Plagiarism

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is the use of the work of others without acknowledgement of your source of information or inspiration. This includes:

- using words more or less exactly as they have been used in articles, lectures, television programmes, books, or anywhere else
- using other people's ideas or theories without saying whose ideas they are
- paraphrasing what you read or hear without stating where it comes from.

Even if you change a few words or sentences you have 'borrowed', or if you reordered them, the result is still plagiarism.

Plagiarism is treated very seriously, and plagiarised work is usually disqualified. This can have a major impact on your marks or grades.

Using quotations

Quotations should be:

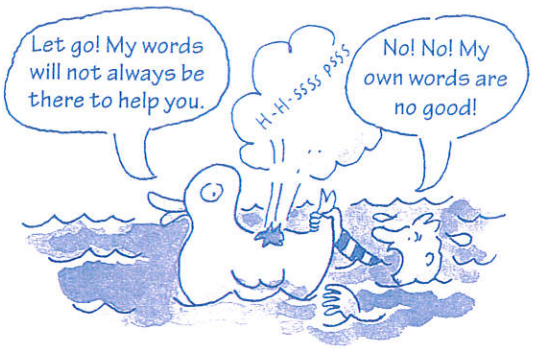
- used sparingly – and only if the words really are worth quoting
- brief – a few words or, at most, a few lines.

In writing a quotation you should:

- copy words and punctuation *exactly*
- use three dots (...) to indicate omitted words
- put 'quotation marks' around the words you quote: *'Stunning,' wrote the artist*
- state exactly the source of the quotation (see page 180).

Develop confidence in your own words

Use your own words, even if you don't think you write well – they count for more than copied text.



Other people's words make for a poor survival strategy

How to avoid plagiarism

- Write all your notes in your own words.
- Note down *exactly* where you read the information you put in your notes.
- In your assignment, cite the sources of ideas and information. Do this even when not giving a quotation. Make it clear when you are using a direct quotation.
- At the end of your work, write a full list of references.
- For details of how to cite your sources and give quotations, see pages 179–82.

Avoid accidental plagiarism

If you have a habit of copying:

- Put your pen or keyboard out of reach.
- Read a passage without taking any notes.
- Stop reading and cover up the page.
- Sum up what you have read. If possible, say this aloud, or record yourself, so you hear your own words and in your own voice. If this remains difficult, look back to ***Improving reading comprehension*** (page 168).
- Once you can say what the passage is about, note it down in your own words.
- If you want to copy material to use as a quotation, write it in a different colour so that you can find it easily. The colour will also show you how much you copy.

Citations and references

Why are references needed?

In academic writing, it is essential to acknowledge, or 'cite' the sources of ideas and information. Such citations allow readers to refer back to the sources for themselves.

There are five main reasons for acknowledging your sources through citations and references.

1. It is a courtesy to the person whose idea or words you have used or referred to.
2. By giving the source you make it clear to the reader that you are not trying to pretend somebody else's work is your own. (You are not 'plagiarising' their work.)
3. It helps your readers to find the original texts or webpages to read themselves, should they wish.
4. If you need to check something later, the reference will help you find it again more easily.
5. People will have more confidence in your assertions if they know where your information comes from. Thoroughness in referencing suggests that you will also have been thorough in checking your facts.

When must you cite your source?

You do this whenever you draw on a source of information:

- as your inspiration (in general)
- for a particular theory, argument or viewpoint
- for specific information, such as statistics, examples, or case studies
- for direct quotations, reproducing the writer's exact words
- for texts and information that you paraphrase or allude to rather than quote.

What information do you give?

Imagine that you wished to read for yourself a source text used by another author. What information would *you* need to locate that source easily? The information usually provided includes:

- the name and initials of the author(s)
- the title, in full
- the year of publication
- for journal articles, the name of the journal and the number of the volume
- the edition, if relevant
- the name and location of the publisher
- relevant page numbers
- for electronic materials, the URL for the webpage and the date it was downloaded.

Provide extra information if needed. For example, to find a photograph, print or manuscript you may need the name of the library, the collection, and the catalogue number of the item within the collection. The important question to ask is, 'Could somebody else *find* this source from the information I have given?'

Where do you put this information?

Citations in the body of the text

Whenever you refer to someone else's work, either directly or indirectly, indicate whose work this is.

Use the format recommended by your tutors. Usually this will be simply the surname of the author(s), the year of publication and possibly the page number(s), using brackets in one of these ways:

> ... and as noted by Cohen and Smith (2013), there are many ...
>
> ... and as noted by Cohen and Smith (2013, p. 56), there are many ...
>
> Evidence for this is well established (Cohen and Smith 2013).

References at the end of the assignment

Write out full details in a list of 'References' – see page 181 for guidance, and pages 415–17 for an example of such a list.

