

AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

What Is Plagiarism?

After the Beatles broke up, the band's lead guitarist, George Harrison, produced a solo album, *All Things Must Pass*, issued in the United States in November 1970, together with an accompanying single, "My Sweet Lord." The song became Harrison's first Number One hit single, but not everyone was happy with the situation. The copyright holder to the 1962 hit "He's So Fine," sung by an American female group, the Chiffons, claimed Harrison had taken the melody for "My Sweet Lord" from the Chiffons' song, without permission. Harrison was sued for copyright infringement. Even though the judge didn't believe that Harrison "deliberately" and consciously made use of the earlier song's melody, the court eventually found the melodies of the two songs to be so similar that Harrison lost the case and was ordered to pay \$587,000 in damages.¹

Copyright infringement, the unauthorized use of written material without the permission of the owner, is of concern primarily to commercial publishers. The financial costs of losing a copyright infringement lawsuit can be very high. But a no less significant kind of theft is greatly important to students and others working in academic and business communities—plagiarism. **Plagiarism** is using someone else's work—words, ideas, or illustrations; published or unpublished—without giving the creator of that work sufficient credit. A serious breach of scholarly ethics, plagiarism can have severe consequences: Academic professionals can face public

disgrace or even be forced out of a position. In the business world, plagiarism leads to distrust and can significantly damage careers. Students risk a failing grade or possibly disciplinary action ranging from suspension to expulsion. A record of such action can adversely affect professional opportunities in the future as well as graduate school admission.

Significance of Intellectual Honesty

People sometimes ask, “What’s so terrible about copying someone else’s work?” After all, many argue, in this age of the Internet and music downloads, information should be “free.” However, it’s possible to preserve the free flow of information without plagiarizing. Actually, careful documentation of information sources helps ensure that information remains not only available, but reliable.

The issues around plagiarism touch two significant points—preserving intellectual honesty and giving credit for work done. The academic community relies upon the reciprocal exchange of ideas and information to further knowledge and research. Using material without acknowledging its source violates this expectation and consequently makes it hard for researchers to verify and build on others’ results. It also cheats writers and researchers of the credit they deserve for their work and creativity.

Even with the writer’s permission, presenting another’s work as one’s own is equivalent to lying; it’s a form of dishonesty. Perhaps most importantly for students, plagiarizing damages a person’s own self-respect and negates the very reasons he or she is in college to begin with. A student who hands in a plagiarized paper has missed an opportunity for growth and learning.

Intentional Plagiarism

Suppose you are pressed for time on a deadline for a paper in your history class and a friend offers you a paper he wrote for a similar class the previous year. Handing in that paper as your own constitutes intentional plagiarism. In the same way, buying a paper from an Internet source—or taking one from a sorority or fraternity file—and handing it in, with or without minimal changes to wording, is plagiarism. Also, paying someone to write a paper that you

then hand in as yours is plagiarism. Finally, handing in a paper of your own that someone else has heavily rewritten or revised is plagiarism.

Ethical considerations aside, it’s extremely hard to get away with plagiarism. Experienced professors can easily tell when a paper is not written in a student’s own style or is more professionally done than they would expect. In addition, online services now identify plagiarized papers for a fee, and academic institutions are increasingly subscribing to such services. The March 2, 2006, online edition of *The New York Sun* reported that in New York City, more and more schools were requiring students to hand in papers through Turnitin.com, “a service that compares students’ papers against everything on the Internet and a database of more than 15 million student papers.”² Clearly, students at these schools will have a hard time getting away with submitting unoriginal papers.

Documentation—The Key to Avoiding Unintentional Plagiarism

As a student, you may resolve never to intentionally be involved in plagiarism. That’s a good intention, but it doesn’t go far enough. You have to consider also the possibility that you might unintentionally plagiarize someone else’s work. Remember that George Harrison probably never intended to copy the melody of “He’s So Fine.” But his lack of intention didn’t prevent the court from ruling against him. Unintentional plagiarism is still plagiarism. Today, with the wide availability of material online and with recurring arguments about the legality of downloading items from the Internet, it can be difficult to tell when you have unintentionally plagiarized something.

