FY 100 Basic Citation Exercise
By Dr. Jennifer Mitchell for SUNY Potsdam FY 100, Fall 2016

College teachers expect student writers to give full credit to the sources you use in your writing. But it’s much tougher at college. We have designed this assignment to help you learn this important skill now – in order to save you some stress later.

Why? College teachers can easily see plagiarism when writers paraphrase poorly or skip a citation. Those are common mistakes among first-year writers, but they are considered a form of cheating with consequences. Therefore, this Basic Citation Exercise shows you how to paraphrase and cite in your sentences. Plan to spend 1-2 hours reading and writing to complete this assignment. We’re not kidding: this Exercise requires time and concentration, but you’ll thank us later.

Of course, the bibliography is the other part of citing well, and it is crucial. Your bib must have every source you’ve used, applying the style your teacher assigns. However, “citation makers” (like EasyBib) can’t do everything you need.

First, it is your responsibility to correct that bib by checking it against a credible guide (see Tips at the end of this document). Second, “citation makers” help you draft your bib, but they do NOT help you with paraphrasing or citing in your sentences. That’s what you’ll learn here.

To complete this Exercise, you will:

1. Create one Word document with your answers to all six tasks below.
2. To complete the six tasks, read and write as explained in each task. Apply what you learn from the reading: that’s what you’ll be graded on.
3. Label each task clearly in your Word document.
4. Submit that single Word document to your FYSS instructor following their instructions. (Never send your teacher a Google docs link – download your Google doc as a Word document, save it appropriately, and submit it as an attachment in email or Moodle.)

Tasks 1-3 will probably take one hour, and Task 4-6 will take you another hour.

Scroll down to get started.
Task 1: “WAKE-UP CALL”

First, read assigned parts from these two links

- Read Potsdam Academic Honor Code, all of parts A and B, plus sections 1-2 of part C.
- Read What is Plagiarism?, section 1 first four paragraphs (up to Heilbroner) plus all of section 3.

Then, follow these instructions to write a response to the readings above
Using those two readings, write a short “wake-up call” addressed to your peers: share key points which might be new to your peers. What are the challenges they should keep in mind?

Write 120-200 words. (To check word count, highlight your selected text and find your word count in bottom left corner of Word screen or in Tools on Google docs.)

Cite the author of each source by naming the author, either in your sentence or in parentheses immediately after you use that source. Find the authors’ names in Task 5, below.

Task 2: GUIDELINES for CITING

First, read assigned parts from these two links

- Read “Plagiarism and Citation Basics.” (Uses MLA 7th ed., but 8th ed. is now in effect for bibliography format. Read more if you’re curious.)
- Read “Paraphrasing,” pages 3-5. These pages are crucial to your college writing success!

Then, follow these instructions to write a response to the readings above
Summarize the most helpful or surprising point you picked up from “Paraphrasing.” Write 75-100 words.
Task 3: APPLY WHAT YOU JUST LEARNED: comment

For Tasks 3-4, you’ll be graded on how well you apply what you learned from the readings in Tasks 1-2.

First, read the following passages

Read the original passage below from a review article written by Amy Lee Pearsall. She is writing about Rhapsody in Black – a one-man show which you’ll see on October 12 with your FYSS class. (Optional: To learn more, you can link to her full review article (scroll down to paragraph six), LeLand Gantt’s acting credits, and his trailer. Here’s another good review, too.)

LeLand Gantt’s one-man show Rhapsody in Black [is a] memoir piece [which] . . . deals with self-destruction, self-sabotage, and racism. It has the potential to come across as heavy stuff, and . . . the last thing an audience might expect is a joyful, openhearted examination of personal history and redemption. Still, Gantt takes the stage with a huge, disarming smile and warm countenance, and playfully engages the audience. "I’m just trying to start a conversation," he says, and what a delightful, important conversation it is (Pearsall).

Then, comment on our five paraphrases of Pearsall’s passage above

Based on what you read in Tasks 1-2, what is good/bad, correct/incorrect about our five paraphrases, below, of Pearsall’s passage? Write around 25 words for each, discussing: Is the paraphrase accurate? Is it original or is it using Pearsall’s words? Is she given credit correctly?

1. Good paraphrase: Gantt addresses intense and painful issues in his show, but his tone is also friendly as he tries to connect with the audience (Pearsall).

