PREVENTING PLAGIARISM

What is Plagiarism?

Using other people's words or ideas without giving them credit. Plagiarism can be *intentional* or *unintentional*.

The University of Alabama in Huntsville's Definition of Plagiarism?

According to the UAH Code of Student Conduct, plagiarism is defined as "the use of any other person's work (such work need not be copyrighted) and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one's own work offered in fulfillment of academic requirements."

Common Types of Plagiarism?

- Quoting material from another source without making citation
- citing only one source while combining materials from several
- citing fake sources to hide the amount of quoting/paraphrasing or to shortcut finding all the sources used
- changing the content of sources to make it sound more relevant
- copying the general structure, argument, or techniques of a source without attribution

How Should I Prevent Plagiarism In My Work?

Give credit whenever you use:
- another person's idea, opinion, or theory
- any facts, statistics, graphs, drawings - *any* pieces of information - that are not common knowledge
- quotations of another person's actual spoken or written words
- a paraphrase of another person's spoken or written words

Information from outside sources includes texts, ideas, graphs, tables, pictures, etc. Different styles require information to be cited differently, so check appropriate style guides.

Common Knowledge

Common knowledge does not need to be cited; however, common knowledge is different for different communities and fields of study.

- Think about what your audience would know or ask your professor
- When in doubt, always cite sources

For more information, make an appointment for your course with one of our content tutors. All appointments are available in-person at the Student Success Center, located in the Library, or online. Adapted from UAH Library and The University of Louisville Writing Center

Quoting

Put quotation marks around **all** words, phrases, lines, and passages taken word-for-word from your sources. Quotations must accurately reproduce what is in the original source. Rules differ depending on what style you are citing in (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.), so check the appropriate style guide for your assignment.

Paraphrasing?

Involves an understanding of the text beyond just what is being paraphrased.

When should I paraphrase?
- When the exact wording is not vital
- If you can say the information more succinctly
- If you're citing general ideas

Tips for paraphrasing correctly:
- Accurately represent the original idea in your own words
- Don't just change one or two words; vary the sentence structure
- Try not to look at the original while paraphrasing
- Think about how you would explain the information verbally

Example

Original Text: "Social theory, a product of the 1970s and 1980s, takes the view that knowledge is socially bounded and constructed--relative to the community that engages it" (Hewett 84).

Unacceptable paraphrase: Social theory, which came out of the 1970-80s, suggests that knowledge is dependent on social communities (Hewett 84).

Acceptable paraphrase: Hewett explains that social theory involves a relationship between social constructs and the community in the development of knowledge (84).

Basic Tips to Help Prevent Plagiarism?

- Start gathering sources early, so that you have time to develop your own thoughts and opinions based on the sources you have read.
- Keep track of your sources as you get them, so you do not have to spend long periods of time looking them up later.
- Reserve quoted material for those times in which the original quote enhances the work.
- Think of sources as data to be incorporated into your work rather than as groups of words into which you simply swap in a few of your own.
- Seek out a few extra sources and data so that your paper can break away from a single source's material.
- Double check to make sure you are accurately reflecting the works cited.
- Assume that even well-hidden plagiarism will be caught, and be harsh as your own critic.

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