The legal doctrine of *fair use* allows writers to use a limited amount of another’s work in their own papers and books. However, to make sure that they are not plagiarizing that work, writers need to take care to accurately and clearly credit the source for *every* use. Magazine and newspaper writers follow their own guidelines for validating information and giving credit. In the academic and business worlds, documentation is the method writers

employ to give credit to the creators of material they use. **Documentation** involves providing essential information about the source of the material—information that would enable readers to find the material for themselves, if they so chose. It tells the reader (1) what ideas are the writer's, (2) what ideas are someone else's, (3) where the writer got the facts and other information, and (4) how reliable the writer's sources are.

Documentation requires two elements—a separate list of sources used in the paper (such as a Works Cited list or a References list) and citations in the text to items in that list. For example, suppose that for a paper about changes in the concept of free speech, you have consulted the 2005 “Worldwide Press Freedom Index” compiled by the organization Reporters Without Borders and listed on the group's Web site. In your Works Cited list, you might give the source as follows:

Reporters Without Borders. “Worldwide Press Freedom Index 2005.”
Reporters Without Borders. 2005. 28 Feb. 2006
 <http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=15331>.

In the text of your paper, at the place where you quote from or give information taken from the index, you need to give enough information to separate the source material from your own ideas and to identify the source material in the Works Cited list. For example:

An international press freedom advocacy group ranked the United States 44th among 167 countries, a decrease of more than 20 places from the previous year, “mainly because of the imprisonment of *New York Times* reporter Judith Miller and legal moves undermining the privacy of journalistic sources” (Reporters).

The **attribution** (in **boldface** in the example) introduces the source information and separates it from the writer's ideas and any other source information. The **reference** (in parentheses) at the end tells the reader how to find the source in the list of Works Cited, by the name of the organization, which is given first in the Works Cited entry in this case. In-text references should be concise; notice that in this example, the organization's name, which is given in full in the Works Cited list, has been abbreviated in the reference.

A number of different documentation styles may be used, but the two most preferred styles for academic work are those of the Modern Language Association (MLA style) and the American Psychological Association (APA style). Your instructor will usually tell you which documentation style to use. (The citation and Works Cited examples in this book are given in MLA style, but a discussion of APA style and sample APA formats are included at the end. A footnote documentation system, outlined in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, is also mentioned briefly later on.)

To use documentation and avoid unintentional plagiarizing from a source, you need to know about:

- Identifying sources and information that need to be documented.
- Using material gathered from sources: summary, paraphrase, and quotation.
- Staying loyal to the source material.
- Creating an in-text reference.
- Blending quotations into your paper.
- Documenting sources in a Works Cited or Reference list.

Sources and Information That Need to Be Documented

Whenever you use information, facts, statistics, opinions, hypotheses, graphics, or ideas from **outside sources**—whenever you use any words or ideas that you have not thought up yourself—you need to identify the source of that material. Outside sources include:

- Books
- Web sites
- Periodicals
- Newspapers and magazines
- Material from electronic databases
- Radio or television programs
- Films, plays, and other performances
- Interviews
- Speeches
- Letters and correspondence, including e-mail
- Government sources

Your documentation must be thorough. It needs to be correctly placed within the body of your paper as well as in the list of sources that follows your paper, according to the documentation style you are using.

Recognizing Common Knowledge

Virtually all the information you find in outside sources requires documentation. However, there's one major exception to this guideline: You do not have to document common knowledge. **Common knowledge** is widely known information about current events, famous people, geographical facts, or familiar history.

Sometimes it's difficult to determine whether a piece of information is common knowledge. Information that's common knowledge in one location might require documentation in another situation. For example, suppose the topic of a paper is public works projects. A student in San Francisco might assume as common knowledge the fact that it's possible to walk or bicycle across the Golden Gate Bridge, while a student in Maine might have to research and document that information.

