

A Note about Plagiarism

Your research paper is collaboration between you and your sources. To be fair and honest, you must indicate when you borrow another writer's ideas or words. You do this by documenting, or citing, your sources. "Citing your sources" means nothing more than telling your reader whose ideas or words you have used and where you found them. To use someone else's words or ideas without giving them credit is dishonest. It is called plagiarism.

Plagiarism is very serious. Two different acts are considered plagiarism:

1. Borrowing someone's ideas, information, or words without citing the source
2. Citing the source, but paraphrasing the source too closely, without using quotation marks to indicate that words and phrases have been borrowed.

You must, of course, document all direct quotations. You must document any ideas borrowed from a source: paraphrases of sentences, summaries of paragraphs or chapters, statistics or little known facts, and tables, graphs, or diagrams.

The only exception is common knowledge or information that your readers could find in any number of general sources because it is commonly known. For example, everyone knows that Frankfort is the capital of Kentucky. It is common knowledge and would not have to be cited.

In summary: Do not plagiarize. Document all quotations and borrowed ideas. Avoid paraphrases that closely resemble your sources.