

WRITING WITHOUT PLAGIARIZING

When you are writing your research papers, summaries, responses, or other term papers, you will read many writers, and you will be asked to report the writers you have read. Sometimes you will like the ideas in the source and you will want to use those ideas. Sometimes you will disagree with the ideas and will still quote what those writers think and then criticize them. In either case, you will report what you have read. The most important question is how you can do that without plagiarizing.

What is plagiarism?

In university courses, in the above situations, if you use information you gathered from other sources without acknowledging the source of information, and make it appear to be you own, this is called plagiarism.

How can you avoid plagiarism?

You must acknowledge the source (give credit) if you use

- another person's idea, opinion, or theory,
- any facts, statistics, graphs, any pieces of information that is not common knowledge,
- quotations of another person's actual spoken or written words,
- paraphrase of another person's spoken or written words.

** These guidelines are taken from the "Student Code of Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct of Indiana University". (Here, for example, I did not plagiarize because I borrowed from a source, and indicated the source of information.)

For further information on plagiarism please refer to the following online sources.

1. Indiana University has a very good page on plagiarism, with special emphasis on what is considered plagiarism in universities and how to avoid it. The pages about what is plagiarism and what is not are especially useful. <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html>
2. Capital Community College also has a good coverage of plagiarism and exercises on strategies to avoid plagiarizing. <http://www.ccc.commnet.edu/mla/plagiarism.shtml>

Writing without plagiarizing: Strategies

How can we make use of other authors' ideas and still credit their work? There are three methods of doing this:

1. Paraphrasing

2. [Quoting](#)
3. [Summarizing](#)

1. Paraphrasing

When you paraphrase some text, do not forget that you still have to cite the source of information in order not to plagiarize.

What is a paraphrase?

- A paraphrase is your restatement of an author's ideas or some information
- It should include the citation, i.e. name of the author and the date of publication of the material

e.g. Davis(2001) discusses the influence of parents on their children's decision making process.

How can you make a successful paraphrase?

- Read very carefully the text you are going to write about
- Make notes while you are reading: Write down major points of argument, etc.
- Make sure that you have understood the writer's ideas completely
- Express in your own words the ideas or information you have read: A good way to do that is to put the text away and write your own sentences:
 - Use synonyms
 - Reorder the information or ideas
 - Change the sentence pattern
 - You may state the information in shorter and simpler sentences

Important Note:

- Compare your version with the original version; make sure that logic of the ideas has not changed
- Do not add or leave out important information

Example 1

Original paragraph:

“I was a child in a time of hope. I wanted to be a scientist from my earliest school days. The crystallizing moment came when I first caught on that the stars are mighty suns, when it first dawned on me how staggeringly far away they must be to appear as mere points of light in the sky. I'm not sure I even knew the meaning of the word

'science' then, but I wanted somehow to immerse myself in all that grandeur. I was gripped by the splendour of the Universe, transfixed by the prospect of understanding how things really work, of helping to uncover deep mysteries, of exploring new worlds - maybe even literally. It has been my good fortune to have had that dream in part fulfilled. For me, the romance of science remains as appealing and new as it was on that day, more than half a century ago, when I was shown the wonders of the 1939 World's Fair.“ (Sagan, 1997,p.27)

This paragraph discusses Sagan's fascination with science as a child. It is a narrative paragraph and told in the famous scientist's own colorful words. When we paraphrase such a text, we should summarize his narrative without losing the main points of attraction science had for him.

1. He was attracted to science even before he knew the meaning of the word "science"
2. The stars, the universe attracted him with all their mystery
3. He wanted to be involved in this wonder and mystery and discover new worlds
4. He is a lucky man because he realized his dream of becoming a scientist

Our paraphrase may look as follows:

In the article Sagan states that his fascination with science started when he was a child. He was very much intrigued by the mystery and wonders of the stars and the universe. Sagan also says that he is a lucky man because he realized his dream of becoming a scientist, a dream which started when he first visited the World's fair in 1939.”

Example 2

Original paragraph

“The principal point of interest for a social psychology of the city is that moral and social involvement with individuals is necessarily restricted. This is a direct and necessary function of excess of input over capacity to process. Restriction of involvement runs a broad spectrum from refusal to become involved in needs of another person, even when the person desperately needs assistance (as in the Kitty Genovese case), through refusal to do favors, to a simple withdrawal of courtesies (such as offering a lady a seat, or saying “sorry” when a pedestrian collision occurs). In any transaction more and more details need to be dropped as the total number of units to be processed increases and assaults an instrument of limited processing capacity. There are myriad specific situations dealing with social responsibility.

Specific incidents can be ordered in terms of two dimensions. First, there is the dimension of the importance of the action in question. Clearly, intervening to save one's life rates higher than tipping one's hat, though both imply a degree of social involvement with others. Second, one may place any specific incident in terms of its position on a social-anomic continuum. Thus, in regard to courtesy expressions, a person may extend courtesies (the social end of the continuum) or withhold them (the anomic end). Anomic conditions, up and down the spectrum, are said to characterize the metropolis in comparison with the small town." (Milgram, 1973)

This paragraph discusses the basic concepts Milgram develops in order to explain the urban social phenomena. He coins special terms and offers descriptions for these terms. When we paraphrase such a text we cannot change the terms because they are rightfully the author's, but we can acknowledge the source and paraphrase the rest.

