

Plagiarism and Citation Basics

Potsdam Writers' Block

Important resources to bookmark

[Purdue OWL](#): See Purdue OWL on “Research and Citation” for helpful instruction.

[Writers' Block](#): Check out our site to make an appointment to help with your citations.

[Cite Source](#): See our site for helpful information on citing sources from Trinity College.

[What is Plagiarism?](#): sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, and 11 will help to define what plagiarism is.

Note: This handout uses MLA citation. **The pages above show many different styles required by different majors.** If you choose to use a citation machine of any kind, be sure the bibliography is indeed correctly formatted, and save it in the same file as your paper. Refer to Purdue OWL for the ultimate answer.

The Three Golden Rules for Citing Sources

1. When in doubt, cite it!
2. Cite in your paragraphs AND in your bibliography.
3. Always cover yourself (save your sources & share your process) Resist academic temptation to use sources without citation!

College citation means...

- Good citation creates a clear trail for your reader, from statements in your paper back to their 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.

Four ways to use words or ideas from sources

Your teacher-reader wants to see when you're using the source and when you're using your own ideas; citations show when you're done using a source, even if there are no quotation marks because you've paraphrased.

- Paraphrase with citation. Incorporate into **your own** thinking and language -- with citation. Paraphrase completely into your own words: don't just tinker with the words from the original. Put quotes around any phrases that still use the original wording. Always provide author and page number in parentheses (except in some advanced APA citation).
- Exact quotation, short and long: Include a short quote in your sentence or paragraph, with quotation marks. Indent a quote that is 40 words or longer, no quotation marks. Both must be exact original wording and followed by (Author page#).

- Summarize many pages or the entire source. Mention the author and include the source in your bib. Do not give page numbers unless you are summarizing a section of under ten pages or so – (Jones 12-20).

Examples follow:

- 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: As in the example above, you can sometimes refer to the author of any quote or paraphrase in your text. Then provide page numbers in parentheses.
- 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)

Examples of plagiarism:

- Copying and pasting from an Internet source into your paper without giving credit or using correct citation. Expulsion from college is possible.
- Putting information in your own words (paraphrasing) without showing where the information originally came from – give credit with (Author page#).
- Poor paraphrasing, which is just changing a few words from the original even if you give credit for the source. It looks like you are presenting their words as your own.
- Problems with citation in your text especially combined with FORGETTING TO INCLUDE A SOURCE IN YOUR BIBLIOGRAPHY. Include every source in your bib, so it NEVER looks like you are pretending you didn’t use that source.

How can the Writers’ Block help me with proper citation?

The Writers’ Block can help you with any stage of your writing, including questions about plagiarism and citation. Our services are for ALL college writers: we are not a remedial center. You can consult with peer tutors or use our copies of handbooks that show you how to cite correctly. Also find useful links and handouts on our website.

Call x3059 to make an appointment, or stop by Carson 105 during weekdays. See <https://www.potsdam.edu/support/tutoring/writersblock>.