

Sources

The definition of a source is the person, place or thing from which something (information, etc.) came or was acquired. In the academic field, the word is widely used in writing academic works, as the author of the work has to cite his sources, which means that he has to mention where he got the information from.

We can **divide sources into two groups:**

by type of source

- **text** (monographs, scripts, manuals, textbooks)
- **visual** (graphics, photographs, diagrams)
- **audio** (CD, DVD)
- **audiovisual** (video, movie)

by type of source origin

- **primary document** (It contains information that has its original character, notation or interpretation)
- **secondary document** (The document resembles a primary document and contains information or parts of primary documents)
- **tertiary document** (Records data on the existence of secondary bibliographic sources)

These groups can be further divided into **electronic** or **printed** sources. Both have similar ways of quoting, the main difference is in quoting an electronic source - it is a good practice to add the **address of the website** where our source is located.

Referring to sources

When we are referring to information from a source in our text (quoting, citing), we have to include the **author**, **title**, the **year of publication**, **international identifier** (ISBN or ISSN) and the **page number** of the source. It's necessary to refer to **all sources**. Only generally known facts and original ideas can be given without reference. We can avoid plagiarism by correct citation with complete bibliographic references of used information sources. A **quotation** is a text that we have taken literally from a document (or other sources of information) and it's written in quotation marks. **Citation** is an abbreviated alphanumeric expression embedded in the body of a research that denotes an entry in the bibliographic references section of the research.

Phrases to use when referring to source materials

Phrases used to mention a published work

- comment, explain, state, conclude

Phrases used to point out someone's study

- emphasise, illustrate, propose, suggest

Phrases used to affirm someone's discovery

- confirm, establish, maintain, prove

Phrases of disagreement

- assert, claim, state erroneously

Phrases to avoid

- believe, think, feel, try, suppose

How can students avoid plagiarism?

According to the Meriam-Webster dictionary, to “plagiarise” means to **steal and pass off the ideas or words of another as one's own**. For example turning in someone else's work as your own, copying parts of code of your friend's programming project, or even accidentally failing to give correct information about the source of a quotation.

Therefore, as we can see, **plagiarism doesn't have to be intentional** and you can become a plagiarist simply by not being careful enough. But when you write an academic paper, you most likely need to use the work of others to build upon and to provide information or evidence.

So **what should we focus on** to avoid plagiarism? There are four main steps to ensure your paper is free from plagiarism: keeping track of your sources, paraphrasing or quoting, giving credit to the original author and using a plagiarism checker.

Keeping track of your sources means to cite every one of the ideas that you came across in the work of others. You need to keep track of all the books and journal articles you use, but also websites, videos, or even conversations.

Quoting an idea means enclosing it in quotation marks and correctly attributing it to the original author. On the other hand, paraphrasing means using your own words to explain someone else's idea. Either way, you have to reference the original author.

Giving credit, or citing the original source, means including an in-text or footnote citation that identifies the author. There are many different citation styles, for example APA or Chicago Style.

Plagiarism checker is a technology that scans your work and compares it to a huge database of publications (or other students' works). This is a very useful tool for avoiding unnecessary problems that come from “stealing” someone's ideas.

In conclusion, plagiarism is a problem that is taken very seriously these days, but you can avoid becoming a plagiarist easily, just by being cautious enough. And if anyone asks you if they can use the ideas of others without referencing the original authors, you tell them a decisive “**no**”¹.

¹(HAMLET, Act III, Scene III, Line 92)