

Avoiding Plagiarism



What is plagiarism?



- Plagiarism is presenting someone else's knowledge or ideas as your own.
- It is illegal.
- It will earn you a zero on any paper or essay you write in this class and all future English classes.
- All other content areas in this school (science and history) are also aware that students are taught about plagiarism in English classes.

What are the consequences?



- Plagiarism damaged the reputation of prominent historian, Stephen Ambrose (most famous for his book *Band of Brothers*):
 - Ambrose's works “[contain] words and phrases borrowed from other books, apparently without giving appropriate credit to the authors” and “appear to borrow freely from certain source books without using quotation marks.”

Lewis, Mark. “More Controversy for Stephen Ambrose.” *Forbes.com*.
Forbes.com LLC. 9 Jan. 2002. Web. 11 Aug. 2014.

Here's how it looked...

ORIGINAL:

The next morning, the 29ers draped the body with the Stars and Stripes and hoisted it on top of a huge pile of stones that had once been a wall of Sainte Croix Church, one block west of the cemetery. The body remained on display throughout July 19. The 29ers and some of the few civilians remaining in the city adorned the site with flowers.

PLAGIARIZED

Men from the 3rd Battalion draped the body with the Stars and Stripes and hoisted it on top of a huge pile of stones that once had been a wall in the Saint Croix Church, a block from the cemetery. Howie's body remained on display through the next day, July 19. GIs and some of the few civilians remaining in the town adorned the site with flowers.

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Stephen Ambrose, continued:



- **Balkoski's response to Ambrose's plagiarism?**

“[H]e was ‘very disappointed and somewhat depressed’ when *Citizen Soldiers* came out in 1997, and he came across certain passages that relied heavily on his 1989 book *Beyond the Beachhead*. ‘The writing seemed very familiar, and much to my astonishment, it was my own,’ he said today in an interview. ‘He will footnote me, but the writing is either identical or subtly changed without using quotation marks.’”

Lewis, Mark. “More Controversy for Stephen Ambrose.” *Forbes.com*.
Forbes.com LLC. 9 Jan. 2002. Web. 11 Aug. 2014.

A more recent example:



- In July 2014, Montana Senator John Walsh was forced to end his race for re-election.
- “[T]he New York Times reported that Walsh lifted large passages from other authors for a masters thesis he submitted to the Army War College in 2007. The paper, a discussion of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, included passages that previously appeared verbatim in papers from scholars at Harvard University and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.”

Miller, Jake. “Accused of Plagiarism, John Walsh withdraws from Montana Senate Race.” *CBSNEWS.com*. CBS Interactive Inc. 7 Aug. 2014. Web. 11 Aug. 2014.

More real-life instances



- *New York Times* senior reporter Jayson Blair was forced to resign after being accused of plagiarism and fraud.
 - “The Times articles calls Blair's career a ‘profound betrayal of trust and a low point in the 152-year history of the newspaper.’”
 - “The Times said its own investigation showed Blair's deceptions to be much more widespread, with problems in at least 36 of the 73 articles Blair had written since transferring to the national desk in October [of 2002].”

“New York Times: Reporter routinely faked articles.” *CNN.com/US*. Cable News Network LP, LLLP. 11 May 2003. Web. 11 Aug. 2014.

More real-life instances



- Following an investigation at the University of Virginia, 48 students were expelled
- Three of the students had already graduated, and their degrees were revoked.

Boorstein, Michelle. “U-Va. Expels 48 Students After Plagiarism Probe.”
Highbeam Research. Cengage Learning. 26 Nov. 2002. Web. 11 Aug. 2014.

- A New Jersey valedictorian was denied her seat as a Harvard freshman when it was discovered that she plagiarized in a local newspaper.

What does it cost?



- “In an academic context, it's really about shame,’ says Corynne McSherry, an intellectual property attorney in San Francisco and author of ‘Who Owns Academic Work? Battling for Control of Intellectual Property.’”
- “[C]opiers can be liable for legal fees and damages, which range from \$750 to \$30,000 per work copied. Those fines can rise to \$150,000 if the copying is particularly egregious and willfully done.”
- “Copying may also lead to fraud charges - which can carry criminal penalties.”

Demirjian, Karoun. “What is the price of plagiarism?” *The Christian Science Monitor*. The Christian Science Monitor. 11 May 2006. Web. 12 Aug. 2014.

What's the big deal?



- What if:
 - Your architect cheated his way through math class. Will your new home be safe?
 - Your lawyer paid for a copy of the bar exam to study. Will the contract she wrote for you stand up in court?
 - The accountant who does your taxes hired someone to write his papers and paid a stand-in to take his major tests? Does he know enough to complete your tax forms properly?
 - Your promotion depended on your writing an explanation about why you deserved to be promoted, so you hired someone else to write that explanation for you. If you get promoted, will you have the skills you need to fulfill your responsibilities?

Nobody likes a liar or a fake...



- The most common reason people plagiarize is that they can't come up with their own way of saying something or that they don't already know enough about the subject to be able to write about it.
- The problem is, if you copy someone else's words without giving them credit, you are pretending that you COULD come up with your own words or you DID know enough about the subject to write about it.
- Basically, you're a fake.
- You are trying to get credit for being something you aren't.

