

Citation, Plagiarism, Quotation

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August 2012

1. Citation

A citation is a note of some kind (an in-text reference, footnote, or endnote) which tells the reader that the information presented has been summarized, or quoted directly, from some source such as a book, journal article, magazine article, web log, radio program, archival document, doctoral dissertation, or personal interview. Judgment must be used in discerning when to cite and when not to cite. The following is a general guide on how to proceed.¹

(i) When Not to Cite

- (a) When it is fairly obvious that all the material in, for example, a paragraph, originates from a single source. In this case, you could have just one citation at the beginning or the end of the paragraph.
- (b) When using facts that are a part of “common knowledge.” A rough test of common knowledge is: Would a TV game show host pose this question to a contestant? For example, you might reasonably be asked: “Who was elected prime minister of Canada in 1993?” or “Who won the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor in 1953?”. The answer to these questions would not require a citation. On the other hand, it is unlikely a game show contestant would be asked to recall the information on the costs of poor relief, noted below, in the “When to cite” section.

Jean Chrétien was first elected prime minister of Canada in 1993.

Frank Sinatra won the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor in 1953.

- (c) When using distinct phrases that at one time would have required a citation but are now considered to be a part of everyday speech.

Almost everyone agrees that we are entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

¹ Harvey 1998, pp. 14-17.

(ii) When to Cite

Note: The following four reasons for citing (from Harvey 1998) can be matched to the “Four Types of Plagiarism” discussed in Section 2(i).

- (a) When using facts that are not a part of common knowledge. Do not quote this kind of information but *do* cite it.

Poor relief expenditures in Great Britain rose from £520,000 in 1751 to £4.2 million in 1803 (Smith, 1968, p. 204).

- (b) When you quote verbatim (word-for-word). Words taken verbatim *must* be put in quotation marks. Having a citation without quotation marks is *not* good enough.

According to Wood (2008, p. 19), the “idea of a *peasant*-citizen was even further removed from the experience of other ancient states.”

- (c) When you summarize the ideas and interpretations of another person, those formulated by *someone else*.

Gramsci’s (1971, p. 59) concept of hegemony is helpful to ...

Wilson (2008, p. 221) maintains that the policy was an attempt to subvert ...

- (d) When you make use of another person’s distinct structure or organizing strategy – for example, the way an argument is divided into parts or sections.

Johnston (1989, pp. 37-44) suggests that all revolutions go through three stages. One,

Have approximately one to three citations per double-spaced page – that is, from 10 to 30 for a ten-page paper. If you have just three or four citations in a paper of this size, it suggests you are not giving sufficient credit to your sources. More than 30 would constitute overkill; you do not require a citation for every sentence (or every second sentence).

The Golden Rule Is: When In Doubt, Cite.

2. Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when you present other people's ideas or choice of words *as if they were your own*. According to Hughes, Silverman, and Wienbroer (1994, pp. 109-10), plagiarism may be: (1) Deliberate (or "conscious"), when you knowingly copy either verbatim or with some minor changes; (2) Careless, when you "take notes carelessly and therefore don't know when the ideas and phrasing are yours or someone else's"; or (3) Unconscious, when you unintentionally use another person's distinct terms or phrases.

(i) *Four Types of Plagiarism*

Harvey (1998, pp. 22-25) notes that there are four types of plagiarism, as follows.

(1) Uncited information or data from a source, when this information is not common knowledge. For example:

There were thirty cases of academic dishonesty at Harvard College in 1996-97 (Harvey, 1998, p. 22).

(2) A verbatim phrase or passage that isn't quoted. Harvey wrote the following:

... occasionally, at the other end of the scale, a student coldbloodedly plagiarizes a whole paper because he or she simply doesn't care about a course, or is unwilling to give it any time. ... At this point, in one common scenario, the student gradually edges across the moral line into plagiarism by getting careless while taking notes on a source or incorporating notes into a draft. The source's words and ideas blur into those of the student, who has neither the time nor the inclination to resist the blurring.

Let us say that a student came along, in a paper on plagiarism, and composed the following, claiming that there is one type of plagiarizer,

not the kind who would coldbloodedly plagiarize a whole paper, [who] has started on this paper too late. By the next afternoon, he has neither the time nor the inclination to fight the blurring of his sources' words into his own. Imperceptibly, he crosses a moral line (Harvey, 1998, p. 22).

There is a reference to Harvey, however the writer has borrowed distinct phrases without putting them in quotation marks, including "coldbloodedly," "neither the time nor the inclination," and "crosses a moral line." It is important to understand that, in this example, the student has committed plagiarism. It may fall into the "unconscious" category described above, but it is plagiarism nevertheless.

