words spoken or written during the period you cover in your research. Why *describe* a major presidential speech by when you could liven up your paper with the President’s own words?

The trick here is to make absolutely clear where you found the quotes you’re using. The essential distinction is this: are you citing from a *primary* source or a *secondary* source?

Primary Source. Maybe you’re quoting material you *have* “unearthed” yourself—perhaps from a newspaper or magazine article, or an edited primary source reader. In this case, be certain to identify the title of the series, the volume number, and the page number in your footnote. For more on formatting issues, see below under “What Do Footnotes Look Like?”

Secondary Source. It is perfectly acceptable for you to draw upon evidence cited in someone else's article or book. Since you do not always have access to documents contained in distant archives, you should feel free to rely upon quotes presented in the research of advanced scholars. However, in that case, your footnote must reflect the fact that you did not "unearth" this material yourself. Did you *really* consult the U.S. Congressional Record from December 5, 1922? If not, use the original quote in your main text, and write in your footnote "as cited in..." (followed by the source and page number where you found this quote).

(2) Always Use a Footnote for Claims by Other Authors. Students sometimes assume that footnotes are only used after direct quotes. *Not true.* There are plenty of occasions when you will want to use a footnote to indicate the origins of a particular assertion, even if that assertion does not appear in your essay in the form of a quote.

While writing your paper, you will inevitably build upon the arguments of other scholars. One important function of footnotes, then, is to help distinguish *your* ideas and arguments from those you've read during your research. By drawing a line between your own arguments and those of others, you demonstrate to your professor the freedom and independence of your own thought.

What Do Footnotes Look Like?

You have already encountered the footnote marker above.² ← Here it is again!

All citation methods adhere to a system of rules. Once we know the rules of a particular citation method, we know whether the reference cited is a book, a journal article, or a newspaper article; when it was written and by whom it was published; and where in a particular text to find the claim to which the author is referring. If you don't know the rules, not only will you be unable to construct a footnote yourself, but you also won't be able to follow other scholars' footnotes—a terrible disadvantage if you're trying to do research.

Historians use the Chicago Manual of Style method (or "Chicago-style"), in which footnotes look like this:

Book:

↓ in *italics* ↓ in (parentheses)

Firstname Lastname, *Title of Book* (Place of publication: Publisher, Year of publication).

If you're referring to a specific page of the book, that page number goes at the end of the citation, after a comma. (.)

2. To create a footnote, you'll use the footnoting function in your word processing program. On a PC, you find it in MS Word 2010 under the "References" tab; in older versions of MS Word, go to "Insert" then "Reference." On a Mac, it's just under "Insert."

Chapter or Part of Book:

↓ in “quotes”

↓ in *italics*

↓ in (parentheses)

Firstname Lastname, “Title of chapter,” in *Title of Book* (Place of publication: Publisher, Year of publication), pages of chapter in book.

If you’re referring to a specific page of the chapter, note just that page rather than the full range of pages.

Scholarly Article:

Firstname Lastname, “Title of Article,” *Title of Journal* Volume number, Issue number (Date of publication): pages of article.

Specific page? See above.

Other Citations:

To learn how to cite other kinds of sources, like newspaper articles, websites, or Ph.D. dissertations, look to the Chicago Manual of Style website at <https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html>.

You can also look at the footnotes or endnotes of any scholarly book or article that uses the Chicago Manual, and model your own notes from there.

IMPORTANT: Often, a citation will list more than one source. When that happens, footnote references are strung together like sentences in a paragraph. When more than one source is cited in a single note, they’re separated by a semi-colon, like this:

4. Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 7-9; Matthew D. Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 66.

It’s crucial that you be able to find the semi-colon in a multi-source footnote. If you can’t, you won’t be able to recognize where one citation starts and another ends. This will make it impossible for you to follow footnotes, and it will make your own footnotes pretty confusing.

What Do Bibliographies Look Like?

Here is some bad news: References appear in a *slightly* different format in the bibliography. Bibliographic entries are lists, ordered alphabetically by author surname. One of the most obvious consequences of that is the fact that the name of an author appears “Firstname Lastname” in the footnote, but “Lastname comma Firstname” in the bibliography. Thus:

Reference in a Footnote:

Lawrence Levine, *The Unpredictable Past: Explorations in American Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

Reference in a Bibliography:

Levine, Lawrence. *The Unpredictable Past: Explorations in American Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

One of your tasks in documenting your work is to ensure that your footnote references are presented in footnote format *only*, and that the bibliography at the end of your paper appears in proper bibliographic format. (Once you get the hang of it, it will all seem quite logical.)

Additional Information

If you want to know more about footnotes—and *who doesn't?*—look to the very helpful website created by Jill Anderson, our History Librarian at <<https://research.library.gsu.edu/footnotes>>.

