

Avoiding Plagiarism

In writing, we draw upon others' words and ideas and the intellectual heritage underlying human progress. Scholarship entails researching, understanding, and building upon the work of others, but also requires that proper credit be given for any "borrowed" material. Students are responsible under our Code of Academic Conduct for ethical scholarship and for knowing what plagiarism is and how to avoid it.

WHAT IS PLAGIARISM?

Plagiarism means using another's work without giving credit. You must put others' words in quotation marks and cite your source(s) and must give citations when using others' ideas, even if those ideas are paraphrased in your own words.

The Faculty Council at Indiana University states the definition of plagiarism as (<http://education.indiana.edu/~frick/plagiarism/>) :

Plagiarism.

A student must not adopt or reproduce ideas, words, or statements of another person without appropriate acknowledgment. A student must give credit to the originality of others and acknowledge an indebtedness whenever he or she does any of the following:

- a. Quotes another person's actual words, either oral or written;**
- b. Paraphrases another person's words, either oral or written;**
- c. Uses another person's idea, opinion, or theory; or**
- d. Borrows facts, statistics, or other illustrative material, unless the information is common knowledge. (2)**

HOW TO CITE SOURCES

The most common citation method is to identify the source in the text, putting the author's last name and the publication year in parenthesis, for example (Hacker, 1995). The author's last name links the reader to a list of sources at the end of the paper where the full publishing information is given. For instance: Hacker, D. (1995). A writer's reference. New York, New York: St. Martin's Press.

When citing sources within the paper, use the following format:

One author: (Smith, 1999)

Two authors: cite both last names with no initials: (Jones & Dawson, 2001)

More than two authors: cite the first author, then et al.: (Knapp et al., 1993)

When the author is an agency/business: (Tucson Water, 1998)

When using class notes: use the date when possible: (Classnotes, Oct. 2, 2002)

STRATEGIES FOR AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

Paraphrasing and Quotations:

1. Put in **quotations** everything that comes word for word directly from the text, then cite the source.
2. When **paraphrasing**, be sure you are not just rearranging or replacing a few words. **AVOID USING OTHERS' WORK WITH MINOR "COSMETIC" CHANGES.** Examples: using "less" for "fewer," reversing the order of a sentence. Read over what you want to paraphrase carefully; cover up the text with your hand, or close the text so you can't see any of it (and so aren't tempted to use the text as a "guide"). Write out the idea in your own words without peeking.

If you repeat another's exact words, you **MUST** use quotation marks and cite the source. If you adapt a chart or paraphrase a sentence, you must still cite the references. Paraphrase means that you restate the author's ideas, meaning, and information in your own words (see examples). **Check your paraphrase** against the original text to be sure you have not accidentally used the same phrases or words, and that the information is accurate.

3. You don't have to cite **common knowledge**, or facts that can be found in numerous places and are likely to be known by a lot of people. This is generally known information. **You do not need to document this fact.**

Examples: John F. Kennedy was elected President of the United States in 1960.

Tucson is overdrafting its aquifers.

You don't have to cite "common knowledge," **BUT** the fact must really be commonly known. That Abraham Lincoln was the U.S. President during the Civil War is common knowledge; that over 51,000 Union and Confederate soldiers died in the Battle of Gettysburg is not. **As a general rule, make sure to cite claims made by other people and statements that include statistics and numbers. ALWAYS cite information and ideas you use if they are new to you (learned in your research).**

Definitions (for instance of overdraft, subsidence) do not have to be cited, but when you give numbers, you must show where you got the numbers because the numbers aren't common knowledge and may vary somewhat depending on who gave them to you. For instance, if you say that the city of Tucson uses 154,00 acre-ft of water each year for residential water use, you must cite your source. If you say that the groundwater levels have dropped over 300 feet since the 1940's, you need to cite your source.

Much of this material was taken in its original form from:

1. The Regents of the University of California (2001). Avoiding plagiarism. Retrieved March 27, 2002, from the World Wide Web: <http://sja.ucdavis.edu/avoid.htm#guidelines>

Except:

2. Frick, Ted. Plagiarism lesson. Retrieved March 27, 2002, from the World Wide Web <http://education.indiana.edu/~frick/plagiarism/>
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Examples of Citing Sources:

PARAPHRASING:

Tucson's groundwater has an average salinity of 300 ppm while CAP water has an average salinity of 750 ppm (WRRC, 2002).

According to the WRRC (2000), Tucson's groundwater has an average salinity of 300 ppm while CAP water has an average salinity of 750 ppm.

The WRRC (2000) states that Tucson's groundwater has an average salinity of 300 ppm while CAP water has an average salinity of 750 ppm.

QUOTATIONS:

If you can't paraphrase and want to quote someone, try to couch the quote in your own words or in some context. Also, for quotations, make sure to include the page number in the citation.

Tucsonans perceptions that CAP water is of poor quality may be due to the fact that, "Colorado River water has more than twice the dissolved salts of Tucson's high quality groundwater (700 ppm vs. an average of 300 ppm), giving it a stronger taste" (WRRC, 1999, p. 1).

CLAIMS:

Be careful of how you word things. The first example requires a source. The second doesn't because it is common knowledge.

Traditionally, Tucson has relied on the groundwater from its aquifer as the source of drinking water, which is known to be the best quality drinking water nationwide (Smith, 2000).

Traditionally, Tucson has relied on the groundwater from its aquifer as the source of drinking water, which many Tucsonans think is the best quality drinking water around.

USE OF PARENTHESES

(When a complete sentence is enclosed in parentheses, place punctuation in the sentence inside the parentheses, like this.) If only part of a sentence is enclosed in parentheses (like this), place the punctuation outside the parentheses (like this).