

Avoiding Plagiarism



Learning from and building upon the work of others is a central part of academic writing. Failure to properly credit the work of others is called **plagiarism**. Plagiarism gives a false impression of originality and is considered dishonest. This handout provides general concepts related to plagiarism, but always tailor your work, including the inclusion and citation of sources, to your audience and assignment.

Citing Sources

There are many citation styles, but they all function in similar ways. An in-text citation or footnote directs readers to a section at the end of your work that lists full citations for each source used (i.e., a bibliography, references, or works cited). The partial citation included in the text and the full citation included at the end of the work signals where your work ends and the work of others begins and directs readers to the sources used to inform your work.

In-text Citation: As Matsuo notes, “reflection is a key component of learning” (p. 449).

Full Citation: Matsuo, M. (2015). A framework for facilitating experiential learning. *Human Resource Development Review*, 14(4), 442-461. doi: 10.1177/1534484315598087

Determine the citation style for your assignment and adhere to the conventions of that format. Style manuals, handouts, instructors, and tutors can help you learn how to cite sources properly.

Incorporating Sources

Sources are used within academic work to show how your work fits into a larger conversation on a topic and as evidence to support your own ideas. Sources can be quoted, summarized, paraphrased, or included visually (e.g., figures, tables, etc.). Avoid plagiarism by clearly acknowledging where your work ends and another’s work begins. In addition to citing sources, you can effectively incorporate sources by introducing the source, providing context for the source, fairly representing original ideas of the source.

Introducing the Source: According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) . . .

Providing Context: In the wake of the 2018 measles outbreak, the CDC announced that . . .

Representing the Original Idea: Young people have a higher risk. (represents the original idea)

People have a higher risk. (misrepresents the original idea)

Common Knowledge

Information does not need to be cited if it is common knowledge. A few types of common knowledge include commonly known general facts and popular opinion.

General Fact: George Washington was the first President of the United States.

Popular Opinion: The ideals of democracy can be seen throughout the U.S. Constitution.

Becoming more familiar with writing in your discipline will help you to develop an understanding of what is considered common knowledge for your audience.