Examples of Basic Footnote Reference Styles**Example - Book:**

Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 131.

The number at the end of the note makes clear that the quoted material can be found on that specific page of the cited text.

Example - Journal Article:

Nancy MacLean, "The Leo Frank Case Reconsidered: Gender and Sexual Politics in the Making of Reactionary Populism," *The Journal of American History* 78, no. 3 (December 1991): 917-948.

This note gives the entire page run of the article. If you want to cite a specific page or several pages from this article, replace "917-948" with those pages.

Example - Selection from an Edited Volume:

Lawrence Levine, "Progress and Nostalgia: The Self Image of the Nineteen Twenties," in *The Unpredictable Past: Explorations in American Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 189-205.

Example - Newspaper Article:

“Citizens Commend *The Age* For Its Campaign Against Harlem Hootch Hell Holes,” *The New York Age*, 30 June 1923, 1.

Note that there is no author for this article; many newspaper articles (especially before the mid-twentieth century) had no byline.

Keeler McCartney and Hal Gulliver, “13 Sitting in Street are Arrested Here: Traffic at Leb’s Corner is Snarled During Melee,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 27 July 1963, 3.

Example - Website:

“Growth, Cities, and Immigration: Crash Course US History #25,” YouTube video, 12:44, posted by CrashCourse [John Green], 15 August 2013, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RRhjqqe750A>>.

Note that if there isn’t any author listed, begin your citation with the title of the piece. Be sure to include the publisher (website name), publication date if available, and URL.

IF YOU CITE A SOURCE MORE THAN ONCE:

After you cite a specific source once, you do not need to repeat all of the source information each time you refer back to it. Historians use what is known as shortened citations or “short-title format”:

MacLean, “The Leo Frank Case Reconsidered,” 922.

Levine, “Progress and Nostalgia,” 200-201.

“Citizens Commend *The Age*,” 1.

McCartney and Gulliver, “13 Sitting in Street are Arrested Here.”

“Ibid.” is also sometimes used if the same source is cited twice (or more) in a row; if you want to know more about this tool, go to <<https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>> and search for “ibid.”

Appendix B: Quiz for “Follow the Footnote”

The Footnote: Show What You Know

1. What is the difference between a footnote and an endnote?
2. When do you need to use a footnote? (choose as many as are correct)
 - a. When you are making a claim based upon common knowledge.
 - b. When you are making a claim that can commonly be found in standard reference books, but you had to look it up.
 - c. When you are making a claim based on a scholarly interpretation of why an event occurred, and you are quoting that scholar directly.
 - d. When you are making a claim based on a scholarly interpretation of why an event occurred, but you are not quoting that scholar directly.
 - e. All of the above.
3. What is the purpose of a semi-colon in a footnote?
4. Following is citation information for three different texts. Create a footnote for each one, using the Chicago style.

Book

2003 / Hill Street Press / *Atlanta: An Illustrated History*
Athens, GA / Andy Ambrose

Journal Article

Journal of Urban History / 2003 / Amy Hillier / Vol. 29, no. 4
“Redlining and the Homeowners’ Loan Corporation” / 394-420

Newspaper Article

p. 2 / *Atlanta Journal* / May 18, 1913
“Saturday on Decatur Street”

Appendix C: Activity Handout for “Follow the Footnote”

Follow the Footnote

1. Look at the footnotes from the *Georgia Historical Quarterly* journal article, “Waging War on ‘Loose Living Hotels’ and ‘Cheap Soda Water Joints’: The Criminalization of Working-Class Women in Atlanta’s Public Space,” by Georgina Hickey. Select one of each of these source types:
 - a. A **book**
 - b. A **journal article**
 - c. A **newspaper article**
2. Look up each source.

If it is a **book**:

Look it up in the library’s catalog. Use the “Catalog” tab on the library’s homepage. “Advanced Search” will let you search by both author and title (select “Author” or “Title” in the dropdown menu next to each search box).

Go get the book from the stacks. (Look for **campus**, **floor number**, and **call number** information in the book’s catalog record).

Example: **Atlanta Library North 5 F 124.P38 1986** will be on the 5th floor of Library North. (Our classroom is on the 2nd floor of Library North).

If it is a **journal article**:

Look it up in the **America: History and Life** database. Use the link in the “Scholarly Journal Articles” box on the research guide. (If it looks like a journal title is an abbreviation—like “JER”—look it up in the “Abbreviations” list).

If the article is available as a PDF, open the PDF.

If you see a “**Find It @ GSU**” button, click it to see if the PDF is available through another database. Open that PDF.

OR

Look up the article in **JSTOR**, using the “Advanced search” option and searching by “Author” in one box and “Title” in another.

