

Avoiding Plagiarism

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What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is using another person’s ideas or words without clearly acknowledging or citing the source of that information. You must give credit whenever you use:

- Another person's idea, opinion, or theory.
- Direct quotes from another person's actual spoken or written words.
- Paraphrasing of another person's spoken or written words.
- Any piece of information this is not common knowledge (e.g., fact, figure, statistic, chart)
- Multimedia created by another person (e.g., photo, drawing, film clip, music, etc.)

Obvious Plagiarism	Less Obvious Plagiarism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turning in someone else’s paper as one’s own. • Turning in a paper that was bought from a service on the Internet. • Reusing a paper previously turned in for one class and then submitting the same paper or portions of it for subsequent classes without permission of the instructor (self-plagiarism). • Cutting and pasting entire sections from other authors’ works into one’s own paper. • Using another author’s exact words but not putting quotation marks around the quote and citing the work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failing to differentiate between common knowledge and something that needs to be cited. • Failing to include complete and correct citations. • Sticking to closely to another author’s words by only changing a few words around when paraphrasing. • Using another author’s exact words but not putting quotation marks around the quote even if one cites the work.

Why should I cite my sources?

The primary reason to cite your sources is to avoid plagiarism and give proper credit to the original author or creator. Other reasons for citing your sources:

- Enables a reader to locate the sources you cited.
- Demonstrates the accuracy and reliability of your information.
- Shows the amount of research you’ve done.
- Strengthens your work by lending outside support to your ideas.

Tips for Avoiding Plagiarism – The Basic Rules

- Make sure to place **direct quotes** from another person in **quotation marks**. This is especially important to remember when you are taking notes from any source you use. Make sure to copy the words exactly as they appear in the source.
- When you **paraphrase**, be sure you are not just changing or rearranging a few words. Carefully read over the text you want to paraphrase. Write out the idea in your own words. Check your paraphrase against the original text to make sure you have not accidentally used the same phrases or words.
- Make sure to include **complete** and **correct citations** in your works cited list.
- Make sure to follow the **guidelines** and **rules** for the **citation style** specified by your instructor (e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago).

Tips for Avoiding Plagiarism – The Basic Rules (cont'd)

- In the beginning of the first sentence containing a quote or paraphrase of another's work, make it clear that it is someone else's idea (e.g., According to Smith . . .)
- Make sure to include **in-text citations** within your paper for any information taken from another person's work. A typical in-text citation includes the author's last name and the page number of the source. The in-text citation is inserted at the end of the last sentence containing a quote or paraphrase of another's work - example: (Jones, 127). Check with your instructor or a librarian for other in-text citation examples.

More Tips for Avoiding Plagiarism - Managing Your Research

- **Start your research early.**
- **Take and keep accurate notes** of the sources you use. Distinguish between your ideas and other's ideas and direct quotes.
- **Document your sources immediately.** As you gather sources during your research, make sure to record all the information you need to cite your sources accurately and completely (e.g., authors, titles, URL addresses, etc.). Check with your instructor or a librarian to see what citation information is required for the citation style you will be using (e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago)
- **Books:** When using the library catalog to find books, print out the catalog records of any books you may use for your paper. Catalog records provide brief information on books including the author/s, title, publisher, and publication date. You can also photocopy the title and copyright pages from any book you use for your paper. Note the page numbers you need to cite.
- **Journal, Magazine, & Newspaper Articles:** Keep an online or paper copy of the articles you will use for your paper. If you use an article from a library database, you will need to include the database information in your citation. The information you need to include from the database will depend on the format style specified by your instructor. Many library databases have a citation tool that automatically generates a citation in the format you specify. These citation tools are a good starting point for formatting your references but you may still need to "tweak" them according to your instructor's specifications.
- **Web Sites:** Keep an online or paper copy of the web pages you use for your paper. Make sure to record the URL address of the exact page on the web site that is used.

Terms to Know

Citing: Also called **documenting** or **referencing**. The recording of information (e.g., author, title, publisher, publication date, page numbers, database name, URL address, etc.) from a source (e.g., book, magazine article, web site) which allows an instructor or anyone to identify and locate a source. By citing your sources, you are also giving proper credit to those sources. This information is then formatted to a citation style (e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago) specified by your instructor and inserted into your essay.

Common knowledge: Facts or ideas that are well known by many people and that can be found in numerous sources (e.g., Barack Obama is our current president of the United States).

Quotation: Also called a **quote**. Using someone's exact words. When you use a direct quote, place the passage in quotation marks and cite the source according to the citation style specified by your instructor (e.g., Using a direct excerpt from Barack Obama's January 2009 inaugural address).

Paraphrasing: Using someone's ideas, but putting them in your own words. This is probably the skill you will use most when incorporating sources into your writing. Although you use your own words to paraphrase, you must still cite the source of the information (e.g., Using an excerpt from Barack Obama's January 2009 inaugural address and putting it in your own words).