

Plagiarism is . . .

using someone else's words or ideas without giving the other person credit **either** on purpose or through carelessness. Revising, paraphrasing, or using the ideas of someone else without giving them credit is plagiarism.

"Words or ideas" includes:

written or spoken material

information taken from whole papers and paragraphs, sentences, or phrases

statistics, graphs, lab results, art work, etc.

any piece of information that is not common knowledge

"Someone else" can mean:

a professional source, such as a published writer or critic in a book, magazine, encyclopedia, or journal

an electronic resource such as material we discover on the World Wide Web

another student, a friend, a relative, etc.

a paper-writing "service" (online or otherwise) which offers to sell written papers for a fee or offers papers for free

What is Common Knowledge?

Common knowledge: facts that can be found in numerous places and are likely to be known by a lot of people.

Example: *John F. Kennedy was elected President of the United States in 1960.*

This is **generally known information**. You do not need to document this fact.

However, you must document facts that are **not generally known** and **ideas that interpret facts**.

Example: *According to the American Family Leave Coalition's new book, Family Issues and Congress, President Bush's relationship with Congress has hindered family leave legislation (6).*

The idea that "Bush's relationship with Congress has hindered family leave legislation" is not a fact but an **interpretation**; consequently, you need to cite your source.

Strategies for Avoiding Plagiarism

1. Put in **quotations** everything that comes directly from the text, especially when taking notes.
2. **Paraphrase**, but be sure you are not just rearranging or replacing a few words. *Instead, read over what you want to paraphrase carefully; cover up the text with your hand, or close the text so you can't see any of it (and so aren't tempted to use the text as a "guide"). Write out the idea in your own words without peeking.*
3. **Check your paraphrase** against the original text to be sure you have not accidentally used the same phrases or words, and that the information is accurate.

Quotation: using someone's words. When you quote, place the passage you are using in quotation marks, and document the source according to a standard documentation style.

The following example uses the Modern Language Association's (MLA) style:

Example: According to Peter S. Pritchard in *USA Today*, "Public schools need reform but they're irreplaceable in teaching all the nation's young" (14).

Paraphrase: using someone's ideas, but putting them in your own words. This is probably the skill you will use most when incorporating sources into your writing. Although you use your own words to paraphrase, you must still acknowledge the source of the information.

Example: In Alan Walker's book *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years* (Ithaca: 1983), we read that Liszt's father encouraged him, at age six, to play the piano from memory, to sight-read music and, above all, to improvise. We can report in our paper (and in our own words) that Liszt was probably the most gifted of the child prodigies making their mark in Europe in the mid-nineteenth century — because that is the kind of information we could have gotten from a number of sources; it has become what we call **common knowledge**.

However, if we report on the boy's father's role in the prodigy's development, we should give proper credit to Alan Walker. We could write, for instance, the following: Franz Liszt's father encouraged him, as early as age six, to practice skills which later served him as an internationally recognized prodigy (Walker 59). Or, we could write something like this: Alan Walker notes that, under the tutelage of his father, Franz Liszt began work in earnest on his piano playing at the age of six (59). Not to give Walker credit for this important information is plagiarism.

Sources:

"Anti-Plagiarism Strategies for Research Papers" by Robert Harris at <http://www.virtualsalt.com/antiplag.htm>

The Capital Community College "Guide to Writing Research Papers" at <http://webster.comment.edu/mla/plagiarism.shtml>

Indiana Writing Center at <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html>

Incorporating Quotes Into Your Paper

Whenever a quote is used, *it must be introduced to the reader*; this way the reader can differentiate your ideas from “the experts.” This introduction is referred to as a “signal” phrase. The following are a couple of ways in which to introduce a quote into your paper.

In your signal phrase you should always indicate who said the quote and from where it came:

In Michael Grant’s book *The History of Rome*, “...” (152).

As Michael Grant indicates/states/reveals in his book *The History of Rome* “...” (152).

- The above introductions make it clear that the quote was spoken by Michael Grant, and that the source of the quote is his book *The History of Rome*. Since the author was clearly identified in the signal, it is not necessary to include his/her name in the parenthetical citation.
- If for some reason you do not include the author’s name in the signal, then you must include it within the parenthetical citation.

Quotations that are fewer than five lines in your paper should be set off with quotation marks and incorporated within the normal flow of your text.

If you use a quotation that is longer than four lines, this is a “**block quote**.” A block quote is indented one inch from the left-hand margin and is not enclosed in quotation marks. You should still introduce and cite the quotation.

When citing an Internet site, follow the same basic model except for the parenthetical format. Generally you include the page number – or both the author’s last name and the page number – of the information, for example: (Grant 152). WebPages however do not have page numbers; therefore you *must* indicate the author of the site.

- In the article “Postcolonial Responses to the Missionaries: *Things Fall Apart*,” Richard Bleakley states, “...” (Bleakley).
- If the author’s name is not provided, use the name of the organization sponsoring the site: (The United Nations).
- If no sponsor name is provided (hint: you may not want to use the site... it may not be reliable) use the first few words of the title.
- If there is no title – DO NOT USE THIS SITE!

Example 1:

Original text from Elaine Tyler May's "Myths and Realities of the American Family":

Because women's wages often continue to reflect the fiction that men earn the family wage, single mothers rarely earn enough to support themselves and their children adequately. And because work is still organized around the assumption that mothers stay home with children, even though few mothers can afford to do so, child-care facilities in the United States remain woefully inadequate.

