Citation, Plagiarism, & Using Source Materials

E100-250: Microprocessors & Toys
Technical Communication W19
Why should you cite your source materials?

To help your readers find your sources

To give credit to the owner of the intellectual property (it’s a matter of honesty)

To lend authority and credibility to your work (and you) by citing acknowledged authorities/experts
When do you cite your source materials?

When you use someone else’s words
When you use someone else’s ideas or argument
When you use someone else’s research or data
How do you cite your source materials?

With quotation marks for direct quotes (word-for-word extracts);
Without quotation marks for summaries or paraphrases

With parenthetical, in-text citations—the author or source name, the year, and the page number (if applicable) in parentheses for direct quotes, summaries, and paraphrases
How to: Direct quote <40 words

1. Enclose the quoted material in double quotation marks (for an American English audience)

2. Include your parenthetical, in-text citation after the quote or at the end of your sentence

3. Finish your sentence with a period

Modified from Elizabeth Hildinger, PhD
How to: Direct quote >40 words

1. Put quoted material into a justified block of text, indented from the margin on both sides; do not use quotation marks

2. Set the block of text off from the surrounding material with an additional line above and below it

3. Include your parenthetical citation after the last sentence ends

Modified from Elizabeth Hildinger, PhD
Direct quote example

What is wrong with this?

In *Cosmopolis*, Toulmin states that Leibniz’s rationalism was subject to the same limitations as that of Descartes.
In *Cosmopolis*, Toulmin states that Leibniz’s rationalism was subject to the same limitations as that of Descartes.

While the name of the piece and the author are included in the sentence, this is considered undocumented because a portion of it is copied word for word but does not use quotation marks; the parenthetical, in-text citation is also left off.
Direct quote example

This is how it should look.

In *Cosmopolis*, Toulmin states that “Leibniz’s rationalism was subject to the same limitations as that of Descartes” (1992, p. 106).

**Quotation marks show borrowed text**, and the **year and page number** show both recency and location of text in original source.
There are two methods of using the ideas, lines of argument, and/or research findings from source material without quoting the material directly: **summarizing** and **paraphrasing**.

The difference between the two is the amount of text you are borrowing from.
Summarizing

“involves putting the main idea(s) into your own words, including only the main point(s). Summaries are significantly shorter than the original and take a broad overview”

(Purdue OWL, 2013, “Quoting,” para. 6).
Paraphrasing

“involves putting a passage from source material into your own words. … Paraphrased material is usually shorter than the original passage, taking a somewhat broader segment of the source and condensing it slightly”

(Purdue OWL, “Quoting,” 2013, para. 5)
When do you use a summary?

When you want to describe a source’s main arguments

When you want to describe the topics covered in a source

(Purdue OWL, 2013, “Annotated,” para. 4)
When should you paraphrase?

To present your own version of someone else's information or ideas
To borrow (legitimately) from a source
To provide more detail than a summary
Summary example

What is wrong with this?

In his 1848 volume *Eureka: A Prose Poem*, the poet and author Edgar Allan Poe divided stars into two categories: those whose light has reached us, and those whose light has not yet reached us.
In his 1848 volume *Eureka: A Prose Poem*, the poet and author Edgar Allan Poe divided stars into two categories: those whose light has reached us, and those whose light has not yet reached us.

This analysis of Poe’s work is an *undocumented idea* from other writers.
Summary example

This could be presented correctly in one of two ways:

In his 1848 volume *Eureka: A Prose Poem*, the poet and author Edgar Allan Poe divided stars into two categories: those whose light has reached us, and those whose light has not yet reached us (Halpern & Wesson, 2006).

In this example, the authors and year are included in a parenthetical citation at the end of the sentence.
Summary example

This could be presented correctly in one of two ways:

According to Halpern and Wesson (2006), Edgar Allan Poe, in his 1848 volume *Eureka: A Prose Poem*, divided stars into two categories: those whose light has reached us, and those whose light has not yet reached us.

In this example, the authors are cited within the sentence and the year is included in a parenthetical citation after the authors’ names.
All in-text citations require corresponding reference list entries

The previous example would need to be accompanied by the following entry in a reference list at the end of the document:


*(This is APA format)*
Plagiarism is

“the use of another writer’s words or ideas without acknowledging the source. Akin to theft, plagiarism has serious consequences and should be avoided at all costs”

Hodges, et al. (1990)
Plagiarism has different forms

The **worst form** occurs when you repeat someone else’s work word for word without acknowledging the source.

Plagiarism also occurs when you repeat “someone else’s apt phrase … argument … [or] line of thinking as though it were your own” (*MLA Handbook*).
This should recall the heart of the honor code:
Don’t take credit for work that isn’t yours.
Why is plagiarism unethical?

It’s taking credit for others’ work
(stealing intellectual property)

It’s misrepresenting your knowledge/expertise
(people may trust you to know things you don’t know, which could in turn cause harm)
Plagiarism has a price

Your credibility: Others may mistrust you

Your degree: Universities have the legal authority to withhold or rescind degrees over plagiarism, a form of academic misconduct (Academic Paradigms, 2018)

Your job: From CNN news editors and BuzzFeed reporters to potential presidential candidates, several people have lost positions over allegations of plagiarism

Money: Copyright infringement lawsuits can cost plaintiffs millions of dollars
At school, plagiarism can result in failure in your classes, expulsion for repeated offenses, and even revocation of your degree if discovered after you graduate.
References & Acknowledgments

References


Purdue OWL. (2017). Quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing. Purdue Online Writing Lab. Available at https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/563/1/

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