

Plagiarism

Academic writing relies heavily on the understanding and use of other authors' words and ideas. On the one hand, you must support your arguments by using data, theories, concepts, and examples borrowed from previous research in the field of study; on the other hand, you must indicate the provenance of this borrowed material by providing accurate references done according to the right referencing style.

Problem

Plagiarism is the incorrect use of source material, **whether it is intentional or not**. More specifically, it is the non-referenced use of words, ideas, and facts taken from the literature. Plagiarism is therefore a form of academic fraud that involves a student who claims ownership of another author's intellectual property.

If you use another author's words or ideas without indicating their source (or if you use a paper or part of a paper that you have previously submitted in another class), you are compromising academic integrity and could be accused of plagiarism. Various sanctions can apply depending on the case.

In order to avoid unintentional plagiarism, you must adopt honest writing habits.

- Do not copy and paste source material.
- Do not omit, falsify or invent facts, data or sources.
- Do not write another student's paper or ask someone to write yours.
- Do not submit the same paper (or one of its parts) in several courses without the professor's approval.

Solution

Referencing is not only a sure way to prevent the negative consequences of plagiarism, but also an excellent opportunity to develop your **critical thinking** skills. Moreover, by establishing a clear distinction between your ideas and those of others, you can more effectively show the professor that you have done some serious research and critical analysis.

If you use another author's words or ideas to support your own (or if you use passages taken from a paper that you have previously submitted in another class), you must add a reference that includes the bibliographic information needed to locate the original source.

In order to avoid plagiarism, you must indicate the provenance of words, ideas, and facts taken from another source. All quotations, paraphrases, and summaries must therefore be accompanied by a reference that gives proper credit to their author.

- With APA Style, source material is followed by a parenthetical citation: (Author, date, page). All the sources that are cited in the text are consolidated in the reference list at the end of the paper.
- With Chicago Style's notes and bibliography system, source material is followed by a note number such as this one¹. All the sources that are cited in the text are consolidated in the bibliography at the end of the paper.
- With MLA Style, source material is followed by a parenthetical citation: (Author page). All the sources that are cited in the text are consolidated in the list of works cited at the end of the paper.

To know more about academic integrity and academic fraud, consult the University of Ottawa's academic regulations (available online).

Here are three ways to integrate source material in a paper:

A **quotation** is the exact reproduction of another author's words within quotation marks. Use this format when an idea is expressed in a way that should not be changed, but use it sparingly: a quotation must reinforce your ideas, not replace them. Make sure to respect the original context, to put all changes to the original text in brackets, and to cite the source.

"The purpose of a plain-language approach in written communication is to convey [simple or complex] information easily and unambiguously. It should not be confused with an oversimplified, condescending style" (Translation Bureau, 1997, p. 245).

A **paraphrase** is the reformulation of another author's ideas in your own words. Use this format to show your understanding of the literature and to limit the number of quotations. Make sure to preserve the original text's meaning, to put the author's key terms in italics or within quotation marks, and to cite the source.

In *The Canadian Style*, "plain language" is described as a series of writing strategies used to express a message in a clear way (Translation Bureau, 1997).

A **summary** is the succinct account of another source in your own words. Use this format when citing an entire source rather than a specific part of it. Make sure to preserve the original text's meaning, to put the author's key terms in italics or within quotation marks, and to cite the source.

In this chapter, the Translation Bureau (1997) mentions the importance of using simple and straightforward vocabulary and sentence structures, and of adapting the overall structure and layout of the text to the intended reader.