Is this plagiarism?

Since women's wages often continue to reflect the mistaken notion that men are the main wage earners in the family, single mothers rarely make enough to support themselves and their children very well. Also, because work is still based on the assumption that mothers stay home with children, facilities for child care remain woefully inadequate in the United States.

Example 2:

Original text from Elaine Tyler May's "Myths and Realities of the American Family":

Because women's wages often continue to reflect the fiction that men earn the family wage, single mothers rarely earn enough to support themselves and their children adequately. And because work is still organized around the assumption that mothers stay home with children, even though few mothers can afford to do so, child-care facilities in the United States remain woefully inadequate.

Is this plagiarism?

As Elaine Tyler May points out, "women's wages often continue to reflect the fiction that men earn the family wage" (588). Thus many single mothers cannot support themselves and their children adequately. Furthermore, since work is based on the assumption that mothers stay home with children, facilities for day care in this country are still "woefully inadequate." (May 589).

Example 3:

Original text from Elaine Tyler May's "Myths and Realities of the American Family":

Because women's wages often continue to reflect the fiction that men earn the family wage, single mothers rarely earn enough to support themselves and their children adequately. And because work is still organized around the assumption that mothers stay home with children, even though few mothers can afford to do so, child-care facilities in the United States remain woefully inadequate.

Is this plagiarism?

By and large, our economy still operates on the mistaken notion that men are the main breadwinners in the family. Thus, women continue to earn lower wages than men. This means, in effect, that many single mothers cannot earn a decent living. Furthermore, adequate day care is not available in the United States because of the mistaken assumption that mothers remain at home with their children.

Example 4:

Original text from Elaine Tyler May's "Myths and Realities of the American Family":

Because women's wages often continue to reflect the fiction that men earn the family wage, single mothers rarely earn enough to support themselves and their children adequately. And because work is still organized around the assumption that mothers stay home with children, even though few mothers can afford to do so, child-care facilities in the United States remain woefully inadequate.

Is this plagiarism?

Women today still earn less than men — so much less that many single mothers and their children live near or below the poverty line. Elaine Tyler May argues that this situation stems in part from "the fiction that men earn the family wage" (588). May further suggests that the American workplace still operates on the assumption that mothers with children stay home to care for them (589). This assumption, in my opinion, does not have the force it once did. More and more businesses offer in-house day-care facilities. . . .

Example 5:

Original text, from page 1 of *Lizzie Borden: A Case Book of Family and Crime in the 1890s* by Joyce Williams et al.:

The rise of industry, the growth of cities, and the expansion of the population were the three great developments of late nineteenth century American history. As new, larger, steam-powered factories became a feature of the American landscape in the East, they transformed farm hands into industrial laborers, and provided jobs for a rising tide of immigrants. With industry came urbanization the growth of large cities (like Fall River, Massachusetts, where the Borden family lived) which became the centers of production as well as of commerce and trade.

Is this plagiarism?

The increase of industry, the growth of cities, and the explosion of the population were three large factors of nineteenth century America. As steam-driven companies became more visible in the eastern part of the country, they changed farm hands into factory workers and provided jobs for the large wave of immigrants. With industry came the growth of large cities like Fall River where the Borden family lived which turned into centers of commerce and trade as well as production.

Example 6

Original text, from page 1 of *Lizzie Borden: A Case Book of Family and Crime in the 1890s* by Joyce Williams et al.:

The rise of industry, the growth of cities, and the expansion of the population were the three great developments of late nineteenth century American history. As new, larger, steam-powered factories became a feature of the American landscape in the East, they transformed farm hands into industrial laborers, and provided jobs for a rising tide of immigrants. With industry came urbanization the growth of large cities (like Fall River, Massachusetts, where the Borden family lived) which became the centers of production as well as of commerce and trade.

Is this plagiarism?

Fall River, where the Borden family lived, was typical of northeastern industrial cities of the nineteenth century. Steam-powered production had shifted labor from agriculture to manufacturing, and as immigrants arrived in the US, they found work in these new factories. As a result, populations grew, and large urban areas arose. Fall River was one of these manufacturing and commercial centers (Williams 1).

Example 7:

Original text, from page 1 of *Lizzie Borden: A Case Book of Family and Crime in the 1890s* by Joyce Williams et al.:

The rise of industry, the growth of cities, and the expansion of the population were the three great developments of late nineteenth century American history. As new, larger, steam-powered factories became a feature of the American landscape in the East, they transformed farm hands into industrial laborers, and provided jobs for a rising tide of immigrants. With industry came urbanization the growth of large cities (like Fall River, Massachusetts, where the Borden family lived) which became the centers of production as well as of commerce and trade.

Is this plagiarism?

Fall River, where the Borden family lived, was typical of northeastern industrial cities of the nineteenth century. As steam-powered production shifted labor from agriculture to manufacturing, the demand for workers "transformed farm hands into factory workers," and created jobs for immigrants. In turn, growing populations increased the size of urban areas. Fall River was one of these manufacturing hubs that were also "centers of commerce and trade" (Williams 1)

Note that if the writer had used these phrases or sentences in her own paper without putting quotation marks around them, she would be PLAGIARIZING. Using another person's phrases or sentences without putting quotation marks around them is considered plagiarism EVEN IF THE WRITER CITES IN HER OWN TEXT THE SOURCE OF THE PHRASES OR SENTENCES SHE HAS QUOTED.