(3) An uncited idea. For example, Gordon Harvey wrote that plagiarism is an act of lying, cheating, and stealing. A student could read his book and then write:

Plagiarism is not in fact a simple sin: rather it involves the dastardly trio of lying, cheating, and stealing.

This is problematic as well, because the idea of the three sins of plagiarism is plagiarized, even though they were presented using words that are slightly different than the original (such as the addition of the phrase “dastardly trio”). Harvey needs to be given credit for his idea.

(4) An uncited structure or organizing strategy. This involves plagiarizing a distinctive intellectual structure or way of proceeding with a topic. According to Harvey, this would happen, for instance, if you read his survey of plagiarizing and then proceeded, without giving him credit, to take your own

structural framework or outline of the passage directly from the source paragraph, which proceeds through patch plagiarizing out of (a) ignorance of the rules, or (b) obliviousness; (c) wholesale plagiarizing out of indifference or laziness, and (d) plagiarizing in a time-panic, either by (1) careless note-taking or (2) deliberate copying (Harvey, 1998, p. 25).

Students have a much greater chance of plagiarizing a distinct intellectual structure when they use only one or two sources and then transfer the ideas from beginning to end in these sources into their own paper. The odds of committing plagiarism are increased even further if students read just a handful of pages in their sources.

(ii) The Gradations of Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs in a series of gradations from the most serious to the least serious (though note, *still* serious).

1. Verbatim: This is a word-for-word transcription of the original. This is the plagiarism equivalent of first-degree murder, the most serious violation you can commit.

2. The Mosaic: This is when you take bits and pieces that conform to the pattern of the original. As Harold Martin (1957, p. 178) notes, in this instance, the writer has patched together random sections of the original, “the writer’s sole contribution being the cement to hold the pieces together.” This is the plagiarism equivalent of second-degree murder – perhaps unintentional on your part, but still a grave breach of the rules.

3. The “Too Close” Paraphrase: This involves taking sections of the text and substituting your own words every now and then for ones in the original. Similar to the “mosaic,” this usually entails rearranging sentences and cutting out the odd phrase here and there. A strong “echo” of the author’s voice remains in your paper. To continue the crime analogy, this is the plagiarism equivalent of manslaughter.

4. Apt Terms: This occurs when you use distinct and colourful phrases, ones you have not developed on your own. This is the plagiarism equivalent of criminal negligence causing death – for sure, not as grave as the other transgressions, yet it is the type of action that still invites discipline.

The restrictions around apt terms sometimes confuse students. The bottom line is that you are encouraged to learn new words and develop vocabulary, but you must be careful of using another person's *unique* phrasing without quotation marks. Some terms, like “the invisible hand of the market,” are from a particular source (in this case, Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*), but have been used so often they are now in the “public domain,” part of ordinary language. Other phrases, however, are not in the public domain. They must be cited.

The analogy used above is meant to emphasize one point: there is a different degree of seriousness in the crimes, based on the intent and the actions that resulted in the deaths, but all actions are still criminal and all result in punishment. The same logic of punishment applies to the degrees of plagiarism, the consequences of which can include a warning, a failing grade on an assignment, academic probation, or, in extreme cases, suspension from the university.

(iii) How to Avoid Plagiarism

You can avoid plagiarism by following accepted standards for using and identifying other writers' ideas. Here are some suggestions:

Learn how to paraphrase, how to restate a short passage in your own words. It is not acceptable to repeat the original just by altering, cutting out, or rearranging a few words. If the author you are paraphrasing uses highly original expressions (or apt terms), then these terms must be quoted. You can combine paraphrasing and quoting by squeezing in a few small quotations along with your own words.

Learn how to summarize, how to condense a long passage. In a summary, you cut out most of the detail. Here, too, you can combine quoting with summarizing.

Learn how to quote. You are permitted to copy a passage word-for-word as long as you use quotation marks (or indent longer quotations) and identify the original with a citation.

Take notes carefully. Develop a method of noting your ideas, so as to distinguish the words and thoughts of the sources from your own. For instance, as part of your note-taking regime, put an arrow in the margin to signal that what follows are your own words. Equally important, always know where you obtained your material. Keep accurate bibliographic information.

Conduct extensive research. If you depend on one 10-page article to write a 10-page paper, then you will almost certainly end up plagiarizing.

Read your research notes, then use a “tree diagram” to sketch out your argument in point form. See the process highlighted in John C. Bean’s *Engaging Ideas*, pp. 231 and 233. Set your research notes aside for a day or so, then using your “tree diagram,” begin writing the paper. This method will help you avoid the phrasing of your sources.

Remember that electronic sources, such as those found on the Internet, are not “floating in space,” free for the taking. They must be quoted and/or cited like any other source. Also, if you plagiarize from the Web, you can be caught easily. All it takes is a simple keyword search in Google – then you’re done like dinner.

