

WRIT 221: UNDERSTANDING & AVOIDING PLAGIARISM PROPER SOURCE INTEGRATION & CITATION

As defined in the online Oxford dictionary, plagiarism is “the practice of taking someone else’s work or ideas and passing them off as one’s own.”

A more comprehensive definition from Middlebury College:

Plagiarism is a violation of intellectual honesty. Plagiarism is passing off another person's work as one's own. It is taking and presenting as one's own the ideas, research, writings, creations, or inventions of another. It makes no difference whether the source is a student or a professional in some field. For example, in written work, whenever as much as a sentence or key phrase is taken from the work of another without specific citation of the source, the issue of plagiarism arises.

Paraphrasing is the close restatement of another's idea using approximately the language of the original. Paraphrasing without acknowledgment of authorship is also plagiarism and is as serious a violation as an unacknowledged quotation.

The individual student is responsible for ensuring that his or her work does not involve plagiarism. Ignorance of the nature of plagiarism or of College rules may not be offered as a mitigating circumstance.

RESOURCES:

- **MSU, The Writing Center has student resources on plagiarism:**
<https://www.eou.edu/writing-center/student-resources/>
 - **OWL has a comprehensive section on the matter:**
<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01>
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- ✓ **Avoid plagiarism by being transparent**, which means being open and honest regarding your intentions and process. Do not pretend that ideas and/or products that are not your own *are* your own. Do not help others to this extent, either.
 - ✓ **Understand that incorrectly paraphrasing something constitutes plagiarism.**
 - ✓ **Also understand that correct paraphrasing is essential to a well-crafted, well-supported document: STRONG ESSAYS STRIKE A BALANCE BETWEEN PARAPHRASING, SUMMARIZING, AND QUOTING VARIED SOURCES OF CREDIBLE INFORMATION.**

Paraphrase: Write it in Your Own Words (from OWL)

A paraphrase is...

- Your own rendition of essential information and ideas expressed by someone else, presented in a new form.
- One legitimate way (when accompanied by accurate documentation) to borrow from a source.
- A more detailed restatement than a summary, which focuses concisely on a single main idea.

Paraphrasing is a valuable skill because...

- It is better than quoting information from an undistinguished passage.
- It helps you control the temptation to quote too much.
- The mental process required for successful paraphrasing helps you to grasp the full meaning of the original.

6 Steps to Effective Paraphrasing

1. Reread the original passage until you understand its full meaning.
2. Set the original aside, and write your paraphrase on a note card.
3. Jot down a few words below your paraphrase to remind you later how you envision using this material. At the top of the note card, write a key word or phrase to indicate the subject of your paraphrase.
4. Check your rendition with the original to make sure that your version accurately expresses all the essential information in a new form.
5. Use quotation marks to identify any unique term or phraseology you have borrowed exactly from the source.
6. Record the source (including the page) on your note card so that you can credit it easily if you decide to incorporate the material into your paper.

Some examples to compare

The original passage: Students frequently overuse direct quotation in taking notes, and as a result they overuse quotations in the final [research] paper. Probably only about 10% of your final manuscript should appear as directly quoted matter. Therefore, you should strive to limit the amount of exact transcribing of source materials while taking notes. Lester, James D. Writing Research Papers. 2nd ed. (1976): 46-47.

A legitimate paraphrase: In research papers students often quote excessively, failing to keep quoted material down to a desirable level. Since the problem usually originates during note taking, it is essential to minimize the material recorded verbatim (Lester 46-47).

An acceptable summary: Students should take just a few notes in direct quotation from sources to help minimize the amount of quoted material in a research paper (Lester 46-47).

A plagiarized version: Students often use too many direct quotations when they take notes, resulting in too many of them in the final research paper. In fact, probably only

about 10% of the final copy should consist of directly quoted material. So it is important to limit the amount of source material copied while taking notes.

Attributing Sources in Academic Essays

We use MLA style documentation to attribute source material in academic essays. Your essays (and technical documents like proposals) must have in-text citations following any ideas or information that you took for another source. For interviews, surveys or phone calls, you can include the information within the body of the essay. For example, you can write: *Bob Johnson, in an interview on September 16, 2010, said that he was impressed by the opportunities to recycle hazardous waste in Missoula County.*

Once you've given readers context (a reference to source info), then you can wait until the end to provide full biographical details.

