Working with Secondary Sources

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When to Cite

You must cite your source when you:

a) use another writer’s exact words

b) use another writer’s ideas, although you paraphrase their language (put it into your own words)

c) base your own argument closely on the ideas of another writer
What constitutes plagiarism?

Example:

- You discover a paper (maybe from the Internet or maybe something that one of your classmates wrote for their EGL 1010 class), and you submit that paper, word for word, as your own.

- Is this plagiarism?
What constitutes plagiarism?

Yes!

- Submitting someone else’s work as one’s own is a clear-cut case of plagiarism.
- Professors have zero tolerance for this kind of academic dishonesty.
Plagiarism Example #2

You have read three articles on Iago’s character, and you include paragraphs from all three in your own paper, with a few changes made to the language. You don’t use quotation marks or parenthetical citations, but you do list the three sources in your Works Cited page.

Is this plagiarism?
Plagiarism Example #2

Yes!

- Even if you have acknowledged your use of the source material in the Works Cited page, you have not indicated that you are quoting directly from the sources (with quotation marks & parenthetical citations telling your readers the author and page).

- This, too, is plagiarism, even if you have included some writing of your own and a Works Cited page at the end.
You’ve read a very fascinating article arguing that Iago fits the modern definition of a sociopath. Since you are a psychology major, you are especially interested in this idea. You write your own essay using this writer’s thesis and a few of his examples, as well as a few examples of your own. You do not list the original essay in your Works Cited list, although you do list three other sources that you quote from.

Is this plagiarism?
Plagiarism Example #3

Yes!

- Even though you have come up with some of your own examples and used other secondary sources in your paper, you do need to acknowledge that the idea for your paper (as well as some of your examples) came from another writer’s work.

- Without acknowledging your debt to that writer, you are presenting the thesis or idea as your own, when it was not.
You’ve read an excellent article, and part of one paragraph says EXACTLY what you want to say. You try to paraphrase it, but the original is so perfect that you decide to include it word for word in your paper. You do remember to include a parenthetical citation, but you don’t use quotation marks around the direct quotation.

Is this plagiarism?
Plagiarism Example #4

Yes!

- Using another writer’s language without indicating your use with quotation marks is a form of plagiarism!
- Without the quotation marks, you are suggesting that you are the passage’s author.
- It’s okay (and even encouraged) to quote in a research paper! But you MUST use quotation marks to show your readers that you are including words written by another writer.
Plagiarism Example #5

Instead of presenting the material as a quotation, you paraphrase most of the paragraph, finding synonyms that fit some of the writer’s words and plugging them into the original sentence structure.

Is this plagiarism?
Plagiarism Example #5

Yes!

- Even if you change SOME of the language, you are keeping the sentence structures, merely replacing some of the original language with synonyms.

- If you can’t do a genuine paraphrase (truly put the material into your own words), try presenting it as a quotation.

- Remember, quotations are allowed in research papers, as long as you present them correctly.
Cite your source if you:

- Base your own argument on an idea that you read about in someone else’s work (Example #3). Use a signal sentence, paraphrase, and entry in your Works Cited page.

- Paraphrase another writer’s language (put the ideas into your own words) in your paper. Here, you need to acknowledge your debt in a parenthetical citation (and probably a signal sentence) and an entry in the Works Cited page.

- Use another writer’s exact language (Examples 2, 4, and 5). You need a parenthetical citation AND quotation marks around the section(s) that you are quoting as well as a Works Cited entry.
WHY We Cite

➤ Let’s say that you’ve written an essay about Iago’s character, something that interests me very much.

➤ As I read your essay, I find myself very interested in one of your sources.

➤ I decide to go to the library and track down the interesting articles that you’ve used in your own discussion.

➤ The entries on your Works Cited page tell me exactly where to find the sources!

➤ For instance, I know the volume, page numbers, and publication dates for journal articles, the author and title (and publisher and publication date) of the books that you have used, as well as the URLs for any internet sources.

➤ If I decide to do further reading on your topic, you have provided me with the information to do so.
These details may seem tedious or overwhelming at first, but they’re really not that complicated.

Remember that you must always list a source used (either as a direct quotation, a paraphrase, or as an idea that influenced your thinking) in your Works Cited list, and you must always include a parenthetical citation within the paper to give credit to those sources where relevant.

Good luck on your own essay!