

How to Avoid Plagiarism

Plagiarism – According to the AHED Academic Honesty Policy

“To plagiarize is to use the ideas and/or words of another without properly identifying and giving credit to the source. Plagiarism includes copying or paraphrasing ideas, phrases, statements, papers or other information.

The definition of plagiarism does not vary according to the source of the material. The original source may be a published item, such as a book, article, website, lyrics or movie; it may also be an unpublished item, such as another student’s work, or an instructor’s notes (2014).“

Use Direct Quotations Properly –

- Use the exact wording directly from a source and incorporate it into your paragraph. No words, spellings, or punctuation can be changed.
- Direct quotations should be kept to a minimum and only be used when the original authors wording has high impact and would lose meaning if changed. If the quote is less than 40 words, enclose in “quotation marks,’ if 40 or more words display it in a free standing block of text without quotation marks.
- Direct quotations **must** include an in-text citation and corresponding reference entry or they are considered plagiarism.

Paraphrase Properly –

- Taking a passage from an author and putting it into your own words. Quotation marks are not used but the **passage still needs an in-text citation and reference entry.**
- Paraphrasing requires the writer to do more than change a few words – it involves understanding the material and rewriting the main points in completely different phrasing.
- When you achieve an acceptable paraphrase the passage sounds dramatically different from the original.
- Beware of patchwork paraphrasing – combining your own wording with direct phrasing from a source.
- Your ability to accurately restate ideas in your own words shows that you understand the material.
- Incorrect paraphrasing is the most common form of plagiarism.

How to paraphrase:

- Read the material and take notes as you go. Do not use exact phrases.
- Close the book/website. Do not copy and paste!
- Make a list of the ideas that you remember.
- **Reword** – replace words and phrases with synonyms whenever you can
- **Rearrange** – rearrange words within sentences or ideas within the paragraph
- **Realize** – some words and phrases cannot be changed – names, dates, titles, etc.
- **Recheck** - compare your work with the original to make sure you are getting the points across correctly. Re-write as needed.

Examples:

Original passage:

"I had to explain to him that I was deaf. I said, 'Wait; I can't hear; please talk slowly.' He looked at me and said, 'What?' I told him again I was deaf, and he said, 'Oh.' He pointed to a door and told me to go through that door. I followed his instructions. I opened the door and walked through it, closing the door behind me. I found that I was in the hallway near the elevator where I had just come up. I was shocked! He had rejected me without any explanation. I got into the elevator, and as it descended, I felt very letdown. I couldn't understand why he didn't give me a chance to explain that I could do the job well. It didn't require hearing!" (Bragg, 1981).

Acceptable paraphrase:

In *A Handful of Stories*, Bernard Bragg tells a story of trying to get a job. One time he told a potential employer he was deaf, and the man just pointed to the door. Mr. Bragg, not realizing the man was telling him to leave, opened the door and stepped out. Not until he went out the door did he realize he had been rejected because he was deaf (1981).

Original passage:

Students frequently overuse direct quotation in taking notes, and as a result they overuse quotations in the final research paper. Probably only about 10% of your final manuscript should appear as directly quoted matter. Therefore, you should strive to limit the amount of exact transcribing of source materials while taking notes (Lester, 1976).

Plagiarized:

Students often use too many direct quotations when they take notes, resulting in too many of them in the final research paper. In fact, probably only about 10% of the final copy should consist of directly quoted material. So it is important to limit the amount of source material copied while taking notes.

Acceptable paraphrase:

In research papers students often quote excessively, failing to keep quoted material down to a desirable level. Since the problem usually originates during note taking, it is essential to minimize the material recorded verbatim (Lester, 1976).

Original passage:

*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" (2010).*

Plagiarized:

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.

Acceptable paraphrase:

Researchers cite their sources to ensure their audiences know where they got their information and to recognize and credit the original work (Hacker, 2010).