Asking these questions can help you determine whether a fact is common knowledge:

- **Is this information that you know, or that you would expect others to know, without having to look it up?** For example, you know that there are 50 states in the United States, Ottawa is the capital of Canada, the Renaissance followed the Middle Ages in Europe, the current Dalai Lama is in exile from Tibet, and cats and dogs belong to different species. These facts are common knowledge (even if you find you sometimes have to refresh your memory about them).
- **Is the information readily available in many sources without documentation?** For example, you might not know that D-Day, the date of the Allied invasion of Normandy during World War II, was June 6, 1944. But a quick look in a range of sources confirms that this historical fact is widely stated and never documented. It's common knowledge. However, if you want to give details about how the invasion was planned, you

will have to document the sources where you learned those details. Another example: You know that Martin Luther King, Jr., admired Mahatma Gandhi's approach of non-violent civil disobedience—common knowledge that need not be documented. However, if you want to quote from King's writings about Gandhi, you must document your source.

- **Is the information in a general dictionary?** Suppose you are researching the societal function of urban pocket parks and gardens, and you come across a reference to photosynthesis. If you don't remember the details of the process, you can look up the word in a general dictionary to refresh your memory about, say, the role of chlorophyll without having to document that information. If, however, you decide to use the dictionary's definition in your paper, you must then document the source.
- **Is it a common saying or expression?** Traditional sayings, nursery rhymes, and other similarly widely known expressions do not require documentation if you can write them down from memory. If you have looked up the wording in a source, you ought to document the source you used. One caution: Some popular sayings actually come from Shakespeare or the Bible. You can check the origin of a saying by looking it up in a reference source such as Bartlett's *Familiar Quotations*.
- **Is this widely known information about authorship or creation?** You need not document that Shakespeare wrote *King Lear* or that Einstein discovered the general theory of relativity. However, if you quote from *Lear* or write about a specific performance of the play, or if you write about Einstein's ideas, you need to document the sources you've consulted.

If you have asked these questions and are still in doubt about whether information is common knowledge, the safest strategy is to provide documentation. Keep in mind also that many instructors require students to document *all* the information that they learn in their research; that is, if you personally had to look it up, you need to provide documentation.

How to Use Material Gathered from Sources

Once you find information that you want to use, you need to figure out how best to present it in your paper or report. You have several options, and your decisions should be based on making the most effective use of the material for your purposes. Essentially, you can integrate material into your paper in three ways—through summary, paraphrase, or quotation.

Summary

A **summary** is a brief restatement in your own words of the main ideas in a source. Summary is used to convey the general meaning of the ideas in a source, without specific details or examples that may appear in the original. You can summarize a paragraph, but summaries are mostly used for long items—a chapter, an Internet document, or even an entire book. A summary is always much shorter than the work it treats. For example, a summary of an entire book can take just 50 to 100 words.

Write a summary when (1) the information is important enough to be included, but not important enough to be treated at length; (2) the relevant material is too long to be quoted fully; or (3) you want to give the essence of the material without the corroborating details. In summarizing, you need to revise again and again to condense your writing as much as possible. Be objective, but if the original has a particular tone—ironic or critical, say—give an indication of the tone in your summary.

Original source:

Although the stereotypical profile of a hoarder is an older, single female, living alone and known as the neighborhood “cat lady,” in reality this behavior seems to cross all demographic and socioeconomic boundaries. As hoarders tend to be very secretive, many can lead a double life with a successful professional career—hoarding behavior has been discovered among doctors, nurses, public officials, college professors, and veterinarians, as well as among a broad spectrum of socioeconomically disadvantaged individuals (Patronek).

Works Cited

Patronek, Gary J. “The Problem of Animal Hoarding.” *Municipal Lawyer* May/June 2001. Hoarding of Animals Consortium, Center for Animals and Public Policy, Cummings Animal Veterinary School, Tufts University. 12 Mar. 2006 <<http://www.tufts.edu/vet/cfa/hoarding/pubs/municipalawyer.pdf>>.

