AVOIDING PLAGIARISM IN ACADEMIC WRITING

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism refers to a text, image or diagram that is being used without a reference to its source. There are two types of plagiarism: intentional or unintentional.

Intentional plagiarism is where a work is copied and the sources are left out deliberately. In contrast, unintentional plagiarism can occur when the rules of writing are not adhered to correctly due to a lack of knowledge or attentiveness. As professional academic writers, you must clearly acknowledge the sources you are using by referring to them correctly.

Exercise 1

Read and understand each of the given situations and determine whether they are intentional or unintentional plagiarism.

Situation	Intentional / Unintentional plagiarism
You quote ideas from an online article, and you cite the source without indicating the page number.	
You are having a discussion with your friend. During the discussion, your friend showed a sample of her previous assignment and allowed you to take a paragraph from her assignment to be integrated in your own text without a proper citation.	
You read many articles to get an understanding of a particular topic. However, you only include ideas from some of the articles in your text. You cite the sources that you include in your text only and write the references accordingly.	
You found an image from the internet where could illustrate your idea clearly. You include it in your text without a proper citation.	

Now that you have understood what plagiarism is and what kind of situations that may make you plagiarised, you can adopt these THREE ways to avoid plagiarism in your text. They are:

   I.   Using proper in-text citation and referencing convention to acknowledge the sources
  II.   Using direct quotation
 III.   Using indirect quotation (ie: paraphrasing and summarising information)

Note: Examiners or lecturers are able to check whether your work contains plagiarised information or not by uploading it onto an internet-based plagiarism detection service such as Turnitin.

SELECTING SOURCES FOR ACADEMIC WRITING TEXTS

One of the characteristics of an academic texts is that they contain evidence gathered through previous research within the field or within related fields. Providing evidence to strengthen arguments is a vital step in writing an academic text effectively. The evidence included in the academic texts is commonly gathered from reliable sources; therefore, references need to be made to all sources that have been used according to accepted writing standards.

Since there is a wide collection of resources within academia, you need to evaluate your sources to ensure that the information they provide is trustworthy, plausible and unbiased.

Reliable sources

In an academic context, reliable or credible sources are referred to texts that are supported with reliable evidence (facts / data / statistics) and often make references to other academic authors within the field. Furthermore, the sources should have also undergone a strict process of peer-reviewing. This is a process where the texts are read and approved for publication by experts within the field. To determine the reliability of your sources, you can use the following questions to guide you in selecting the best sources.

I.   **Who** is conveying the information?

- Creator/Author

  Can you identify the details of the author or is the document anonymous? Has the author published anything else? Is the creator an expert within the field?

- Publisher
  Who publishes the information - a company, an administrative authority, an organisation or a private individual? Is the publisher known for its publications on the subject in question? Are there any contact details?

II. **What** kind of source is it?
  Is the source scientific/scholarly or is it popular science? Does it contain references to other sources? Are the references correct?

III. **Who** is the source created for and for what purpose?
  Which is the source's intended target group? Is the material created to present, inform, sell or convince its audience? Does the it present facts or information in a nuanced way?

IV. **When** is the material written or created?
  Is the source up to date?

  *If there are several editions of a work, it may be advisable to use the latest edition. If the source is a web site, check when the text on the web page was published.

Exercise 2

Determine the reliability of the following sources. Provide reasons to support your answers.

No	Sources	Reliable (Yes/No)	Reasons
1.	Online journal article		
2.	Course textbook		
3.	News magazine		
4.	Wikipedia		
5.	Autobiography		
6.	Personal blog		
7.	Local newspaper		
8.	Final year project		
9.	Official website		
10.	Thesis / dissertation		

With the advancement of technology, it is common for writers to search information using the internet as it is convenient and informative. However, it is also extremely time consuming and difficult to gather reliable sources if you search using a general search engine such as Google. The following list provides a guide to several academic search engines that could assist you to access reliable online sources.

- Google Scholar

- https://academic.microsoft.com/

- https://www.base-search.net/

- https://core.ac.uk/

- http://science.gov/

- https://www.semanticscholar.org/

- https://xueshu.baidu.com/

You can also visit https://paperpile.com/g/academic-search-engines/ for more information on each of the listed search engines.

Using in-text citations and references to avoid plagiarism in academic texts

In scholarly writing, it is essential to acknowledge how others contributed to your work. By following the principles of proper citation, writers should make sure that readers understand their contribution to the body of knowledge, the way the ideas help to build on the existing literature and the extent to which it engages with the work that has come before.

