FAQs

Q: What is plagiarism?
A: Plagiarism is the theft of ideas. Whether intentional or not, if information is used without giving proper credit to its source, it is considered plagiarism. The consequences can be severe and professors are not new to the game, so don’t bother trying!

Q: Specifically, how does someone plagiarize?
A: Plagiarism happens when a student does not use quotation marks around borrowed language, when the student does not cite where quotes and borrowed ideas come from, and when a student does not put paraphrases or summaries in his or her own words. (Hacker 570)

Q: What should I document?
A: You should document all word-for-word quotations from a source, all summaries of material from a source, all ideas (including opinions, judgments, and insights) of others, and all tables, graphs, charts, and statistics that you get from a source. (Kirsner 644)

Q: What type of documentation style should I use?
A: Always ask your professor first! However, the two most common types of citations are MLA and APA. MLA is used for the humanities (English, philosophy, religion, languages, history, art) and APA is used for the social sciences (psychology, sociology, business, economics, social work, nursing). These pages are devoted to the MLA style, but there are links at the end to direct you to further information on APA.

Q: Can I use the internet as a source for my paper?
A: The internet is not off limits, but be careful! There are a lot of sites out there that are not credible sources. Anybody can make a website, but credible information does not come from just anybody! Look for official organizations and try for sources that list the author or provider of information. A great example of a commonly used website that is NOT trustworthy is Wikipedia. When in doubt, ask your professor.

Q: How can I avoid plagiarism?
A: Don’t procrastinate! Research is often the most time-consuming part of writing a research paper. Plan for time to find your sources, then even more time to read your sources and decide what you want to use. Document all information AS YOU GET IT. Keeping index cards with the information and its source often helps. Resist the temptation to keep looking at the source as you take notes. This will help you avoid copying phrases and word choices. Make sure you fully understand the information. If you do, you’ll more easily be able to use your own words to explain it in your paper.

Q: What are some common examples of plagiarism?
A: Allowing another student to write your paper for you (even if it’s just part of it!) Copying essays from the internet (even if you cite this, you cannot copy an entire essay to turn in as your own) “Cut & Pasting” from the internet—this is common and almost always wrong because students don’t cite it, or they don’t use the info to support their own original ideas

See the following pages for examples on how to correctly quote, paraphrase and create a works cited page, as well as view additional resources.

By Virginia Bax
Learning Assistant, Learning Center
Graduate Student, MATW
Original Source #1:

...You’ve seen others with that personality magic or some kind of charisma. How do they develop it? It’s not hard, but it does take time. Why? Everything you think has the possibility of leading to an action. Every action you take can lead to habit. Every habit you develop becomes your personality and a winning (or losing) attitude. So, it’s easy to see that...

Original Source #2:

Lack of exercise is especially common among women. Even though research has shown definite health benefits for women—including a lower risk of osteoporosis, certain cancers, and heart disease—approximately 70% of women are sedentary or irregularly active. In a 1995 report...
HOW TO PARAPHRASE

PLAGIARIZED Student Examples:

#3
Even though two-thirds of the states passed child labor laws between 1905 and 1907, a large number of children were still exempt, especially newsboys and youngsters in theater. (Nash 458)

#4
After a ban on killing humpbacks was initiated in the 1960s, these whales began to flourish in the North Pacific, skyrocketing their numbers from just a few thousand forty years ago, to possibly ten thousand or more today.

Why these are wrong:

#3
This example uses far too many phrases that are word-for-word identical to the original. Even replacing many of those words with synonyms would still make it plagiarism because the structure is just too similar.

#4
This example of paraphrasing is actually a good one, but the student failed to cite where the source came from. Regardless of his use of original wording, it is still plagiarism.

CORRECT Student Examples

#3
According to Gary Nash, in the early twentieth century, two-thirds of the states passed laws that prohibited child labor in some way, however, many of these were flawed and did not protect all children. (458)

#4
Humpback whales have seen a dramatic turn-around since the 1960s when a ban was placed on killing the few thousand that were left. Since then, SPLASH, the largest whale-census ever carried out, predicts that in the North Pacific the whales have prospered to ten thousand or more. (Chadwick76)

Why these are correct:

#3
This example introduces the author as well as summarizes the information in an original way. At the end of the paraphrase, the student cited the page number, but remembered the name was not necessary, since she already mentioned the author’s name.

#4
This example is correct because it also summarizes the information in an original way and the student correctly cited its source. Because the author’s name was not mentioned in the paraphrase, he included it in the citation.

Original Source#3:

Original Source #4:
A Works Cited page is the LAST page of your paper and it is numbered just like the rest of the pages, in the upper right hand corner.

- Use 1” margins
- Space your name and page number ½” from the top
- Double space from the title (Works Cited) to your first entry
- Indent ½” any additional lines after the first in each entry
- Double space within each entry and between them
- Alphabetize each entry by author’s last name (or if there is no author, the first word of the title)
- You MUST include ALL sources you cited, referenced or paraphrased

Reference the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers by Joseph Gibaldi for more detailed information concerning your sources and how to document them
- Remember that every kind of source, whether a book, magazine, internet source or audio tape, has its own special citation. You can learn how to cite pretty much every kind of source through the MLA Handbook.

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**SOURCES FOR MORE HELP**

**PEOPLE & PLACES:**

*Your Professor:* Your professor wants you to ask questions! He or she will be happy to help you get it right.

*Learning Center, House 71 (library circle):* A great place for all kinds of academic help, tutoring and references.

*HSU Library:* All kinds of references about plagiarism can be found in the library. If you need helping finding them, ask a librarian.

*HSU Writing Center, FH 201:* For help with specific papers, this is an excellent place to go.

**SPECIFIC BOOKS:**

*MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, by Joseph Gibaldi*—this can be found in the HSU library, the Learning Center and your professor may even have his or her own copy.

*Mastering APA Style: Student's Workbook and Training Guide, by Harold Gelfand*—this can be found in the HSU library, along with numerous other APA style guidebooks.

**ON-LINE SOURCES:**

*Avoiding Plagiarism*—Online Writing Lab at Purdue
  http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_plagiar.html

*Plagiarism: What it is and How to Recognize and Avoid It*—Writing Center, Indiana University, Bloomington
  http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml

*How Not to Plagiarize*—Margaret Proctor, Coordinator of Writing Support at the University of Toronto
  http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/plagsep.html

*Plagiarism Quiz: What is Plagiarism (at Indiana University)?*
  http://education.indiana.edu/~frick/plagiarism/item1.html

*Citation Machine*—an easy tool for formatting your citations for several different styles
  http://citationmachine.net

**APA**

*APA formatting*
  http://citationmachine.net

*APA Style.org*
  http://www.apastyle.org/

*APA Citation Style*
  http://www.liu.edu/cwis/cwp/library/workshop/citapa.htm

*Online Writing Lab at Purdue*
  http://owl.english.purdue.edu/
Chadwick, Douglas. “What Are They Doing Down There?” National Geographic Jan. 2007: 72-93