Example of plagiarism:

According to Gary J. Patronek, not all animal hoarders fit the stereotypical profile of the neighborhood “cat lady” but can come from any demographic and socioeconomic group. Some hoarders are **successful professionals** including doctors, nurses, politicians, and teachers. Thus, agencies investigating reports of animal hoarding should be prepared to deal with people from a variety of backgrounds.

What’s wrong? Some of the writer’s language (in **boldface** in the example) remains too similar to that of the source. Also, the reader cannot clearly tell where the information from the source ends and the writer’s own contribution (given in the last sentence in the example) begins because no parenthetical reference immediately follows the summary.

Correction:

Animal hoarders can be people from any demographic and socioeconomic group, including professionals (Patronek). Thus, agencies investigating reports of animal hoarding should be prepared to deal with people from a variety of backgrounds.

What’s right? The writer has eliminated almost all of the original source’s language—in particular, distinctive, creative language—such as *stereotypical profile* and *neighborhood “cat lady.”* The words *demographic*, *socioeconomic*, and *professionals*, which are semitechnical or commonplace and hard to rephrase accurately, have been retained. Finally the writer’s own ideas are separated from the summarized ideas by the parenthetical reference, which immediately follows the summary.

Rules to Remember: When summarizing, follow these guidelines to avoid plagiarism:

1. Write the summary using your own words. If you “borrow” distinctive words or phrases from your source, you must use quotation marks within your summary to indicate quoted material.
2. Indicate clearly where the summary begins and ends.
3. Use attribution and parenthetical reference to tell the reader where the material came from.
4. Make sure your summary is an accurate and objective restatement of the source’s main ideas, but preserve the source’s tone or point of view.
5. Check that the summary is clearly separated from your own contribution. One way to do this is to place the parenthetical reference immediately after your summary.

Some papers require particular types of summaries—reviews, plot summaries, annotated bibliography entries, or abstracts. Take care to give the essential information as clearly and succinctly as possible in your own language.

Review. A review gives details about the time, place, and participants of an artistic event, such as a play or film; summarizes the event; and gives the reviewer’s opinion of the event’s success, often with supporting examples.

John Patrick Shanley’s *Doubt*, a tightly focused, one-act play that takes as its subject the issue of child abuse at a religious school, leaves audience members questioning their own sources of faith and belief. How can we be sure of the truth? What are the roles of instinct and evidence in searching for the truth? What does it mean to have faith? In the February 17, 2006, performance, at the Walter Kerr Theater in New York City, the actors Eileen Atkins, Ron Eldard, and Jena Malone, who recently joined the cast, and Adriane Lenox, from the original production, posed these questions and demonstrated once again why *Doubt* won the 2005 Pulitzer Prize for Best Drama.

Plot Summary. In a plot summary, the writer reduces the storyline of a novel, play, movie, story, or other artistic work to a brief outline. A plot summary includes only as much detail as necessary for the writer’s particular purpose.

In *Daniel Deronda*, a novel by George Eliot, the title character, who is a young English gentleman, finds himself drawn to the practice of Judaism and eventually learns the truth of his origins, that his mother was Jewish.

Annotated Bibliography Entry. A bibliography or Works Consulted list gives all the sources looked at for a paper, unlike a Works Cited list (in MLA style) or a References list (in APA style), which gives only the works actually *used* in the paper. In an annotated list, briefly summarize the material or purpose of each source.

Reporters Without Borders. “Worldwide Press Freedom Index 2005.” Reporters Without Borders. 2005. 28 Feb. 2006
<http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=15331>
This index surveys and ranks the level of press freedom in 167 countries.

Abstract. Placed at the beginning of an article or report, an abstract summarizes the purpose, process, and conclusions of the experiment or project detailed in the work.

Technology changes the ways in which members of a group interact. In an exploration of the impact on social norms of cell phone technology, 25 male and female college students were extensively interviewed about the effect of cell phones on extending and accepting invitations to social events, sending thank-you messages, and meeting expectations about punctuality. The study demonstrated that technology has had an impact on how people approach social interactions, with most interviewees saying that they were more spontaneous about making social arrangements and more relaxed about meeting expectations, especially concerning punctuality, than they would be without the use of cell phones.