It is permissible to get together as a small group with your fellow students to discuss your assignments. Unless you are explicitly permitted to hand in the same assignment, though, you must write your own paper, featuring your own organization, your own writing style, and with some of your own ideas.

Do not hand in a paper, or sections of a paper, that you have written for another course. You may want to expand on a paper written elsewhere, and explore the issue in more detail, but consult with your professor first before undertaking the assignment.

Do not hand in a paper written by someone else, whether you pay someone to do it or you copy it from the Internet.

Keep in mind that if you string together a clothesline full of quoted phrases, you will have avoided plagiarism. At the same time, however, you will have produced a less than worthwhile text, containing no original thinking. Your own expression, your own voice, must *dominate* the paper. Otherwise, it looks like you have not done much work.

3. Rules for Quoting

Quote verbatim (word-for-word). You quote a passage *exactly* as you see it on the page, including spelling errors. If words are italicized, you italicize them. If words within the quotation are in quotes, you keep those quotes. Do not alter *anything* without informing the reader that you have done so.

You are allowed to omit words from a direct quote, but you must indicate that you have done so by using an ellipsis (three dots). You may want to drop some of the author’s words when those words are unimportant (such as “which we saw in the previous chapter”) or because the words do not fit the grammatical structure of your sentence.

Today, we “are told that these ideas are ‘old-fashioned’ ... and must be discarded” (Kerry, 1995, p. 10).

Do not use the ellipsis to stitch together statements from widely separated areas of the text. If you do so, you may misrepresent the views of the author.

Use square brackets when you want to add a word or phrase within a quotation. This is usually done to make the quotation fit the grammatical structure of the sentence or to clarify something that may be unclear to the reader.

According to Carter, when “we first meet him [Hamlet], a”

Use this device only when you have to. You can often dispense with it by trimming words out of the quotation, stringing together a few brief quotations, or rearranging your sentences.

You may sometimes come across a spelling, grammatical, or factual error in the quotation you plan to use. You should point out the error by using the italicized word “*sic*” in square brackets. This lets the reader know that it is the original author’s mistake, not yours. Do not quote something just to show that you caught a famous author making an error. Quote for the right reasons (because it adds to your argument, it is well said, and so forth).

Jones (1980, p. 216) concluded that “Marx was wrong to points out [*sic*] that alienation”

You may want to italicize a word in the quote for emphasis, a word that is not italicized in the original. If you choose to do this, indicate that you have done so by using the bracketed phrase “emphasis added” at some point in your reference.

Thomas (1999, p. 68, emphasis added) argued that “capitalism did *not* exist anywhere at this time.”

Avoid cumbersome interjections simply by changing the place where the quotation starts. If you want to quote a sentence that begins: “The report had its origins ...”, do it as follows:

She claimed that the “report had its origins ...”.

rather than

She claimed that “... [t]he report had its origins ...”.

If there is a quotation within your quotation, distinguish it from your own by using double quotes and single quotes. Use double quotes for your own text; for the quotation within the quotation, use single quotes.

The Senate Report (Canada, 1970, p. 3) noted that “the majority of the poor have difficulty accessing the ‘good life’ because they have little money.”

In this instance, you are quoting the Senate report *and* the Senate report quoting another phrase.

Be careful to whom you attribute ideas. Do not claim to be quoting, say, Joe Smith if you are quoting a section of the Senate Report found in Joe Smith's book.

When you quote a passage you found quoted by another scholar, and you have not read the original source, write "as cited in" so-and-so's work. This gives credit to the person who found the passage. For example, if you quote from the Senate Report found in Smith's book, you must give Smith credit for discovering this information and bringing it to your attention.

The *Senate Report on Poverty* (as cited in Smith, 1993, p. 52) concluded that "the majority

This way, too, you do not give the impression that you have read the original. For example, if you have Karl Marx's *Capital* in your reference list, the assumption will be that you have, in fact, read this large work. It is *perfectly acceptable* to say you found Marx's words in Joe Smith's book (or wherever).

Note

The information in this handout was taken mainly from Gordon Harvey, *Writing with Sources: A Guide for Students* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998); Jon Furberg and Richard Hopkins, *College Style Sheet*, 4th ed. (Vancouver: 49th Avenue Press, 1996); Elaine Hughes, Jay Silverman, and Diana Roberts Wienbroer, *Finding Answers: A Guide to Conducting and Reporting Research* (New York: HarperCollins, 1994); John C. Bean, *Engaging Ideas* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996), and Harold Martin, *The Logic and Rhetoric of Exposition* (New York: Rinehart, 1957).