journal articles or chapters in a multi-authored edited volume) is in inverted commas or not, and so forth.

In preparing a bibliography, some basic considerations are:

- Arrange items in alphabetical order of authors' names.
- Insert an unauthored source alphabetically by way of the document's title.
- Make sure your bibliographic style is rigorously consistent in every respect.

Avoiding plagiarism

Universities treat cases of plagiarism very seriously, and lecturers and supervisors are skilled in detecting plagiarized work. You should therefore take time to familiarize yourself with your institution's various policies, guidelines and codes of conduct relating to plagiarism and research integrity, and read carefully any departmental handouts on the subject, as ignorance is no excuse when it comes to plagiarism.

key points

Honesty is crucial in study and research.

Deliberate plagiarism is viewed as outright cheating (for example, download-ing or copying-and-pasting unsourced material – sometimes whole essays – from the Internet, or copying another student's work), and penalties can be harsh, and even include dismissal from an institution.

The causes of plagiarism, however, can be complex. As examples, each of the following is discussed in turn:

1. Insufficient understanding of conventional practices governing the use of source material in academic writing.
2. Insufficient understanding of the task-specific uses to which source material will be put.
3. Failing to distinguish when you are drawing on source material and when you are interpolating your own comments.
4. Poor time management.

Practices governing the use of source material

When you write, you need to acknowledge the hard work (including mental work) of those scholars on whose work you draw. Disciplinary practices can vary, which is why it is vitally important to follow an appropriate style manual. Still, in general, you will need to cite your sources, including sources from the Internet, in situations such as the following:

key points

If English is a second language, do take care. It is all too easy to introduce second-language errors into direct quotations and can be time-consuming to check the correct wording of the flawed quotations.

When you quote directly from another author   This means when you reproduce the *exact* words of the author in your own text, and do make sure they are exact. Signal direct quoting by using double ("....") or single ('....') quote marks around the extract. Or indent longer quotes (usually over four lines) about five spaces from the margin.

If you insert anything into a direct quotation or change anything in that quotation, it is usual to indicate this by placing square brackets [...] around the word/s you have inserted or changed. If something unusual appears in the original quotation (for example, a misspelling), place [*sic*] meaning 'thus' after the misspelt or otherwise seemingly incorrect word or expression. '*Sic*' communicates 'this is how it appeared in the original source'.

When you paraphrase what another author has said   This means when you put what another has said into your own words. Make sure you do use your own words. Paraphrase proves challenging for some students. If you are uncertain about this, Google OWL Purdue, which has a good discussion of 'Quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing'.

When you summarize, refer to or use another author's ideas, theories, methodologies, models, procedures, arguments, results, insights, interpretations, information or data   All these require intellectual, and sometimes manual, effort on the part of another and you need to acknowledge this.

When you use distinctive language or phrases from another author, including those phrases that have been coined by an author to denote a concept or specific meaning.

When taking notes from reading, work out a system (use colour-coding if that works for you) that clearly distinguishes the following:

- Direct quotations from other sources, that is, where you are reproducing the *exact* word-ing of an author (note page number/s).
- Material from other sources that you are paraphrasing: putting into your own words. No page numbers will be needed if you are referring to a source in general, but these will be needed when citing specific information from some part of a source in your discussions.
- Your own observations, views or comments that you wish to document.

Task-specific uses of source material

The second point above is now addressed by way of a case study example.

> **case study example**
>
> ## box 3.1 Plagiarism can arise from the misunderstanding of task-specific objectives
>
> Three graduates for whom English is a second language were advised to seek help because they were not using their 'own' words when paraphrasing source material; in effect they were plagiarizing. In discussing the problem with each of them in separate consultations, it soon became clear that their real difficulty lay elsewhere. Their writing task involved critically evaluating a published article. But the students had not understood that their lecturer did not want them to report on, or simply repeat, what the author was saying, but rather to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the paper. With this new understanding in place, the students were encouraged to concentrate on formulating the key points they wanted to make in developing their critical review, to think about why they were taking that position, how they would develop their key points, and to use material from the paper to backup these points (by way of summary comment, by incorporating key words or phrases as direct quotations, and by using only page references). As all three students were able to verbalize their critical insights, it was clear that they had already thought deeply about the article. The true cause of their apparent plagiarism was a misunderstanding of writing task objectives.

Distinguishing source material and comment

Plagiarism may also be suspected if you do not make clear whether the ideas being discussed belong to another or are your own comment. Take the text below, where in the original version it is impossible to determine which ideas belong to X (the source) and which to the writer:

Original text:

X's critique of truth [reference] is based on his analysis of discursive procedures. The relation between truth and power is one between truth and discursive practice. Truth is not a stable and independent entity.

Amended text:

X's critique of truth [reference] is based on his analysis of discursive procedures. The relation between truth and power is **[seen by him as]** one between truth and discursive practice. **[This suggests]** that truth is not a stable and independent entity.

It is clear from the inserted material shown in bold type in the amended text that the ideas in the first two sentences belong to the source (X), on whom the writer is drawing, and that the writer herself is interpolating her own comment in the third sentence.

Nor is placing a reference at the end of a succession of paragraphs a sound practice. If all the ideas in a paragraph are being taken from a single source and you are not interpolating any comments of your own, then simply phrase your lead sentences to indicate that this will be so, as in these hypothetical examples:

1. The following discussion draws on an empirical study undertaken by X (2009).
2. Further support for this type of intervention is found in X's argument (2006), as now discussed.
3. The extent of military interference in the political process is attested to in an extensive study undertaken by X, Y and Z (2000).

As lead sentences in paragraphs, sentences of this type would set up reader-expectation that all that follows in that paragraph is taken from the nominated source.

Poor time management

Many students find themselves under pressures of time when it comes to submitting work for graduate studies. In such situations, it can be easy to cut-and-paste sections of work without due acknowledgement simply in order to meet a deadline. It is always better to ask for an extension in such instances – or even to hand in your work late – rather than risk plagiarizing. It will surely help to revisit your time management, as discussed under → 'Effective self-management' in Chapter 1.

Attending to readers' needs

When immersed in complex trains of thought while writing, it is easy to forget that you are always writing *for* someone. It is vitally important to understand and take into account the needs of your readers on every occasion of writing. No matter how impressive your ideas and insights, these will be lost if your readers cannot understand what you are doing and why, or follow where you are going.

Just who your readers will be depends on the type of communication task in which you are engaged, which is why this subject is taken up in different contexts throughout this book. Still, in many cases your readers will be your lecturers/supervisors, who may also be your examiners, and, in the case of some dissertations, your external examiners. This is the group now considered, with initial emphasis on the all-important matter of disciplinary practices from the angle of the reader.