Main ideas:

1. Interaction among people in the cities is restricted
2. It is restricted because there are too many instances of interaction
3. Our capacity to process such an interaction load is restricted too
4. Therefore, we choose to limit such social interactions
5. There are two "dimensions" :
 - "The dimension of importance of the action"
 - "The place of the action in the social-anomic continuum"

6. Anomic conditions rather than social conditions dominate the urban life

Having written down the main points, now we can proceed to make our own paraphrase/summary of Milgram's discussion.

People living in cities have to restrict their interaction with others because there are simply too many instances of such interaction; and since our capacity to handle such an interaction load is limited too, we have to restrict our interactions in order to be able to cope with such a situation. There are two "dimensions" we use to order interactive events: "the dimension of importance of the action" and "the social-anomic continuum" (Milgram, 1973). According to the value assigned to the interactive event, people choose their course of action. Thus, people may decide to intervene to save a person's life but choose not to say sorry when they step on another person's toes.

Example 3

"There is no easy awakening from the nightmare of their history. However, outsiders can do something to break the demonic hold of myth. War crimes tribunals and human rights commissions are not the irrelevance they seem. Their function is to

plunge the burning coals of myth into the icy bath of evidence; to hold the remaining ember of truth aloft for all to see; to show that history never justifies crime; and to teach people that they need truth as much as they need peace, and can't hope to get one without the other." (Ignatieff, Time, 1993)

When we read this concluding paragraph from Ignatieff's article in which he discusses the role of myth in atrocities in the Balkan conflict, we see that he used a highly metaphorical language, and quoting him in his own metaphors and choice of words would be direct plagiarism.

What we should do instead is figure out what he suggests here as a solution to the conflict:

1. War crimes tribunals and human rights commissions can be useful
2. The function of such bodies will be: to show the truth by separating truth from untruth with the help of historical evidence, and to show the importance of finding the truth rather than believing in stories people have believed without ever questioning

When we have sorted out his suggestions and made a note of his ideas in our own words, now we can refer to Ignatieff.

Ignatieff (1993) discusses the importance of unraveling the truth in solving the Balkan conflict. He advocates the establishment of war crime tribunals and human rights commissions. According to Ignatieff such bodies may help show the truth. Another idea that must be disseminated is that peace will not be possible without eradicating false beliefs.

2. Quoting

When should you quote? If the original wording of the source is very well-known and widely-recognized, or when the original phrasing is distinctly put together and paraphrasing would alter the meaning or weaken the effect, then you should use direct quotation from the source.

e.g. Bashevich Singer said, "I don't believe in miracles in writing."

e.g. "All our science, measured against reality, is primitive and childlike - and yet it is the most precious thing we have." Albert Einstein (1879-1955)

How to quote?

- Never quote extensively, that is, do not quote more than one or two paragraphs. Your paper should not consist of a collection of quotes from the same source or from different sources. Such a paper lacks coherence in style or meaning. Clippings from various writers, all

written in different styles cannot make up a consistent and coherent whole. Your paper looks like a scrap-book. It also appears that you could not master what you have read and present it in a coherent whole.

- Your quotes should be integrated into the main line of discussion in your paper. You should use quotes carefully. Quoting for effect or to strengthen the meaning.
- When you quote a writer you should acknowledge the source. Using one of the format style manuals (MLA, APA, Chicago) you indicate the name of the author and the date of the publication.

e.g. 1978 Nobel Prize winner Isaac Bashevich Singer once said, "I believe in miracles in every area of life, except writing. Experience has shown me that there are no miracles in writing. The only thing that produces good writing is hard work."

e.g. "We are going to die, and that makes us the lucky ones. Most people are never going to die because they are never going to be born."
(Dawkins, 1999, p.1)

- You should cite the name of the source in the text and in the references section of your paper. Refer to [documentation](#)
- Do not change the wording and expressions of the original source. Do not misquote.

Punctuation

- Place the text within quotation marks.
- Place all punctuation marks that belong to the text within the quotation marks

e.g. As Brown (2002) once said, "It is X." (p.43)

e.g. As Brown (2002) stated, "It is X." (p.43)

e.g. She argued that "It is X." (Brown, 2002, p.43)

Refer to [style manuals](#) for details

3. Summarizing

When you are writing a research paper, a term paper or reviewing for an exam, you may be asked to summarize the main ideas in a text criticize the approach taken by the author discuss the theme, etc. Your audience will make a great difference in the way you approach a text and summarize it. The notes you make for your own use will differ from the notes you make to discuss the matter with a friend, or from the summary you write for your professor. How much they know about the subject, how

much detail you are going to include will all depend on the task and your target audience.

How to make a summary

A good strategy in summarizing a text you have read is:

- Read the text several times but do not make any notes. During your first reading you may take extensive notes, but later you may find out that you do not need them. Therefore, read without making notes but interacting with the author. That is, familiarize yourself with the text, the author, the main ideas and arguments, etc.
- List the key ideas and supporting arguments
- Rank them in order of importance
- Evaluate them
- Summarize the text
- Acknowledge the source in the summary text and also list in the reference section

See also [documentation](#) section

Writing [the research paper](#)

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Source: <http://www.buowl.boun.edu.tr/students/favoidingplagiarism.htm>