

Plagiarism

When writers *intentionally or unintentionally* present another person's words, ideas, or work as their own, they are committing plagiarism. Most students know that passing off another individual's paper as their own is plagiarism. However, fewer students understand that accidentally including someone else's sentence in their writing without quotation marks and a reference is plagiarism, too. For several important reasons, you must reference the original work and author in your writing whenever you:

- copy another person's exact words;
- paraphrase or summarize someone else's ideas; or
- present facts, statistics, charts, or diagrams developed by another individual.

First, effectively integrating source material from the experts with your own ideas and accurately referencing that source material can lend support to the argument in your paper. Second, providing complete references enables readers who are interested in your topic to find out more about your research, easily. Third, just as you expect to receive credit for your work, other authors expect and deserve credit for theirs.

Become Informed

I didn't know! is not an acceptable excuse for plagiarism. Find out what style of documentation you should use by asking your professor or checking your class syllabus. Then, learn the rules for using that documentation style accurately. MLA, developed by the Modern Language Association, and APA, developed by the American Psychological Association, are the most common documentation styles. Both organizations publish books about their rules for documentation.

Reference for the APA Guidelines section:

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Reference for the Plagiarism section:

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Plan Ahead

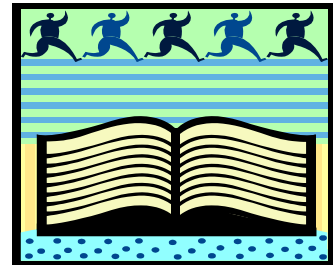
Although this may seem like common sense, writers often leave writing tasks until the last minute, perhaps because they don't have enough time, they don't manage the time they do have effectively, or they just aren't looking forward to the tasks. Procrastination can lead to panic, and panic can cause writers to use poor judgment with regard to plagiarism. Start researching your topic right away and carry a notebook or paper with you so you can jot down your ideas and notes about how to support your ideas with information from your sources. That way, if your mind goes blank when you sit down at a computer, you'll have material to draw from, and the desire to copy someone else's words, ideas, or work will seem less tempting. Remember, too, that your professors are in the business of words, ideas, and people. They'll most likely notice the change in your writing if you copy from an outside source without referencing it. Moreover, by talking with you about your topic, they'll probably discover when you've tried to present someone else's ideas as your own. In addition, if you've copied part or all of your paper from the Internet, your professors will easily be able to locate the original text by using an Internet search engine.

Take Accurate and Complete Notes

Oops! is not an acceptable excuse for plagiarism, either. As you research your topic, make sure you clearly indicate in your notes which ideas are your own and which ideas are quoted or paraphrased from other sources. If you quote something from another source, copy it exactly the way it appears and put it in quotation marks. If you paraphrase something from another source, make sure you use all of your own words. Don't just change a few words in the sentence to make it look a little different--that's plagiarism! In addition, if you've quoted or paraphrased an outside source, carefully record which source the material comes from and all the information needed for referencing that source. You won't want to try to retrace your path to an Internet site or run back to the library the night before your paper is due just because you forgot to write down the necessary information the first time. As you research, you may even want to build a numbered list of all the sources you encounter and then number your notes from each source accordingly. However, no one right way exists for taking notes about research, so develop a system that works for you.

Developed by the
Office of Retention
Wallace State Community College—Hanceville

APA Style Tips and Avoiding Plagiarism



General Guidelines for Using APA Style

This document offers general guidelines to be followed when preparing to create a reference page.

Punctuation in bibliographic entries

- Use periods to separate the three major divisions of the entry: author, title, and publication information.
- Use commas within these subdivisions.
- Use colons between the place of publication and the book publisher.
- Use parentheses around the year of publication of books, the date of publication of articles, qualifications of people in the citation (editors, translators, etc.), report numbers, or volume and edition numbers of book entries.
- Be sure to be consistent in the use of punctuation.

Capitalization in bibliographic entries

- Capitalize only the first word of the title and subtitle of a book, article, or chapter title and any proper names found in the title. Titles of journal articles and book chapters should appear without quotation marks.
- Underline book titles.
- Capitalize each significant word in the publication information.
- Underline journal titles and volume numbers, and capitalize each significant word in the journal title.

Books and parts of books

- Author or editor's name(s)
- Year of publication
- Title of the chapter or part of book used
- Title of book
- Name(s) of the editor, translator, or compiler
- Edition used and number of volumes
- City of publication
- Name of publisher
- Page numbers

Set-up for the reference page:

Author, A. B., Author, C. D., & Author E. F. (1995). Title of chapter. In Editor, X., Editor Y., & Editor Z. (Eds.), *Title of book* (#th ed., Vol. #., pp. xx-xx).

Technical reports

- Author or editors' name(s)
- Date of publication
- Title of report
- Report number (if assigned), enclosed in parentheses
- City of publication
- Name of publisher

Set-up for the reference page:

Author, A. B., Author, C. D., Author E. F., & Author G. H. (1995). *Title of the report* (report number xx-xxxx). Location: Publisher.

Non-print media, excluding music recordings

- Name and, in parentheses, the function of the originator or primary contributors
- Year of publication
- Title
- Specify the medium (film, audiotape, videotape, etc.), enclosed by brackets
- City of publication
- Name of distributor

Set-up for the reference page:

Person, A. (Contributor), & Person, B. (Originator). (1995). *Title of the Non-print material* [Medium]. (Location of distributor: Distributor)

Articles in periodicals

- Author or editor's name(s)
- Date of publication
- Title of article
- Title of periodical
- Volume number
- Issue number
- Page numbers of the article

Set-up for the reference page:

Author, A. B., & Author, C. D. (1995). Title of article. *Title of periodical*, ##, xx-xx.

Music recordings

- Name of the originator (writer) or primary contributors
- Date of copyright
- Title of song
- Specify the artist(s) who recorded the song, if different from the writer, in brackets
- Title of the album
- Specify the medium (CD, cassette tape, record, etc.), enclosed by brackets
- City of publication
- Name of distributor

Set-up for the reference page:

Writer, K. (Copyright date). Title of song [Recorded by A. Singer if different from the writer]. On *Title of the album* [Medium of recording: CD, cassette tape, record, etc.]. Location: Record label. (Recording date if different from the copyright date)

Ordering references

- Organize the list of references in alphabetical order.
- Arrange all entries by the surname of the first author.
- Alphabetize books and articles with no author by the first significant word in the title.
- Alphabetize materials by corporate authors and organizations by the first significant word of the name.
- When two or more writers are listed as the author of a work, use a comma followed by an ampersand (&) before the final name.
- One-author entries by the same author are arranged by the year of publication, the earliest appearing first.
- One-author entries precede multiple-author entries beginning with the same surname.
- References with the same first author and different second or third authors are arranged alphabetically by the surname of the second author, third author, et. al.
- References with the same authors in the same order are arranged by the year of publication, the earliest appearing first.
- References by the same author(s) with the same publication date are arranged alphabetically by the title that follows the date. Lowercase letters -- a, b, c, etc. -- are placed immediately after the year, within the parentheses.