Avoiding Plagiarism and Citing Sources

What is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is when someone presents another person's work, ideas, or words as their own without proper credit. It can happen accidentally or intentionally, but either way, it's a serious issue in academic and professional settings.

According to the *Merriam-Webster* dictionary, to plagiarize means:

- **To steal** and pass off the ideas or words of another as one's own.
- **To use** someone else's work without crediting the source.
- **To commit literary theft.**
- **To present** an existing idea or product as new and original.

Why is Avoiding Plagiarism Important?

Plagiarism isn't just about breaking the rules—it affects learning, creativity, and integrity. When you give credit to original authors, you show respect for their work while also strengthening your own. Proper citations help:

- **Build credibility** – Your work is more trustworthy when sources are properly cited.
- **Strengthen arguments** – Well-researched work shows a strong foundation of knowledge.
- **Encourage learning** – Engaging with different perspectives helps you develop your own ideas.
- **Protect academic integrity** – Honesty in research builds a reputation of integrity.

Visit Plagiarism.org for tips on how to avoid plagiarism and properly credit sources.

How to Take Notes to Avoid Plagiarism

Good note-taking helps you avoid accidental plagiarism and ensures you credit sources correctly. It's easy to mix up ideas when researching, so keeping organized notes strengthens both your understanding and integrity. Follow these strategies to stay ethical and accurate:

- **Use Your Own Words** – Rephrase information to reflect your understanding.
- **Track Sources** – Record the author, title, date, and page number for easy citation. This makes it easier to cite sources correctly later.

- **Use Quotation Marks -** If you must copy exact wording, use quotation marks and note the source details immediately to avoid forgetting where it came from.
- **Organize by Topic** – Structure your notes in categories or key ideas rather than copying large chunks of text.
- **Review Before Writing** – Before drafting your work, compare your notes with the original sources to ensure you properly paraphrase and cite information where needed.
- **Label Summaries, Paraphrases, and Quotes** – Clearly mark your notes to differentiate between your own thoughts, paraphrased ideas, and direct quotes.
- **Use a Citation System** – Jot down citations as you take notes to save time later.
- **Write Immediate Reactions** – Writing personal insights helps separate your thoughts from sources.
- **Use Multiple Sources** – Gathering information from multiple references ensures a well-rounded understanding and reduces the risk of plagiarism.

More Information and Plagiarism Tools

Tools and Resources to Help You Avoid Plagiarism:

- HCOS Academic Integrity Policy (including the use of artificial intelligence)
- Plagiarism Information for Parents - Help students understand academic honesty.
- Plagiarism Checker - Scan your work to ensure originality.
- Avoiding Plagiarism Infographic - A visual guide to staying plagiarism-free.

Citing Sources

What is a Bibliography or Works Cited?

Citing your sources isn't just about following rules but being a responsible researcher and thinker. When you give credit where it's due, you contribute to a culture of honesty, respect, and learning. A bibliography or works cited lists all the sources you have used while researching your work. Whenever you use an idea that isn't your own, you must cite where it came from.

What to Include in a Citation:

- **Author's name** (Who wrote it?)
- **Title of the work** (What is it called?)
- **Publisher's name** (Who published it?)
- **Publication date** (When was it published?)
- **Page numbers** (If part of a book or journal)
- **URL** (If found online)
- **Date accessed** (If it's a website that may change over time)

Example:

Works Cited

Watson, Sharon. "In-Text Citations for Middle School Students." *Writing with Sharon Watson*, 26 July 2017, writingwithsharonwatson.com/in-text-citations-middle-school/. Accessed 6 Dec. 2024.

> **Please refer to the Research Templates for more instructions on citing various kinds of sources (book, webpage, etc.** Gr 4 - 6 Research Template; Gr 7 - 9 Research Template

Citing Sources When Using Subscriptions

Some Subscriptions supply a citation that you can copy.

- **Gale in Context: Canada (Gr. 8-12)** - find the citation at the end of the article
- **Pebble Go (K-3) and PebbleGo Next (Gr. 3-5)** - find the "cite" button at the bottom of the page.
- **World Book Student (Gr. 5-8)** - find the "How to cite this article" button at the end of the article.
- **World Book Advanced (Gr. 9-12)** - citations are listed at the end of the article.

Tip: Even when a source provides a citation, always double-check it against MLA or APA guidelines to ensure accuracy.

More Information

- Citation for Beginners Video
- Citing Digital Images (SOPHIE) – How to properly credit online images.
- Citing Artificial Intelligence (SOPHIE) – How to cite content created by AI tools.
- Schrock Research and Style Manual – Citation guide for Grades 1-6 (MLA 9 format).

Free Citations Generators

- Grammarly Citations
- MyBib
- EasyBib

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