



Avoiding PLAGIARISM

Mastering the Art of Scholarship

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. CSU Chico 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. You must put others' words in quotation marks and cite your source(s) and must give citations when using others' ideas, even if those ideas are paraphrased in your own words.

"Work" includes "original ideas, strategies, and research,"¹ art, graphics, computer programs, music, and other creative expression. The work may consist of writing, charts, pictures, graphs, diagrams, data, websites, or other communication or recording media, and may include "sentences, phrases, and innovative terminology,"² formatting, or other representations.

The term "source" includes published works (books, magazines, newspapers, websites, plays, movies, photos, paintings, and textbooks) and unpublished sources (class lectures or notes, handouts, speeches, other students' papers, or material from a research service).

Using words, ideas, computer code, or any work by someone else without giving proper credit is plagiarism. Any time you use information from a source, you must cite it.

WHY SHOULD YOU 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 don't get specific feedback geared to your individual needs and skills. Plagiarizing a paper is like sending a friend to practice tennis for you – you'll never score an ace yourself!
- Plagiarism is **dishonest** because it misrepresents the work of another as your own.
- Plagiarism violates the **CSU Chico Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities** and can result in a disciplinary sanction that can include suspension or expulsion.

- Plagiarism **devalues** others' original work. Submitting a professional writer's work as yours 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 value or credit due. Further, copyright violations can result in fines or damages.



HOW TO CITE SOURCES

The most common citation method is to identify the source in the text, putting the author's last name and the publication year in parenthesis, with the page number of the cited material (Hacker, 1995, p. 261). The author's last name links the reader to a list of sources at the end of the paper where the full publishing information is given:

References:

Hacker, Diana., *A Writer's Reference* (St. Martins Press, 1995)

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 given 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. Here, sources are fully identified by author's name, title, publisher's name, year of publication, and page number(s). For more information, see the MLA or APA handbooks.

HOW CAN YOU AVOID PLAGIARISM?

Know what plagiarism is: ignorance will not excuse a violation. **Intentional plagiarism** is deliberate copying or use of another's work without credit. **Unintentional plagiarism** can result from not knowing citation standards ("I thought the internet was free!"), from sloppy research and poor note-taking, or from careless "cutting and pasting" of electronic sources. **Both intentional AND unintentional plagiarism are violations of our Code.**



GUIDELINES for AVOIDING PLAGIARISM:

- **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 repeat 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. **Paraphrase means that you restate the author's ideas, meaning, and information in your own words** (see examples).
- **AVOID USING OTHER'S 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 spread sheet layout. If the work is essentially the same, give credit.
- **THERE ARE NO "FREEBIES."**
ALWAYS cite words, information, and ideas you use if they are new to you (learned in your research). **No matter where** you find it – even in an encyclopedia or on the Internet – you cite it!
- **BEWARE OF "COMMON KNOWLEDGE."**
You don't have to cite "common knowledge," **BUT** the fact must really **be** commonly known. That Abraham Lincoln was the U.S. President during the Civil War is common knowledge; that over 51,000 Union and Confederate soldiers died in the Battle of Gettysburg³ is **not**.
- **WHEN IN DOUBT, CITE.**
Better to be safe than not give credit when you should!

EXAMPLE of ETHICAL SCHOLARSHIP

Citing a source for factual information:

In describing the role of the Los Angeles Times in the conflicts and events surrounding the diversion of water from the Owens Valley, I have relied upon the factual account given in Thinking Big—The Story of the Los Angeles Times (Gottlieb and Wolt, 1997).⁴

Identifying the source "up front" means the student doesn't need a page cite until the end of this paragraph, but additional page citations would be required to reference facts used later in the paper.

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MORE EXAMPLES – How to Cite Correctly

The Original Source:

"In research writing, sources are cited for two reasons: to alert readers to the sources of your information and to give credit to the writers from whom you have borrowed words and ideas."⁵

Plagiarism (same words, no quotation marks):

In research writing, sources are cited to alert readers to the sources of your information and to give credit to the writers from whom you have borrowed words and ideas.



The student has used the author's exact words, leaving out only a phrase, without quotation marks or a citation.

Also Plagiarism (incorrect paraphrase):

In research writing, we cite source for a couple of reasons: to notify readers of our information sources and give credit to those from whom we have borrowed. (Hacker).



The student has made only slight changes, substituting words such as "a couple" for "two", "notify" for "alert", and "our"/ "we" for "your"/ "you," leaving out a few words, and giving an incomplete citation.

A Solution (appropriate paraphrase):

A researcher cites her sources to ensure her audience knows where she got her information, and to recognize and credit the original work. (Hacker, 1995, p. 260).



This student has paraphrased in her own words, while accurately reflecting and citing the author's ideas.

A Different Solution (quotation with cite):

In her book A Writer's Reference, Diana Hacker notes, "In research writing, sources are cited for two reasons: to alert readers to the sources of your information and to give credit to the writers from whom you have borrowed words and ideas." (1995, p. 260).



By introducing his source, the student signals that the following material is from that source. All verbatim words are in quotation marks, and the source of the quote is cited with a page number.

GETTING HELP

Read the syllabus and the assignment; ask your instructor how to cite sources; and get a book on writing and citing research papers.

¹ Brenda Spatt, *Writing from Sources* (St. Martins Press, 1983), p. 438.

² *Id.*

³ "The Battle of Gettysburg: Aftermath," Gettysburg Convention & Visitor's Bureau, September 22, 1999, <http://www.gettysburg.com/visitor/booklet/bat/aftermath.htm>

⁴ Robert Gottlieb and Irene Wolt, *Thinking Big—The Story of the Los Angeles Times* (G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1977).

⁵ Diana Hacker, *A Writer's Reference* (St. Martin's Press, 1995).