2. Good paraphrase: Pearsall observes that Gantt’s show is remarkably positive, even as it confronts painful issues in his life.

3. Good paraphrase: Gantt’s show surprises the audience with “a joyful, openhearted examination of personal history and redemption” (Pearsall).

4. Poor paraphrase: Gantt explores personal history and redemption with a disarming smile in this delightful, important conversation.

5. Poor paraphrase: Gantt’s story has the potential to come across as heavy stuff (Pearsall).
Task 4: APPLY WHAT YOU JUST LEARNED: write an essay

First, read pages from Chapter Two, “Fire”
Read pages 47-61 from our shared FYSS book, The 5 Elements of Effective Thinking. These pages are part of Chapter Two, “Fire: Igniting Insights through Mistakes.”

(Note: Your teacher might instruct you to work from a different part of the book, but this section has been very popular with FY100 students in the past. Even if you haven’t read Chapter One, “Earth,” yet, writing about “Fire” can get you into this book.)

Then, follow the instructions below to write a short essay about those pages you read
Write a short essay showing your accurate understanding and your reaction to the reading from “Fire,” above. APPLY WHAT YOU LEARNED to paraphrase and cite correctly!

• Write 400-450 words, total; that’s about a page and a half in Times New Roman 12, double-spaced.
• Follow the prompts below, deciding for yourself whether you want to give more space to the first or second prompt in your own essay.
• Write a rough outline to give yourself time to think through which points you want to make. Type it in at the end of your essay.

In your essay, write about both of these prompts.
1. First, show that you really understand the reading accurately. Quickly summarize the points from these pages in “Fire” that hit you the hardest or which you want to remember. Briefly state why chose each point. (Each of you will have your own set of “key points” from the pages.)
2. Second, briefly tell a story of a time when you did a good job of turning failure or extreme challenge into learning. Show clearly how any part of the assigned reading relates to your experience.

IMPORTANT: Use your source (“Fire”) well, based on what you’ve learned in this Basic Citation Exercise.
• Be sure to use the book accurately to make your points.
• Paraphrase and quote carefully, using what you learned in this Exercise.
• Give credit every time. Be sure to cite author and pages in parentheses after each quotation or paraphrase. Cite as often as necessary throughout your paragraphs!
Task 5: BIBLIOGRAPHY

Copy this Bib
Paste this bibliography in at the end of your Basic Citation Exercise. (This is the only time you can copy and paste without giving credit.) This bib uses the 7th edition of MLA style rules, which are changing now to the 8th edition.

Add today’s date at the end of each item to show when you read it.

Note: Always be absolutely sure that every source you used in writing a paper is listed on that bib page. Then you are revealing that you used that source, not hiding it. Hiding a source is the definition of plagiarism.

Works Cited

Burger, Edward B. and Michael Starbird. The 5 Elements of Effective Thinking.


Note for your future work: Technically, a “bibliography” is a list of works on the topic, but a “works cited” page or “references” list shows only the works you actually drew from (summarized, paraphrased, or quoted) in your paper.
Task 6: TIPS: Help when you need it

First, read the following text and take a quick look at each link

Help on campus:
Potsdam College Writing Center peer writing consultants can help you with any aspect of your writing, including citation. Just contact us for a free appointment any time.
SUNY Potsdam reference librarians can also help with citing, and lib.potsdam.edu includes good links. We really want to help you learn, so come find us with your questions, big and small.

Links:
The best online guides to citation styles are Purdue OWL and CiteSource. The OWL includes sample papers with correct citation; CiteSource gives examples of citing unusual web sources.

Citation makers (like EasyBib or BibMe) help you to create a works cited page, but they don’t show you when to cite in your sentences and paragraphs. And the quality of the works cited page is still your responsibility: check to be sure that it really is correctly formatted by comparing the format to those at Purdue OWL or CiteSource.

Citation styles: Different fields of study use different styles. For example, English uses MLA style, but Psychology uses APA style and History uses Chicago style. Your teacher will tell you what style to use. In most 100- and 200-level courses, MLA style will be fine.

Next, bookmark and make a list
Choose 2-3 links above. Bookmark them on your own computer for future reference. Submit a list of those links which you chose to bookmark as Task 6.

You’re done! We hope you learned something. Remember, you are responsible for learning how to cite and doing it thoroughly. Teachers won’t always spell it out: it’s your work, your academic integrity, and your consequences.