Citing your sources

There are various ways of acknowledging your source materials. Check whether you are expected to use a particular system for your course. If not, use the Harvard (author–date) system.

The Harvard system

When you have used, quoted or paraphrased a source, acknowledge it. Either within the sentence or at the end of the sentence, write in brackets the author's name, the date of publication and, if required, page numbers. Full details of the source should be written out in the reference section.

Text citations

Here are three different ways of using sources.

Short direct quotation – within the text

> Nonetheless, the film was deliberately inaccurate about the life of José Martí. Jesus Colon (1982, p. 82) pointed this out when he wrote, 'José Marti never had a mansion or a hut of his own. Needless to say, he never had slaves.'

Paraphrasing

> Nonetheless, the film was deliberately inaccurate about José Martí, who, contrary to the image depicted in American films, spent much of his life in poverty (Colon 1982, pp. 81–2).

Longer direct quotation

A few words, carefully chosen, make the most powerful quotations, and demonstrate that you can select appropriately. Avoid long quotations; they are rarely needed. If the exact wording of a long quotation is essential, however, indent it and leave space above and below (as shown on the right). Incorporate the quotation clearly into your writing with linking sentences and by discussing its relevance.

References list

In the 'References' at the end of the essay, the reference to Colon would appear in this form (and in alphabetical order):

> Colon, J. (1982). *A Puerto Rican in New York and Other Sketches*, 2nd edn. New York: International Publishers.

Note that for books you don't give page numbers in the 'References'. For a journal article you give the page numbers for the whole article.

Useful phrases to introduce references

- As *X* points out, ...
- According to *X*, ...
- To quote from *X*, '...'
- *X* states/suggests that ...
- *X* tells/shows us that ...
- In an article entitled *Name of Text*, *X* makes the point that ...
- Referring to ..., *X* says that ...
- As *X* stated/wrote/said, ...
- In *Name of Text*, *X* wrote that ...
- Writing in *Name of Text*, *X* explained that ...
- Writing in 1926, *X* argued that ...

Angry at Hollywood versions of Latin American history, Jesus Colon wrote:

> After pictures like *Zapata* and *Santiago* we can only hope that these Hollywood vulgarisers and distorters, without the least bit of respect for the history and culture of our Latin American nations, won't lay their bovine eyes upon epic themes like the Aztec struggle against Cortes' conquest of Mexico, or Sandino's fight against American imperialism ... (1982, p. 84)

Here we can see that Colon is very critical of versions of Latin American history produced in the USA.

Writing out your references

At the end of your assignment, provide a full list of your references – all the sources to which you referred within the assignment. Each time you draw on a source of information in any way to inform your own work, record the details that you will need for your list of references. See page 179 for a list of the details to include.

> *Reference Management Tools*
>
> A number of tools are available free online and make it easier to record details for references.
>
> **Mendeley, Zotero, Endnote, Reference Manager:** all allow you to import references from digital sources, databases and pdfs, and use these to produce your list of references in word-processing tools.
>
> **CiteULike:** useful for storing articles, adding notes and tagging sources you might wish to cite and reference.

Conventions in writing references

- Don't number the items.
- Begin each source on a new line.
- List alphabetically, by author's surname.
- If you use more than one work by a given author and published in the same year, label these a, b, c ... (2013a, 2013b, 2013c, ...) in the text and in your References.
- Order information as in the examples here (author, date, title, location of publisher, publisher) or as recommended by your tutor.
- Italicise titles of books or journals.
- Use 'single' quotation marks for the title of an article within a journal.
- Include every source referred to in your assignment, including DVDs, TV and online sources, but not dictionaries or reference books.
- Don't include in your 'References' materials that you have not used for your assignment.
- List additional sources, which you read but did not use, in a 'Bibliography'.

Sample references (see also pages 415–17)

A book:

> Bailey, P. (1978). *Leisure and Class in Victorian England*. London: Methuen.

A chapter in a book:

> Humm, M. (1991). 'Landscape for a literary feminism: British women writers 1900 to the present'. In Forsas-Scott, H. (ed.). *Textual Liberation: European feminist writing in the twentieth century*. London: Routledge.

A journal article:

> Jones, C. (1980). 'The welfare of the French footsoldier.' *History* **65** (no. 214), 193–213.

Material cited within another text, where you have not quoted the original source:

> O'Connor, J. and McDermott, I. (1996). *Principles of NLP*. London: Thorsons. Cited in Cottrell, S. M. (2013). *The Study Skills Handbook*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

An electronic reference (include the URL and the date on which you downloaded it):

> http://www.foe.co.uk. 6 July 2013.

Bibliographies

A bibliography is a list of everything you read for the assignment, whether or not you referred to it in your writing. Your tutor may require both. Write out using the same conventions as for references.