Why DON'T students cite their sources?



There are probably a lot more reasons students don't cite their sources than I can list here, but this is my best shot:

- Maybe students think it makes them look dumb because they didn't know the information without having to look it up.
- Maybe students don't know how to cite their sources.
- Maybe students are just too lazy to keep track of where they got their information.
- Maybe students think they can get away with it.

None of these reasons will keep you out of trouble.

What needs to be cited?



- Any words that you copy from a source.
 - Put quote marks around them and use an in-text citation after them. This is called a DIRECT QUOTE.
- Any information you learned from having read a source, **EVEN IF YOU PUT IT INTO YOUR OWN WORDS!!!**
 - Do not put quote marks around it, but DO use an in-text citation after it.
- Any information that is “debatable” or that someone may doubt.
- One exception: Information that is common knowledge (for example, George Washington was our first president) does NOT have to be cited. Generally, if you can find the same fact in three or more easily obtained sources, you don’t need to cite it.

Try it out



- Determine if the following information needs to be cited: (Remember: if it's common knowledge, it doesn't need to be cited. All other facts need to be cited.)
 1. In order for water to boil, it must reach 212 degrees Fahrenheit.
 2. Losing weight can cure asthma.
 3. Reconstructive surgery is covered by most health insurance plans.
 4. Smoking marijuana can cause permanent brain damage in teens and young adults.
 5. William Shakespeare wrote the play *Hamlet*.

What information goes in a citation?



- Proper citing of information comes in two stages that MUST be used together.
 1. In-text citations
 2. A Works Cited page
- An “in-text citation” is a brief reference in parentheses, directly in your essay, that refers to the work the original information or words come from.
- It is usually made up of the author’s last name and, if the source is a print source, the page number.
- **Example:** In a scene of calm reflection, “George lay back on the sand and crossed his hands under his head” (Steinbeck 7).

What information goes in a citation – cont.



- The parenthetical reference (or in-text citation) is (Steinbeck 7). Steinbeck is the author's last name and 7 is the page number on which that quote can be found.
- So how are you supposed to know what Steinbeck wrote the words? Surely there is more than one person with the last name of Steinbeck.
- The Works Cited list is an alphabetized bibliography that provides complete publication information to explain what your in-text citations mean.

Example:

Steinbeck, John. *Of Mice and Men*. New York: Penguin Books, 1937. Print.

What information goes in a citation – cont.



- Now you know exactly where that quote came from.
- The Steinbeck in (Steinbeck 7) refers to the works cited entry that begins with the word Steinbeck.
- The Works Cited entry gives the reader all the information he or she needs to find that source and verify that quote for himself or herself.

What information goes in a citation – cont.



- An alternative to a parenthetical reference (or in-text citation) is an introductory phrase that can include the author's name or the name of the publication.

Example:

Voss and Keene suggest that “In research there are essentially two kinds of sources, primary and secondary” (605).

In this case, Voss and Keene still refer to a source listed alphabetically on the works cited page:

Voss, Ralph F., and Michael L. Keene. *The Heath Guide to College Writing*. Lexington: DC Heath, 1995. Print.

Quiz yourself – Question 1



Read this excerpt from an essay.

And yet some things will remain the same. One writer maintains, “The functionality and user interface of a portable media player or cell phone would probably amaze or baffle Alessandro Volta, though he would likely have little trouble grasping the design principles of its battery”

Which information should be included in the excerpt above?

- A. The titles of several works by the writer whose words are quoted.
- B. The author of the source and page number on which the quoted material appears.
- C. The publishing house that issued the quoted material and the year of publication
- D. The name of the writer whose words are quoted.

Quiz yourself – Question 2



Read this quotation.

“As many as thirteen species of carnivorous plants have been found in a single bog.”

Which information should be included with the quotation?

- A. A parenthetical reference citing the source of the quotation.
- B. The name of the person who originally stated the fact in the quotation.
- C. The page number where the writer found the published quotation.
- D. A parenthetical reference citing the publication date of the source of the quotation.

Quiz yourself – Question 3



Which sentence contains information that must be cited?

- A. The story of the migratory monarch butterfly depicts a journey that requires several generations to complete.
- B. Understanding the differences between the two types of monarch helps the reader understand the unique qualities of the migratory monarch.
- C. Scientists believe that monarchs perform this fascinating feat using “a combination of directional aids such as the magnetic pull of the earth and the position of the sun.”
- D. However, the eggs that the female migratory monarch lays in the south become the “first generation” of summer monarchs.

Quiz yourself – Question 4



Read this sentence from a biography.

When reporters asked Jeannette if she was frightened, she retorted that the stratosphere was too interesting for her to be afraid.

Which source information should be included with the sentence?

- A. An introductory phrase stating where the interview with Jeanette occurred.
- B. A parenthetical reference citing complete source information for Jeanette's comment.
- C. An introductory phrase identifying the publication in which Jeanette's comment first appeared.
- D. A parenthetical reference giving the publication date and page number of the source of Jeanette's comment.