

Plagiarism

...and how to avoid it

The bad news

- In U.S., plagiarism is a serious offense
- Possible consequences of plagiarism
 - Failing grade on paper
 - Failing grade for course
 - Loss of student visa status in extreme cases

The good news

- Plagiarism is avoidable if you
 - Understand what plagiarism is
 - Understand what citation is
 - Look at your writing like your reader does

Plagiarism – What is it?

- Submitting a paper you didn't write yourself
 - Everyone knows this is cheating!

Plagiarism – What is it?

- Submitting a paper you didn't write yourself *Cheating!*
- Copying from sources and pretending you wrote it yourself
 - We all know this is cheating, too!

Plagiarism – What is it?

- Submitting a paper you didn't write yourself *Cheating!*
- Copying from sources and pretending you wrote it yourself *Cheating!*
- Using a source and saying it is a different source
 - Also cheating (even if an accident)!

Plagiarism – What is it?

- Submitting a paper you didn't write yourself *Cheating!*
- Copying from sources and pretending you wrote it yourself *Cheating!*
- Using a source and saying it is a different source *Cheating!*
- You use author's ideas and words without giving author credit
 - This is main source of plagiarism!
 - Confusing – even for Americans!
 - Let's learn to avoid this!

“Talking” to your reader

- Make clear who said/thought what
 - Sometimes you use the exact same words as author
 - Sometimes you paraphrase author
 - But always, you make it clear which words/ thoughts are author’s, which are yours
- Readers understand because you follow certain conventions (agreed upon ways of doing things)

Writing conventions

- When borrowing author's exact same words
 - Cite your author
 - Use quotation marks around borrowed words
- Even when paraphrasing author's information
 - Cite your author
- Always, when reporting author's information
 - Cite your author

Cite your author!

- Cite? What does “cite” mean?
 - **According to President Obama**, the economy...
He goes on to say...
 - **Lee (2007)** argues that inflation will...
 - The army’s actions were “incomprehensible and reprehensible” (**Adams & Morten, 232**).
- All **bold words** above are examples of citation.
 - Different disciplines/professors require different citation styles – be sure to ask

What are you telling your reader?

What the reader sees	What it means to the reader
citation + quotation marks	→ The passage is someone else's information in that person's exact words.
citation + NO quotation marks	→ The passage is someone else's information expressed in your own words (i.e., a paraphrase or summary).
NO citation + NO quotation marks	→ The passage is your own idea/interpretation expressed in your own words.

What are you telling your reader?

What the reader sees

What it means to the reader

NO citation + NO quotation marks → The passage is your own idea/interpretation expressed in your own words.

- **Example**

The link between cell phone use and grade point average needs further investigation.

What are you telling your reader?

What the reader sees

What it means to the reader

citation + quotation marks



The passage is someone else's information in that person's exact words.

- **Example**

Survey results found that cell phone use is “negatively predictive of overall grade point average” (Svinicki 19).

What are you telling your reader?

What the reader sees

citation + NO quotation marks



What it means to the reader

The passage is someone else's information expressed in your own words (i.e., a paraphrase or summary).

- **Example**

Survey results found that increased cell phone use corresponds to lower grade point average (Svinicki).

To be clear...

- Plagiarism can happen when your citation (or lack of it)
 - Tells your reader one thing, but you meant something else
- Example: you paraphrase an author's words but you do not cite the author
 - You just told your reader that it is YOUR idea
 - But in reality, it is the AUTHOR's idea
 - Maybe you forgot or misunderstood the convention, but still...it is plagiarism
- Let's take a quiz

Is this plagiarism?

- **Excerpt from article by Svinicki**

Survey results from 1500 college students about their cell phone use found that increased use was negatively predictive of overall grade point average.

- **Student's sentence**

Svinicki's research on cell phone use found that increased use was negatively predictive of overall grade point average.

Yes! This is plagiarism!

- Excerpt from article by Svinicki
Survey results from 1500 college students about their cell phone use found that increased use was negatively predictive of overall grade point average.
- Student's sentence
Svinicki's research on cell phone use found that increased use was negatively predictive of overall grade point average.
- **Red text** should be inside quotation marks because they are the author's exact words!

What the reader sees

What it means to the reader

citation + NO quotation marks



The passage is someone else's information expressed in your own words (i.e., a paraphrase or summary).

Is this plagiarism?

- **Excerpt from article by Svinicki**

Survey results from 1500 college students about their cell phone use found that increased use was negatively predictive of overall grade point average.

- **Student's sentence**

Survey results found that increased cell phone use corresponds to lower grade point average (Svinicki).

No. This is NOT plagiarism.

- **Excerpt from article by Svinicki**
Survey results from 1500 college students about their cell phone use found that increased use was negatively predictive of overall grade point average.
- **Student's sentence**
Svinicki's research cell phone use found that increased use was negatively predictive of overall grade point average.
- **The student paraphrased Svinicki's information and cited Svinicki.**

What the reader sees

citation + NO quotation marks



What it means to the reader

The passage is someone else's information expressed in your own words (i.e., a paraphrase or summary).

Why does plagiarism matter?

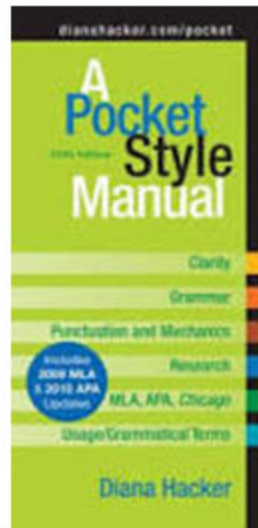
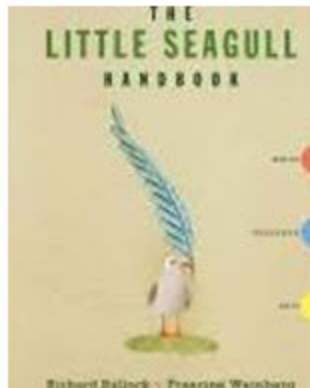
- U.S. education system values independent thinking
 - You need to differentiate between author's ideas and your own reaction to them
 - Professors value independent thinking even more when it draws upon research into the ideas of others – citation shows you did such research
- U. S. law stresses intellectual property rights
 - By citing author's ideas, you respect ownership of work and ideas

How to protect yourself

- Know what plagiarism is
- Learn how to cite, paraphrase, and quote
- Ask your TA, your professor, Student Writing Support for help
- You are in a different culture – don't be afraid to ask how things work

Resources

- Handbooks teach citation, paraphrase, grammar
 - available in U bookstore, online, U libraries



Resources

- Student Writing Support
 - Free face-to-face help with your writing projects
 - <http://writing.umn.edu/sws/>
- Online tutorials
 - The best is Indiana University's <https://www.indiana.edu/~istd/>
 - SWS Tutorials <http://writing.umn.edu/sws/quickhelp/sources.html>
 - U Library Tutorials <https://www.lib.umn.edu/instruction/tutorials>

Resources

- Citation software
 - Refworks, Zotero, Mendeley – free through University Library
 - Automatically creates reference entries in citation method of your choice (MLA, APA, AMA, etc.)
 - Attend free library workshops for Refworks and Zotero

You will do fine...

- Don't be scared – just be aware
- Ask questions
- Ask for help if you need it – students and staff love to tell you how things work
- Enjoy your exciting new experience abroad

Credits

- A special thanks to Katie Levin in Student Writing Support (SWS) for her “What Are You Telling Your Readers?” approach to plagiarism