Paraphrase

A **paraphrase** is a restatement in your own words, and using your own sentence structure, of specific ideas or information from a source. Paraphrase is useful when you want to capture certain ideas or details from a source but do not need or want to quote the source's actual words. A paraphrase can be about as long as the original passage.

Use a paraphrase when (1) you don't want to interrupt the flow of your writing with another person's writing; (2) you want to avoid using a long quotation or a long string of quotations; or (3) you want to interpret or explain the material as you include it.

If you remember that the chief purpose of a paraphrase is *to maintain your own writing style* throughout your paper, you'll avoid falling into a trap that many inexperienced writers succumb to—that is, using the original passage, but changing just a few phrases here and there. The most effective way to write a paraphrase is to read the original passage, put the passage aside, and then compose your own restatement of the material in the passage. If you want to repeat particular words or phrases from the original, put those items in quotation marks.

Original source:

The government of Libya is arbitrarily detaining women and girls in “social rehabilitation” facilities for suspected transgressions of moral codes, locking them up indefinitely without due process. Portrayed as “protective” homes for wayward women and girls or those whose families rejected them, these facilities are *de facto* prisons. In them, the government routinely violates women's and girls' human rights, including those to due process, liberty, freedom of movement, personal dignity, and privacy. Many women and girls detained in these facilities have committed no crime, or have already served a sentence. Some are there for no other reason than that they were raped, and are now ostracized for staining their family's “honor.” There is no way out unless a male relative takes custody of the woman or girl or she consents to marriage, often to a stranger who comes to the facility looking for a wife.

Works Cited

Human Rights Watch. *Libya: A Threat to Society? Arbitrary Detention of Women and Girls for “Social Rehabilitation.”* Human Rights Watch. 18.2 (E). Feb. 2006. 40 pp. 4 Mar. 2006 <<http://hrw.org/reports/2006/libya0206/>>.

Example of plagiarism:

Another example of the worldwide mistreatment of women and girls is the case of Libya. There, the government is keeping **women and girls in “social rehabilitation” facilities** for breaking moral codes, **locking them up indefinitely without due process**. Portrayed as “protective” homes, these places are really prisons. In them, the human rights of women and girls are violated on a routine basis, including the rights to **due process, liberty, freedom of movement, personal dignity, and privacy**. Many have committed no crime, or have already paid their debt to society. Some are there only because **they were raped**, and are now outcast for **staining their family's “honor.”** They cannot get out unless a **male relative takes custody** of them or they agree to get married, often to a **stranger who comes to the facility looking for a wife** (Human).

What's wrong? The wording and sentence structure of the paraphrase are too close to the original. The writer has replicated the original source sentence by sentence, keeping much of the original wording (in **boldface** in the example) and simply replacing some words with synonyms. For example, “for suspected transgressions of moral codes” has become “for breaking moral codes,” “*de facto* prisons” has become “really prisons,” and “consents to marriage” has become “agree to get married.” Most importantly, the number of sentences, the structure of the sentences, and the organization of the paragraph are the same as in the original source. The reader is led to think that the writer has thought through the original material and interpreted it in a wholly new paragraph, when all the writer has done is to take a paragraph from the source and alter a few words.

Correction:

Too many societies in the world today tolerate, or even advocate, depriving women of their human rights. An egregious example of

discrimination against women and girls occurs in Libya. **Human Rights Watch**, in a report issued in February 2006, documented the existence of what are called “social rehabilitation” facilities, run by the government. Women and girls are kept in these places against their will, with little or no legal recourse. Only male relatives can get them released. Committed to these homes, mostly because they have been cast out by their families, these women and girls are virtual prisoners, sometimes for no other reason than that of “staining their family’s ‘honor’” by being a victim of rape (Human).

