



Avoiding Plagiarism Tipsheet

What is plagiarism?

- Plagiarism “occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else’s language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source” (Council of Writing Program Administrators).

Types of plagiarism:

- Direct plagiarism: cutting and pasting information directly from a source and not using a citation.
- Self-plagiarism: Reusing old work without permission or a citation.
- Mosaic plagiarism: Student’s writing mixed with the source’s language without a citation.

Avoiding these:

- Direct plagiarism: Any time you cut and paste a quote, go ahead and write the citation. If you do not want to put in the full citation while writing, put the URL or the author’s last name so that you can easily come back to it at the end.
- Self-plagiarism: Ask your professor! Typically, this would mean using previous information or research and expanding on it or looking at it from a different perspective.

- Mosaic plagiarism: Paraphrase the information! Make sure you put the information in your own words and that it is not too similar to the original source. Paraphrasing still requires a citation.

Use quotes when:

- The idea is worth repeating exactly as it is.
- The idea is complex and summarizing could oversimplify.
- Analyzing a specific section or passage.
- Writing a counter claim.

How to quote:

- Use signal words, such as explains, insists, discusses, argues, states, etc.

Ex: Hopkins argues that “Chihuahuas are the cutest dogs” (113).

Hopkins argues, “Chihuahuas are the cutest dogs” (113).

- When author is not important, integrate the quote into the sentence.

Ex: While all dogs are cute in their own way, “Chihuahuas are the cutest dogs” (Hopkins 113).

- Note: When using the author’s name in the sentence, you do not have to include it in the in-text citation, like in the first example. If you do not use the author’s name in the sentence, you must include it in the in-text citation.

Common mistakes when quoting:

- Drop-in quotes

Ex: Time management is a very important skill in college. “Students who manage their time are more likely to be less stressed” (Banks 14).

To correct this, use a signal word before the quote or integrate it into the sentence:

Ex: Banks states, “Students who manage their time are more likely to be less stressed” (14).

Ex: Time management is a very important skill in college because “students who manage their time are more likely to be less stressed” (Banks 14).

- Missing quotation marks

Ex: The club president said that there will be an event for all students to attend this Friday.

Where does the writer’s voice stop and the source’s voice begin?

There are no quotation marks, so it is unclear. To fix this, add the quotation marks where they belong:

The club president said that “there will be an event for all students to attend this Friday” (Smith).

Use paraphrasing when:

- Original wording of an idea doesn’t matter.
- Original language is too complex for audience.

How to paraphrase:

- Think about what aspects of the text you want to emphasize.
- Record yourself talking about the topic in your own words.
- Write a pretend letter to your grandma or tell a friend about it.

Ex: Passage: “Rapunzel had beautiful long hair that shone like gold. When she heard the voice of the witch she would undo the fastening of the upper window, unbind the plaits of her hair, and let it down twenty ells below, and the witch would climb up by it” (Grimm 94).

Paraphrase: The witch took advantage of Rapunzel’s long hair and used it to climb up the tower (Grimm 94).

Check yourself:

- Is any of the wording from the text used in your paraphrase? If so, change it or put it in a direct quote. Since the ideas are from another person, always use in-text and full citations to avoid plagiarism.