In-text citations

In-text citations must be included following the use of a quote or paraphrase taken from another piece of work. In-text citations are citations within the main body of the text and refer to a direct quote or paraphrase. They correspond to a reference in the reference list.

Incorporating citations in the text require you to know what citation conventions to use. There are various citation conventions available which include APA, MLA, Chicago, IEEE and some others. Each of these conventions has its own format and structure. You can speak to your supervisor / course lecturer on which citation convention to use for your academic-related projects.

Nonetheless, American Psychological Association (APA) citation convention is commonly used because it provides clarity to the texts; it makes them easy to read and comprehend. It also helps writers to have a better organisation of their text and eases the readers to locate the sources used in the texts. When referring to the APA citation convention, you may refer to its latest series, 7th edition.

There are TWO methods of incorporating in-text citations in your text:

Author-centred / Within the sentence citation
This citation method is used when you intend to emphasise on the author than the idea. Applying this method requires the use of reporting verbs as you are interpreting and reporting the idea expressed by the author in the original text.

Format of the citation: Name of author and year of publication is written in **front** of a direct quotation or paraphrase.

Example:
Quotation: Bryson (2003) claimed that "Cosmologists have long argued over whether the moment of creation was 10 billion years ago or twice that or something in between" (p. 2).

Paraphrase: According to Bryson (2003), the first discovery of the universe was believed to happen between 15-20 years ago though the exact timeline could not be concluded by cosmologists.

> **Idea-centred / At the end of the sentence citation**
>
> This citation method is used when you intend to emphasise on the idea than the author.
>
> Format of the citation: Name of author and year of publication is written at the **end** of a direct quotation or paraphrase.
>
> Example:
>
> Quotation: "Cosmologists have long argued over whether the moment of creation was 10 billion years ago or twice that or something in between" (Bryson, 2003, p. 2).
>
> Paraphrase: It was argued that the first discovery of the universe was believed to happen between 15-20 years ago though the exact timeline could not be concluded by cosmologists (Bryson, 2003).

When writing your academic texts, it is advisable to include both methods of in-text citation to show the versatility of your writing style as well as to produce a high-quality academic text.

Essentially, the APA style of in-text citations uses the author's last name and the year of publication of the source. However, there are also situations in which certain information is not presented. This will affect the way you incorporate the in-text citation in your text. For more information on this, visit https://www.mendeley.com/guides/apa-citation-guide/ to get a list of various citation situations.

Reporting verbs

In academic writing, you will often make references to the research of others, or secondary sources and will integrate their ideas into your own text. In order to integrate secondary sources coherently into the texts, reporting verbs are used to create a professional writing text. Furthermore, using appropriate reporting verbs can help writers to achieve the following:

- to acknowledge the author's personal viewpoint
- to indicate a writer's attitude regarding what the author says
- to state the author's viewpoint regarding other literature

Essentially, reporting verbs can show your belief of others' ideas. Your attitude of others' ideas can be divided into three types:

- strong attitude towards the author's idea (stronger position)
- a neutral attitude towards the author's idea (i.e. merely stating what the author does or does not do – neutral position)

- a weak attitude towards the author's idea (weaker position)

The following table contains some of the common reporting verbs that you can use to express your attitude about the literature in your academic texts.

Purpose	Weaker position	Neutral position	Stronger position
addition		adds	
advice		advises	
agreement	admits, concedes	accepts, acknowledges, agrees, concurs, confirms, recognises	applauds, praises, supports
argument/persuasion	apologises	assures, encourages, interprets, justifies, reasons	alerts, argues, contends, convinces, emphasises, exhorts, forbids, insists, proves, promises, persuades, threatens, warns
belief	guesses, hopes, imagines	believes, claims, expresses, feels, holds, knows, maintains, professes	asserts, guarantees, insists, upholds
conclusion		concludes, discovers, finds, infers, realises	
disagreement	doubts, questions	challenges, debates, disagrees, questions, requests, wonders	accuses, attacks, complains, contradicts, criticises, denies, discards, disclaims, dismisses, disputes, disregards, negates, opposes, refutes, rejects
discussion	comments	discusses, explores	reasons

Source:
https://www.uts.edu.au/sites/default/files/Reporting%20Verbs%20Reference%20Sheet.pdf

Examples of reporting verbs used in sentences

Remember that the tense you use for your reporting verb will depend on the context of your text. Depending on the context, reporting verbs can be written in present tense or past tense.

1. Boynton (1982, p. 79) warns the reader that ordinary chocolate is 'too frail to withstand heat, moisture and proximity to baked beans'.