Consider the following example demonstrating source integration and in-text citation:

1. According to Howard Solar at the Institute for New Science, a government-funded organization based in Washington D.C., the country needs to switch from dependency on oil to more sustainable ways of heating our homes and powering our cars. "The nation us in a real state of energy," he told members of the Press Core at a Press Conference last month. His definition of sustainability is borrowed from the World Watch Institute, a nonprofit in D.C.: "sustainability requires habits of mind an living that preserve natural resources for future generations (Smith et. al. 1).

Naming the process:

Research and take notes from credible sources to include in your essays/documents.

Readers want to see other voices besides your own; having a variety of sources boosts the credibility of your essay and adds color. So, even if you know your material well, look for experts online, in books, in newspapers or magazine articles, etc. to say what you already know--often, a different way of saying similar or the same things can actually help you, the writer, consider your subject in a different light and therefore write with more authority and knowledge.

OK, once you've found those experts, you need to seamlessly include their information in your essay via PARAPHRASE, SUMMARY, or DIRECT QUOTE. If you are still unclear about the differences, OWL's discussion is helpful: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/563/1/>. Remember, only use quotation marks for direct quotes—that is, when you include verbatim (word-for-word) information from an outside source.

NEXT, introduce the material. Don't just drop a quote, summary or paraphrase into your essay. Introduce the material and explain its relevance (if it isn't crystal clear). Use a "signal phrase" such as *According to author Bruce Danger in his 1997 book The Life of Turtles,* If you mention the author in the sentence, then there's no need to include the name in the in-text parenthetical citation. If you haven't, the citation will include

(NAME pg. #).

General Method for Writing In-text Citations: In the sentence before or after your quote (as a writer you get to make the decision how best to reference source material so that the essay is fluid and clear, you must convince readers that the quoted, summarized or paraphrased information is credible through attribution. You should include the person's or organization's name, who they are (title), perhaps what they do, and when the information was said or published. In other words, give us enough context so that we know the person/organization that you are referencing is legit—worth believing. Look at newspaper articles for examples.

If you did not include the author's name in the sentence introducing the quote, be sure to include it in parentheses after the quote (and after the quotation marks, yet before the period). You will also want to include a page number if relevant.

Method for Writing a Works Cited Page: At the end of your essay, you must have a titled section that details the full biographical information of your source material. So, once you've gathered relevant and recent information to support your thesis from credible online and print sources, including newspapers, magazines and journals, write down all the information necessary. Be wary of websites—they are fine to use as support, but be transparent about the authors and their credibility (or lack thereof).

MLA formatting for Works Cited pages is specific. Follow directions to record all necessary information. Correct formatting of **in-text citations** and **works cited pages** are detailed in Appendix A: Documenting Sources. You must include source material in PowerPoint or other presentations as well as your non-profit project work (namely the proposal; fundraising letter; and design documents), so it's important to understand this. Let's look together.

NOTE REGARDING NON-PROFIT PROJECT: You are writing on behalf of a non-profit organization, either fictional or real. If your organization already exists: yes, you want to maintain their tone and character with your writing and design. You may use their logo and certain design elements critical to their brand identity; however, **YOU CANNOT COPY THEIR WRITING**. That is not the purpose of this project or this class; rather, our purpose is to refine your *own* professional writing skills.

If you *absolutely must* use a phrase or sentence verbatim (word for word) from their literature, place that language in quotes. (There are rare cases when this is appropriate, but is usually not in outreach material.) **It is far more appropriate and highly recommended to rewrite their information in your own words in a way that achieves your specific writing and rhetoric goals.** If you have any questions about this, please ask. I do not want to see proposals and fundraising letters with language copied and pasted from an organization's website. Do the work yourself and practice your professional writing skills.

If I see plagiarism in your proposals, I will ask you to rewrite them. If I see plagiarism in any documents after this assignment, you will receive a zero for that assignment. This is about academic integrity and MSU policy. Again, if you have questions, please ask.