

Appendix A

Avoiding Plagiarism and Using Sources Ethically

What Is Plagiarism?

It is plagiarism to present another person's words or ideas as if they were your own. A kind of theft, plagiarism can result in failing a course or even in expulsion from college. While blatant, intentional plagiarism is not the campus norm, many students fail to fully understand what constitutes plagiarism. Internet research in particular poses pitfalls: information can be copied from the Web with the click of a mouse, and too many students wrongly believe that anything on the Internet is in the public domain (see the section "Using Copyrighted Materials"). Others believe that they can escape detection because a professor couldn't read all the possible sources on a topic; however, instructors can now access websites that scan documents and search the Internet to identify plagiarized material.

The most flagrant forms of plagiarism are the use of another student's work, the purchase of a "canned" research paper, or knowingly copying passages into a research paper without documentation. Sometimes students unintentionally plagiarize through carelessness--by leaving off quotation marks or failing to document sources properly. Also, too many students believe that merely changing sentence order or a few words in a passage avoids plagiarism.

How to Avoid Plagiarism

Always credit the source for any ideas and words not your own. That said, a fear of plagiarism should not force you to document the obvious. You do not have to document common knowledge--information that most educated people know. (For example, that George W. Bush did not win the popular vote in the 2000 presidential election is common knowledge; a newspaper citation would be

unnecessary.) You also do not have to document your own thinking, including points or conclusions that you have reached through the course of your research.

Paraphrasing

When you paraphrase, you restate *in your own words* a passage written or spoken by another person--and no more. Your writing should reflect the original passage's emphasis in your own phrasing and sentence structure. Compare the following passages. Here's the original, from a Stanford University website on South Africa:

With the enactment of apartheid laws in 1948, racial discrimination was institutionalized. Race laws touched every aspect of social life, including a prohibition of marriage between non-whites and whites, and the sanctioning of "white-only" jobs. In 1950, the Population Registration Act required that all South Africans be racially classified into one of three categories, white, black (African) or colored (of mixed descent). The colored category included major subgroups of Indians and Asians. Classification into these categories was based on appearance, social acceptance and descent. For example, a white person was defined as "in appearance obviously a white person or generally accepted as a white person." A person could not be considered white if one of his or her parents were non-white. The determination that a person was "obviously white" would take into account "his habits, education and speech, and deportment and demeanor" (Chokshi, Carter, Gupta, Martin, & Allen, 1991).

Unacceptable Paraphrase (underlined words are plagiarized):

According to Chokshi et al. (1991), racial discrimination was institutionalized with passage of the apartheid laws in 1948. Race laws touched every aspect of social life, including banning marriage between races, and the sanctioning of "white-only" jobs. The 1950 Population Registration Act required that all South Africans be racially classified as white, black (African) or colored (of mixed descent, Indian or Asian). Classification was based on appearance, social acceptance and descent. A white person, for example, was "in appearance obviously a white person or generally accepted as a white person." A person could not be considered white if one of his parents were non-white. According to the act, determining that a person was "obviously white" would take into account "his habits, education and speech, and deportment and demeanor.

In the above example, citing the authors (Chokshi et al., meaning "Chokshi and others") at the beginning does not legitimize using the authors' exact wording--nor does changing a few words and the order of phrases.

Acceptable Paraphrase:

The 1948 apartheid laws made racial discrimination official. The wide-ranging laws allowed “white-only” jobs and banned marriage between races. Two years later, the Population Registration Act classified all South Africans into one of three racial categories: white, black (African) or colored. “Colored” South Africans were of mixed descent or were Indians or Asians. According to Chokshi et al. (1991), the categories were determined by “appearance, social acceptance and descent.” An officially “white” person, then, had been judged to look like a white person or was accepted as one. A white person could not have a non-white parent. The act posited that “habits, education and speech, and deportment and demeanor” would help determine the classification.

Here, the writer has borrowed two phrases from the original, but enclosed them in quotes or attributed them properly--to Chokshi et al. and the Population Registration Act.

Summarizing

A summary condenses the essentials of someone else’s thought into a few statements. A summary is shorter than a paraphrase and provides only the main point from the original source. Keep it short; a summary should reduce the original by at least half. As with a paraphrase, keep your own ideas and opinions separate; you may want to note them to yourself and use them elsewhere in your paper, however.