What’s right? The ideas from the source are conveyed in the writer’s own words and sentence structure. The attribution that introduces the paraphrase of the source material (in **boldface** in the example) and the parenthetical reference that follows it carefully separate the paraphrase from the writer’s own interpretations and reflections. The phrases that are exact quotations from the original source are kept in quotation marks.

Rules to Remember: To avoid plagiarizing when you paraphrase, be sure to follow these rules:

1. Use your own words and sentence structure. Your paraphrase must not duplicate the source’s words or phrases.
2. Use quotation marks within your paraphrase to indicate quoted material.
3. Make sure your readers know when the paraphrase begins and ends.
4. Check that your paraphrase is an accurate and objective restatement of the source’s specific ideas.
5. Immediately follow your paraphrase with a parenthetical reference indicating the source of the information.

Paraphrase of Technical Information. Paraphrase is especially useful for presenting technical material in language that is easily accessible to the writer’s audience.

Original source:

Malaria parasites have complex life cycles and, thus, distinct developmental stages, each of which has multiple antigens that could serve as targets of an immune response. A *pre-erythrocytic* vaccine

would protect against the infectious form injected by a mosquito (sporozoite) and/or inhibit parasite development in the liver. In a previously unexposed individual if a few parasites were to escape the immune defenses induced by a *pre-erythrocytic* vaccine, they could eventually multiply and result in full-blown disease. An *erythrocytic* or *blood stage* vaccine would inhibit parasite multiplication in the red cells, thus preventing (or diminishing) severe disease during the blood infection. A *sexual stage* vaccine does not protect the person being vaccinated, but instead interrupts the cycle of transmission by inhibiting the further development of parasites once they—along with antibodies produced in response to the vaccine—are ingested by the mosquito. Transmission-blocking vaccines could play a role as part of a multi-faceted strategy directed to elimination of parasites from low-transmission areas or as a means of protecting a vaccine or drug directed at *pre-erythrocytic* or *erythrocytic* stages against the spread of resistant parasites. An optimal vaccine would have the ability to elicit protective immunity that blocks infection as well as prevents pathology and interrupts transmission of parasites, and would most likely be a combination vaccine comprised of subunits from different parasite stages.

Works Cited

James, Stephanie, and Louis Miller. “Malaria Vaccine Development: Status Report.” National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. 30 Dec 2005. 13 pp. National Institutes of Health. 17 Apr. 2006
<<http://www3.niaid.nih.gov/research/topics/malaria/PDF/malvacdev.pdf>>.

Example of paraphrase:

The campaign to improve the health of people worldwide must continue to focus on efforts to eradicate malaria, including work on developing an effective vaccine. How would such a vaccine work? In a status report on malaria vaccines, written for the Division of Microbiology and Infectious Diseases of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, Stephanie James and Louis Miller describe potential types of malaria vaccines. One type would create immunity in people who have not yet been infected by malaria. A second type would prevent infected people from becoming very ill. A third would not help people who are already

infected, but could help stop the spread of the disease to others. The most effective vaccine would have all these characteristics—conferring immunity from infection, preventing the development of the disease after infection, and stopping the spread of the disease. (James and Miller).

Notice that the paraphrase is bracketed by an introductory attribution and a concluding parenthetical reference.

Quotation

A **quotation** reproduces an actual part of a source, word for word, to support a statement or idea, to provide an example, to advance an argument, or to add interest or color to a discussion. The length of a quotation can range from a word or phrase to several paragraphs. In general, quote the least amount possible that gets your point across to the reader. Quoting many long passages from source material can make your paper seem choppy and can give the impression that you have no thoughts of your own.

Use quotations if (1) the original writing is especially powerful, descriptive, clear, or revealing; (2) the original contains language you are analyzing or commenting on; (3) the original provides authenticity or bolsters the credibility of your paper; or (4) the original material is difficult to summarize or paraphrase adequately.

Original source:

If *Rutgers v. Waddington* made Hamilton a controversial figure in city politics in 1784, the founding of the Bank of New York cast him in a more conciliatory role. The creation of New York's first bank was a formative moment in the city's rise as a world financial center. Banking was still a new phenomenon in America.

