



Avoiding Plagiarism:

Mastering the Art of Scholarship¹

In writing, we draw upon others' words and ideas and the intellectual heritage underlying human progress. Scholarship entails researching, understanding, and building upon the work of others, but also requires that proper credit be given for any "borrowed" material. Students are responsible for ethical scholarship, and for knowing what plagiarism is and how to avoid it.

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism means using another's work without giving credit. If you use others' words, you must put them in quotation marks and cite your source. You must also give citations when using others' ideas. Even if you have paraphrased those ideas in your own words.

"Work" includes the words and ideas of others, as well as art, graphics, computer programs, music, and other creative expression. The work may consist of writing, charts, data, graphs, pictures, diagrams, websites, movies, TV broadcasts, or other communication media.

The term "source" includes published works—books, magazines, newspapers, textbooks, websites, movies, photos, paintings, plays—and unpublished sources (e.g., materials from a research service, blogs, class handouts, lectures, notes, speeches, or other students' papers.) Using words, ideas, computer code, or any work without giving proper credit is plagiarism. Any time you use information from a source, of any kind, you must cite it.

Why be concerned about plagiarism?

- ❖ **If you plagiarize, you are cheating yourself.** You don't learn to write out your thoughts in your own words, and you won't receive specific feedback from your instructor geared to your individual needs and skills.
- ❖ **Plagiarism is dishonest and/or misleading** because it misrepresents the work of another as your own.
- ❖ **Plagiarism violates the Code of Academic Conduct** and can lead to Suspension or Dismissal.
- ❖ **Plagiarism devalues others' work.** Using and submitting a professional's work as your own is taking an unfair advantage over students who do their own work.
- ❖ **It is wrong to take or use property** (an author's work) without giving the owner the credit due. Further, copyright violations can result in damages, fines, or worse.

¹ Source: UC Davis, Division of Student Affairs, Office of Judicial Affairs. September 2006.

How to Cite Sources:

One Citation method is to identify the source in the text, putting the author's last name and publication year in the parenthesis and giving the page number where the cited information appears. (Hacker, 2006, p. 391). The author's name links the reader to a list at the end of the paper giving full publishing information.

Example:

Hacker, D., *A Writer's Reference*, 6th ed. (Bedford/St. Martin's Press 2006) pp. 112-25.

Two other methods are footnotes and endnotes, which use raised numbers at the end of an idea or quoted words to link the reader to the source which is given either at the bottom of the page (footnote) or at the end of the paper (endnote). For all three methods, you must include the source in a reference list at the end of the paper, fully identifying each source by author's name, title, publisher's name, year of publication, and page numbers. Citations to electronic resource such as websites should include the exact URL, the date last revised, and any available information about the writer, publisher and/or creator of the site.

Resources on citation include:

- ❖ Gibaldi, J. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th ed. (Modern Language Association, 2009).
- ❖ *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th ed. (American Psychological Association 2009). UC Berkeley Teaching Library Internet Workshops "Style Sheets for Citing Resources (Print and Electronic)" at <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Style.html>

How can you avoid plagiarism?

Know what plagiarism is: ignorance will not excuse a violation. Intentional plagiarism, such as deliberate copying or use of another's work without credit, submitting a paper from the Internet as one's own, or altering of falsifying citations to hide sources is very serious, likely to result in Suspension. Unintentional plagiarism may result from not knowing how to cite sources properly, sloppy research and note-taking, or careless cutting and pasting from electronic resources- it is still a violation of the Code of Academic Conduct and subject to discipline.



Guidelines for Avoiding Plagiarism²

- ❖ **Use your own words and ideas.** Practice is essential to learning. Each time you choose your words, order your thoughts, and convey your ideas, you can improve your writing.
- ❖ **Give credit for copied, adapted, or paraphrased material.** If you copy and use another's exact words, you **must** use quotation marks **and** cite the source. If you adapt a chart or paraphrase a sentence, you must still cite your source. Paraphrasing is restating the author's ideas, information, and meaning in your own words (see examples).
- ❖ **Avoid using others work with minor "cosmetic" changes.** Examples: using "less" for "fewer", reversing the order of a sentence, changing terms in a computer code, or altering a spreadsheet layout. If the work is essentially the same as your source, give credit.
- ❖ **There are no "freebies". Always** cite words, information and ideas that you use if they are new to you (learned in your research). No matter where you find it- even in on the Internet or in an encyclopedia- you cite it!
- ❖ **Beware of "common knowledge".** You may not have to cite "common knowledge", **but** the fact much really be commonly known. That George Orwell was the author of the anti-totalitarian allegory *Animal Farm* is common knowledge; that Orwell died at age 46 in 1951 is not³.
- ❖ **When in doubt, cite.** Better to be safe than not give credit when you should!

² See Henderickson, R.J. *The Research Paper*. (Henry Holt and Company, 1957, xvi-xv; Mc Gill University "Student Guide to Avoid Plagiarism," last updated 05/25/2009.

³ Boker, G. *Inside George Orwell* (Palgrave MacMillan 2003) p 420.

Examples of Citing Sources

❖ Citing a Source for Factual Information:

In describing the personal circumstances and political beliefs of author George Orwell at the time he wrote his greatest novel, 1984, I have relied upon the factual account given in Gordon Bowker's biography Inside George Orwell."

Here the source is identified in the text, and page citations for any quotes or ideas can be given at the end of the material used. Additional citations to the source, with page numbers, are required to reference facts or quotations used later in the paper.

❖ Paraphrase vs. Plagiarism:

Original Source: *'[A Totalitarian] society...can never permit either the truthful recording of facts, or the emotional sincerity, that literary creation demands. ..Totalitarianism demands...the continuous alteration of the past, and in the long run...a disbelief in the very existence of objective truth.*

Student Version A—Plagiarism

A totalitarian society can never permit the truthful recording of facts; it demands the continuous alteration of the past, a disbelief in the very existence of objective truth.

This is plagiarism; the student has combined copies pieces of the author's language, without quotation marks or citations.

Student Version B— Improper paraphrase, also plagiarism

A totalitarian society can't be open-minded or allow the truthful recording of facts, but instead demands the constant changing of the past and a distrust of the very existence of objective truth.

That is plagiarism because the student has woven together sentences and switched a few words ("Open minded" for "tolerant" and "allow" for "permit") has left out some words, and has given an incomplete and inaccurate citation.

Student Version C— Appropriate paraphrase, *not* plagiarism

Orwell believed that totalitarian societies must suppress literature and free expression because they cannot survive the truth, and thus they claim it does not exist. (Bowker) pp 336-37

This student has paraphrased using her own words, accurately reflection and citing the author's ideas.

Student Version D—Quotation with cite, *not* plagiarism

In his biography of George Orwell, Gordon Bowker discusses the themes of 1984, quoting a 1946 essay by Orwell: "Totalitarianism demands...the continuous alteration of the past, and in the long run...a disbelief in the very existence of objective truth." (Bowker p. 337, quoting Orwell, 1946)

By introducing his source, the student signals that the following material is from that source. Verbatim words are in quotation marks, omitted words are marked by ellipses (...) and both the book used and the original source of the quote is cited.