Here is how the above quotation could be summarized:

The 1948 apartheid laws institutionalized racial discrimination in South Africa, affecting all aspects of social life. The 1950 Population Registration Act set up three categories of races, determined by such factors as appearance and descent (Chokshi, Carter, Gupta, Martin & Allen, 1991).

How to Include Reference Citations in Your Text

As you take notes, keep meticulous track of your sources. You may want to print a hard copy of each Web article used in order to save the author or authors, organization, title, date and URL for later reference--especially since Web pages are created and taken down constantly. Find out which documentation standard your instructor is using. The major styles used are MLA (Modern Language Association), APA (American Psychological Association), CMS (Chicago

Manual of Style), or CBE (Council of Biology Editors, now the Council of Science Editors). All of these styles may be found on the Research Navigator homepage (www.researchnavigator.com) at the “End Notes & Bibliography” tab.

Here’s how the entry on your “Works Cited” page would look for the apartheid quote using APA style:

Monal Chokshi, Cale Carter, Deepak Gupta, Tove Martin & Robert Allen (1991). Computers and the apartheid regime in South Africa. *South Africa. Guide to Internet Resources. Stanford University*. Retrieved Dec. 12, 2002, from the World Wide Web: <http://www-cs-students.stanford.edu/~cale/cs201>

In the example above, the authors’ names are followed by the year the paper was written, the paper’s title, and the name of the website (in italics). The date it was retrieved is followed by the URL. If the source is from a journal, you’ll need to include the title of the periodical or electronic text, volume number, and pages.

The process for citing a Web source within text is similar to citing a print source. Within your text, you will need to provide enough information to identify a source with a name or website. If the site includes page numbers or paragraph numbers, use those as well. (In subsequent references to the same authority, the author’s last name is usually sufficient.) Keep citations brief; you will fully document each source on the “Works Cited” page. If no author is listed, use the article title or website information for your in-text citation:

South Africa’s minority government used technology--especially computer hardware and software--as a tool of repression (*Computers and the Apartheid Regime in South Africa*, 1991).

Quoting Sources

Direct quotations from online material follow the same rules as non-Internet material. Enclose within quotations marks all quoted materials--a phrase, a sentence, a paragraph. (Some documentation styles specify that if you are quoting more than a sentence or two, the quote should be indented instead and set off typographically.)

Don’t load a paper with quotations; if more than a quarter of your essay consists of quotations, you are letting others speak for you and giving the impression that you have not synthesized the material. When drawing from an authority, rely mostly on paraphrase and summary. *Do* use a quotation, however, when it fits your message and its language is particularly on point or if the idea is hard to paraphrase accurately.

Diane Sollee (1996), the founder and director of the Coalition for Marriage, Family and Couples Education, said, “The number one predictor of divorce is the habitual avoidance of conflict.”

Quote exactly; if you drop a quoted phrase within a sentence, make sure the grammar meshes with your own. If you eliminate a sentence or words within the quote, use ellipses according to the appropriate documentation style.

Halberstam (2001) described “... a dramatically changed America, one which has been challenged by the cruelest kind of terrorism, and which is in a kind of suspended state between war and peace ...and where so much of our normal agenda has been brushed aside.”

Using Copyrighted Materials

Just as a patent protects an inventor’s rights to exploit a new product, a copyright signifies original creation and ownership of written words, music, or images. As a student, you may use copyrighted material in your research paper under the doctrine of fair use, which allows the use of others’ words for such informational purposes as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, or research. Academic integrity requires documenting such use in the manner covered in this chapter.

Copyright law is not intended to halt the flow of ideas and facts; it is meant to protect the literary, musical, or visual form that an author or artist uses to express his concepts. For example, there is a popular poem called “Warning” by Jenny Joseph (1961) that begins, “When I am an old woman I shall wear purple/
With a red hat which doesn't go and doesn't suit me.” Several websites publish a shorter, adapted version of the poem, but anyone who wants a full version is directed to buy products from a company that has bought publishing rights to the poem. If anyone could sell products displaying Joseph’s poem, its value to Joseph and the authorized publisher would be greatly diminished. Few artworks are as commercial as this, but a literary critic who published, without permission, all seven lines of a seven-line poem in her review would be violating copyright law as well. In either case, it *is* permissible to describe the ideas and facts contained in a work or quote brief passages; what is *not* permissible is to copy or reprint large portions of the work in its original literary, musical, or visual format without permission.

If you use substantial blocks of material, or you want to download images for your paper, you should seek permission from the author or website. When in

doubt, consult your instructor or e-mail the author or another contact for the Internet site.