Works Cited

Chernow, Ron. *Alexander Hamilton*. New York: Penguin, 2004.

Example of plagiarism:

In its early days, America lacked many of the sophisticated financial mechanisms prevalent in other countries. Indeed, **the creation of New York's first bank was a formative moment in the city's rise as a world financial center** (199–200).

What's wrong? The writer did not place quotation marks around the quotation—that is, the words repeated from the source (in **boldface** in the example). Also, the parenthetical reference does not give enough information to enable readers to locate the source in a Works Cited list: the author's name is missing.

Correction:

In its early days, America lacked many of the sophisticated financial mechanisms prevalent in other countries. **In Alexander Hamilton, Chernow**, noting that not many banks were established in the United States in the late eighteenth century, says, “The creation of New York's first bank was a formative moment in the city's rise as a world financial center” (199–200).

Or:

In its early days, America lacked many of the sophisticated financial mechanisms prevalent in other countries. **One commentator**, noting that not many banks were established in the United States in the late eighteenth century, says, “The creation of New York's first bank was a formative moment in the city's rise as a world financial center” (Chernow 199–200).

What's right? The writer used quotation marks to indicate the beginning and end of the quotation. The parenthetical reference contains enough information for a reader to find the source of the quotation. Note that the attribution (in **boldface**) introduces a paraphrase of information, as well as the direct quotation, from the source.

Rules to Remember: Regardless of the length of your quotation, to avoid plagiarism, observe these rules whenever you quote:

1. Copy the material from your source to your paper exactly as it appears in the original. Enclose short quotations (four or fewer lines of text) in quotation marks. (See “Blending Quotations into a Paper” later in this book for guidance on using long quotations.)
2. Provide clear attribution to your source so that your readers know the origin of the quotation.
3. Immediately follow each quotation with a parenthetical reference indicating the specific source information required.

Loyalty to the Source

It's unfair to use a source in a way that misrepresents its intended meaning. Whether you are writing a summary or a paraphrase or you are excerpting a quotation, be careful not to distort the message of the original source, either intentionally or inadvertently.

Quotations must reproduce the original source word for word. Writers should not alter the spelling, capitalization, or punctuation of the original. If a quotation contains an obvious error, you may insert *sic*, which is Latin for “so” or “thus,” to show that the error is in the original. Use regular type (not italics) and brackets: “. . . representatives from the 51 [sic] states plus the District of Columbia.”

In addition, a quotation, paraphrase, or summary must be used in a way that accurately conveys the meaning of the source; that is, material should not be taken out of context to distort the sense of the original.

In “A Modest Proposal,” his trenchant political satire, Jonathan Swift advocates selling off poor children to be eaten as food, as a means of solving the problem of poverty.

Moreover, any special tone that the original has—irony or sarcasm, for example—should be conveyed by the use of the quotation.

Original source:

Robert Lowell was above all an audacious *maker*—in poetry, one of the great makers of the twentieth century. He became famous as a “confessional” writer, but he scorned the term. His audacity, his resourcefulness and boldness lie not in his candor but his art. Therefore the present edition: by laying before the reader materials often buried since first publication, the present edition hopes to bring into focus Lowell’s practice as an artist, his nature as a maker.

Works Cited

Bidart, Frank. Introduction. *Collected Poems*. By Robert Lowell. Ed. Frank Bidart and David Gewanter. New York: Farrar, 2003. vii–xvi.

Example of plagiarism:

Lowell was a great twentieth-century poet because he was honest and daring as a “confessional” writer (Bidart vii).

What’s wrong? The paraphrase distorts the original meaning of the source material.

Correction:

Bidart asserts that though Lowell was known as a “confessional” writer, it was his “practice as an artist,” rather than simply his outspokenness, that made Lowell one of the twentieth century’s great poets (Bidart vii).

What’s right? The paraphrase conveys the meaning of the original source, and the attribution clearly introduces the source material.