2. Hanks (2004, p. 257) defines an idiom as an expression whose 'meaning . . . is distinct from the sum of its parts'.

3. Smith (2005) disagrees with Fry (2003) when she maintains that many students have trouble with reporting verbs.

4. Some people subscribe to the idea that chocolate is unhealthy, but Boynton's (1982) book refutes this claim.

Source: https://www.adelaide.edu.au/writingcentre/sites/default/files/docs/learningguide-verbsforreporting.pdf

Exercise 3

Using the words in the box below, fill in the blanks with an appropriate reporting verbs. The clue is given in the parenthesis.

> conclude, suggest, mention, explain, emphasise, discuss, argue, question

1. Schmidt (2010) _____ that the process of language acquisition was important in childhood. *(to reach a conclusion)*

2. Davidson (2006) _____ that previous research in the field is important in understanding the concept. *(to highlight an important point)*

3. NASA (2011) _____ that governments should continue to fund space projects. *(give advices for the view)*

4. In an article by Morlon (2012), he _____ how information technology is changing society. *(give clear details about something)*

5. Kim (2005) and Young (2010) _____ how Bach's music draws considerably on earlier composer's work. *(to say briefly)*

6. Uvarov (2001) _____that the causes of the revolution can be traced back to the 18th century. *(to say something assertively)*

Paraphrasing to avoid plagiarism

Paraphrasing is generally a restatement of the author's ideas using your own words. When you paraphrase, you need to ensure that you fulfil these criteria to produce an acceptable and effective paraphrasing:

    i.   The meaning of the original idea is retained
   ii.   The paraphrased text is different enough from the original text
  iii.   In-text citation is included

> ### Activity 5
> Watch the following video entitled '*How to Paraphrase'* at
> https://youtu.be/SObGEcok06U
>
> While watching the video, complete the following form with the information from the video.

Key ideas	Details
Paraphrasing is…	Taking …
THREE ways of paraphrasing	i. _____ ii. _____ iii. _____
To paraphrase, we start with…	… of information.
Some people think that paraphrasing is…	Simply...
The bad paraphrase is wrong because…	i. It is too similar … ii. Changing ….

	Half of the words are retained from the original quote.
The main problem with using Thesaurus is that…	The meaning … when a … is used.
A good way to paraphrase is to…	i. _____ ii. _____
A great way to paraphrase is…	- To use .... - Try to …to someone else. - Think about what …
A great strategy is…	- To … the information.
I draw…	- A ... - To reflect … rather than worrying about … around in the quote.

Reflection: After watching the video, explain the strategies that you will use to paraphrase effectively.

Writing references to avoid plagiarism

References list down all sources that you include in your text. The list should be placed at the end of your paper. Essentially, it provides the information necessary for a reader to locate and retrieve any source you cite in the body of the paper. Each source you cite in the paper must appear in your reference list; likewise, each entry in the reference list must be cited in your text. Apart from avoiding plagiarism, you need to learn the format of writing the references correctly to ease the process of retrieving the sources in your academic text.

For more information on references using APA style (7th edition), you can visit
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/reference_list_basic_rules.html

Exercise 4

Using the information given, write the reference for each of the following sources.

1.

Title	Social Research Methods (4th edition)
Type	Book
Author	Alan Bryman
Year of publication	2012
Page	766 pages
Publisher	Oxford University Press
Website	Not available
URL	Not available
ANSWER:	

2.

Title	Assessing Pre-Service Teacher' Attitudes and Self-Efficacy in Using Technology in the Classroom
Type	An article in journal: Teacher Education & Practice
Authors	Jaime Coyne, Mae Lane, Lautrice Nickson, Tori Hollas, and Jalene P. Potter
Date of publication	22 September 2017
Page	Not available
Volume	30
Issue	4
URL	Not available
ANSWER:	

3.

Title	Using English for Academic Purposes
Type	Education Website
Author	Andy Gillett
Date of publication	May 6th, 2020
Date of access	Nov 10th, 2021
Page	Not available
Publisher	Not available
Website	University of Hertfordshire
URL	http://www.uefap.com/
ANSWER:	

4.

Title	The SAGE Handbook of Curriculum, Assessment and Pedagogy
Type	E-Book
Editors	Dominic Wyse, Louise Hayward and Jessica Pandya
Date of publication	3 December 2021
Page	1104 pages
Publisher	SAGE Publication
Website	Not available
URL	https://www.vlebooks.com/Vleweb/Product/Index/812764?page=0

ANSWER: