

Information Literacy 4
Use Information in a Legal and Ethical Manner

Citing a source is more than using the style format of the MLA Handbook or another style manual recommended by your instructor. **It means crediting another person's words, ideas, or figures and more importantly not taking credit for someone else's words, ideas, or figures.** Using information without crediting the source is plagiarism. Plagiarism is easier to spot than most students realize and it is definitely not worth a failing grade or expulsion.

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary defines **plagiarize** as "to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own" or "to use (a created production) without crediting the source" or "to commit literary theft" or, finally, to "present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source."

Plagiarism is morally and ethically wrong. By claiming someone else's ideas or words you are being dishonest. Plagiarism can result in the failure of a course or expulsion from college or university. A copy of the Hartnell College Policies and Procedures Relating to Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Grievance Process explains plagiarism and is available from the Office of the Vice President for Student Services.

HOW TO AVOID PLAGIARISM

As you are researching,

- ✓ Always give credit to the source of your information, ideas or products (e.g. EBSCOhost, ProQuest, CQResearcher, etc.).
- ✓ Take accurate notes of each source used.
- ✓ Don't confuse your own thoughts with information found during your research
- ✓ Use quotation marks when including a direct quotation.
- ✓ When paraphrasing information, note where you found it. Paraphrasing is restating or summarizing someone else's words and must be cited.
- ✓ Read any instructions and/or restrictions regarding the use of information. This is especially true of information from the World Wide Web.
- ✓ Use copyrighted material appropriately, i.e. according to copyright laws and restrictions.
- ✓ Get to know the elements of the citation format you will use and make note of those elements as you are doing research. For example, become familiar with the MLA or APA styles of citing the resources.

INFORMATION THAT MUST BE CITED

- ✓ Facts, figures, and statistics that are not common knowledge.
- ✓ Specific theories or ideas stated by someone else. This includes paraphrasing or restating of ideas.
- ✓ Any specific information that is not commonly known by the person or group you intend to have read your paper or report.

Including ideas or quotations from others to support your thesis is a good thing. Paraphrasing someone's idea or using a direct quote can be a powerful argument to support your position. It also shows your instructor that you have researched your topic before writing your paper. The number and relevance of the references you find help determine the grade you receive. So, do not be afraid to give credit to another for their ideas or words.

Avoid writing a paper that is filled only with quotations and paraphrases. The quotations and paraphrases are used to support your own ideas and theories instead of replacing them.

INFORMATION THAT NEED NOT BE CITED

- ✓ Anything that is considered common knowledge by your audience.
- ✓ Remember, it is always better to cite a source than to assume it is common knowledge.

For More Information, Explanation, and Examples,

- ☐ Hartnell College's "Code of Student Conduct Policy on Cheating"
- ☐ [MLA Handbook](#) LB2369.G53 1999
- ☐ Plagiarism: What It is and How to Recognize and Avoid it
www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html
- ☐ Citing Sources: Information Navigator: MIT Libraries
libraries.mit.edu/tutorials/general/cite.html
- ☐ Avoiding Plagiarism: Information Navigator: MIT Libraries
libraries.mit.edu/tutorials/general/plagiarism.html
- ☐ Newman Library: Instruction: Help Guides: Plagiarism
newman.baruch.cuny.edu/instruct/handouts/plagiarism.html

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Reference Department 831 **759-6078/755-6872**
<http://www.hartnell.cc.ca.us/library/>