Creating In-Text Citations

Remember that there are two parts to documentation—a list of works used and in-text citations for all source material. The in-text citations need to supply enough information to enable a reader to find the correct source listing in the Works Cited or References list. To properly cite a source in the text of your report, you generally need to provide some or all of the following information for each use of the source:

- Name of the person or organization that authored the source
- Title of the source, if there is more than one source by the same author
- Page, paragraph, or line number, if the source has one

These items can appear as an attribution in the text (“According to Smith . . .”) or in a parenthetical reference placed directly after the summary, paraphrase, or quotation. Not providing enough reference information in the text to enable readers to find a source listed in Works Cited or References page is a form of unintentional plagiarism.

Original source:

What accounts for the government’s ineptitude in safeguarding our privacy rights? Is privacy regarded by ordinary citizens and public policy makers as a trivial right unworthy of their attention? Or are we powerless victims of technology that has stripped away our privacy without our ability to recognize what was happening?

Works Cited

Spinello, Richard A. "The End of Privacy." *America* 4 Jan. 1997: 9–13.

Example of plagiarism:

The greatest threat to privacy may be our failure to recognize that it is being eroded by the very technology that many regard as beneficial, particularly the use of computers for commercial transactions. Electronic money transfers and credit card purchases over the Internet expose important private information about our finances to unscrupulous hackers. "[A]re we powerless victims of technology that has stripped away our privacy without our ability to recognize what was happening?" (9).

What's wrong? There is no attribution, such as "Spinello observes" or "according to Spinello," that clearly identifies the source for the quotation. The page number in parentheses is insufficient identification.

Correction:

The greatest threat to privacy may be our failure to recognize that it is being eroded by the very technology that many regard as beneficial, particularly the use of computers for commercial transactions. Electronic money transfers and credit card purchases over the Internet expose important private information about our finances to unscrupulous hackers. The journalist Richard A. Spinello raises this question when he asks, "[A]re we powerless victims of technology that has stripped away our privacy without our ability to recognize what was happening?" (9). Unfortunately, it may be ignorance, not apathy, that is creating the problem.

Or:

The greatest threat to privacy may be our failure to recognize that it is being eroded by the very technology that many regard as beneficial, particularly the use of computers for commercial transactions. Electronic money transfers and credit card purchases over the Internet expose important private information about our finances to unscrupulous hackers. The journalist Richard A. Spinello asks whether we have become "powerless victims of technology that has

stripped away our privacy without our ability to recognize what was happening" (9). Unfortunately, it may be ignorance, not apathy, that is creating the problem.

What's right? Both examples provide an attribution that gives the author's name and a parenthetical reference that includes the page number.

Using an Introductory Attribution and a Parenthetical Reference

The author, the publication, or a generalized reference can introduce source material. Remaining identifiers (title, page number) can go in the parenthetical reference at the end. The parenthetical reference should follow the source material as closely as possible, usually at the end of the sentence. This two-part format—*attribution plus parenthetical reference*—works well for quotations and is the best practice to follow for a paraphrase, as it clearly separates the source material from the writer's own ideas.

Original source 1—"Living" article:

Over the past two years state tax revenues have come roaring back across the country, after dropping sharply from a recession in 2001.

Original source 2 –McNichol and Lav report:

Despite recent reports of rapid state revenue growth and surpluses in some states, most states continue to feel the after-effects of the fiscal crisis. The spurt of current growth is occurring following several years of falling or stagnant revenues. During those years, states cut back on services, drew down rainy day funds, enacted temporary revenues, and used an array of fiscal gimmicks. As a result, state fiscal conditions today are weaker than they were before the last recession.

Works Cited

"Living on Borrowed Time." *Economist* 25 Feb–3 Mar. 2006: 34–37.

McNichol, Elizabeth C., and Iris J. Lav. "State Revenues and Services Remain below Pre-Recession Levels." *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*. 6 Dec. 2005. 10 Mar. 2006 <<http://www.cbpp.org/12-6-05sfp2.htm>>.