

Plagiarism and Citation: How to Cite Sources Correctly

Potsdam College Writing Center

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The Three Golden Rules for Citing Sources

When in doubt, cite it!

Always cover your...self (save your sources)

Resist academic temptation

Paraphrase: (Gillespie and Lerner 32) – no comma necessary in MLA style.

Short quote: Gillespie and Lerner point out that “[i]f you’ve had any experience with a writing center [...], you know that not all sessions start with a draft of a paper” (31).

Reference in sentence: Often, you can refer to the author of any quote or paraphrase clearly in the text, and provide page numbers only in parentheses. If you do not, then include author’s name in parentheses: (Gillespie and Lerner 31).

Long quote: Indent exact quotes that take up more than three full lines of text. Drop the quotation marks and change the punctuation of the citation.

Moore Howard argues that universities too often see plagiarism as a moral crime or sin, rather as an indication of confusion and new thinking:

 Morality is not a necessary component of plagiarism, and ignorance of citation conventions is not its sole alternative. [...] A third possibility, too seldom recognized, is that students have commendable reasons for engaging in patchwriting, a textual strategy that is commonly classified as plagiarism. (797)

Some Definitions:

Citation is giving credit to the sources you use by showing the author and page numbers in your paper right alongside your use of the source. It also includes giving a detailed standard bibliography so that your reader can go straight back to your original sources.

Plagiarism is the lack of citation or inadequate citation. This is seen as passing off another’s words as your own, or even stealing another’s words or work. Plagiarism is an offense whether it was intentional or not.

Potsdam College Academic Honor Code definition:

“**Plagiarism:** presenting as one’s own the distinctive ideas, facts or words of another (in part or in whole) without appropriate acknowledgement of the source. Issues of plagiarism apply to any type of work including, but now limited to exams, papers, any writing or printed text, computer programs, web sites, art, music, photography or video.”

A few examples of plagiarism:

- Copying and pasting from an Internet source into your paper without using correct citation.
- Putting information in your own words (paraphrasing) without showing where the information originally came from.
- Poor paraphrasing, which is just changing a few words from the original even if you give credit for the source.
- Recycling your own papers (or sections of them) from another course. This is known as multiple submission.

A few basic guidelines for good citation:

- Leave a clear trail your reader could follow from your paper back to each of your original sources.
- Give credit *even when you put information in your own words*.
- Cite everything from every source, including web pages of any and all kinds, lectures, interviews, movies, TV programs, newspapers, etc.

Three ways of using someone else’s words or ideas:

- Incorporation into your own thinking and language with citation
- Paraphrase with citation - don’t just tinker with the words, because those are their words
- Exact quotation, indented or not

How can the College Writing Center (CWC) help me with proper citation?

The CWC can help you with any stage of your writing, including questions about plagiarism and citation. You can consult with peer tutors or use our copies of handbooks that show you how to cite correctly. **Call x3059 to make an appointment, or stop by Carson 106 during weekdays.** We will offer workshops on plagiarism and citation in the fall; call for times.