**JSTOR is a broad interdisciplinary database. America: History and Life includes a wider range of history journals. Both are good options. However, note that you cannot search by subject (i.e., “aboutness”) in JSTOR.

If it is a **newspaper article**:

Check the **US Newspapers** page of the Historical Newspapers Research Guide at Georgia State University (<https://research.library.gsu.edu/newspapers>) to find the **title and date information** for the newspaper you are looking for. The **form** the newspaper is in (online or microfilm) will be determined by the **date**.

If the newspaper is not listed on the Historical Newspapers guide, follow the instructions in the “Searching the GSU Library for Historical Newspapers” to see if we have it. (Not every newspaper that we have access to is listed on the Historical Newspapers guide)

3. Find where in the chapter that source is cited. If you are looking at endnote #11, look in the text of the chapter to find the superscripted “11” that the endnote corresponds to.

Questions for Discussion

(and for you to think about anytime you work with footnotes/endnotes!)

4. How does the author cite this book/article?
 - Is the whole book or article cited?
 - Is a smaller section (one page, a few pages, or a page range) cited?
5. How is the author using this book/article to support their argument?
 - Citing a **fact** from it?
 - Citing a **table, chart, graph, or other image** from it?
 - Citing an **argument** from it?
 - **Quoting** from it?

Notes

1. Harry Belafonte, as quoted in Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History*, revised ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 235.
2. Nathan Heller, "Save Footnotes," *The New Yorker*, 5 September 2014, <<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/save-footnotes>>.
3. Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History*, revised ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), vii.
4. Sam Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2001), 79.
5. See items "2. Develop historical methods" and "4. Apply the range of skills it takes to decode the historical record because of its incomplete, complex, and contradictory nature," in "AHA History Tuning Project: 2016 History Discipline Core," American Historical Association, <<https://www.historians.org/teaching-and-learning/tuning-the-history-discipline/2016-history-discipline-core>>. See also items "2.5 Mines references from secondary sources and uses source-appropriate tools to locate them," in "Information Literacy Guidelines and Competencies for Undergraduate History Students," Reference and User Services Association (RUSA), 2013, <<http://www.ala.org/rusa/resources/guidelines/infoliteracy>>. Relatedly, the recently adopted Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) "Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education" (2016) includes the concept of "scholarship as conversation" as one of its six broadly defined "threshold concepts" that students can learn to apply both within and across disciplines. Footnote mining addresses several of the key "knowledge practices" in this frame by teaching students to "identify the contribution that particular articles, books, and other scholarly pieces make to disciplinary knowledge" and, ultimately, to "cite the contributing work of others in their own information production." "Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education," Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), 2016, <<http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework>>.
6. Jim Dwyer, "A 1964 Lesson in Fake News Still Applies," *The New York Times*, 10 January 2017, A19, <<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/10/nyregion/a-1964-lesson-in-fake-news-that-still-applies.html>>.
7. Leah Shopkow, "How Many Sources Do I Need?" *The History Teacher* 50, no. 2 (February 2017): 170-171.
8. Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 4.
9. "14.52: Several citations in one note," *The Chicago Manual of Style*, sixteenth ed. (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), 682-683; Kate L. Turabian, "16.3.5.1: Complex Notes," *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, eighth ed. (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2013), 157.
10. Mary Lynn Rampolla, "Directory to Documentation Models," in *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, eighth ed. (Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2015), 119-147.

11. See, for example: Christopher J. Prom and Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe, eds., *Teaching with Primary Sources* (Chicago, IL: Society of American Archivists, 2016); Anne Bahde, Heather Smedberg, and Mattie Taormina, eds., *Using Primary Sources: Hands-On Instructional Exercises* (Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, 2014); Eleanor Mitchell, Peggy Seiden, and Suzy Taraba, eds., *Past or Portal? Enhancing Undergraduate Learning through Special Collections and Archives* (Chicago, IL: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2012).
12. The most current version of the Georgia State University Library's Research Guide for "Mining References - Humanities: Using Footnotes" is available at <<https://research.library.gsu.edu/footnotes>>.
13. Manu Kapur, "Productive Failure," *Cognition and Instruction* 26, no. 3 (2008): 414-415.
14. On peer instruction and library anxiety reduction, see Jill E. Anderson and Jason Puckett, "Crossing Disciplines, Creating Space: Using Drop-In Research Labs to Support an Interdisciplinary Research-Intensive Capstone Course," *Practical Academic Librarianship* 4, no. 1 (2014): 11-12.
15. "Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education."
16. See, for example, Andrew J. Rotherham and Daniel T. Willingham, "'21st-Century' Skills: Not New, but a Worthy Challenge," *American Educator* 34, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 17-20.