Plagiarism:
What it is and how to avoid it

University Libraries
Shelie Vacek
Health Sciences Librarian
shelie.vacek@usd.edu
Plagiarism
What is it?

• When you use words, ideas, or any other information from another source, you need to give credit to that source
• Not giving credit to a source or “borrowed intellectual material” is plagiarism
• Outright plagiarism is a barrier to the learning process, as it is a failure to engage your mind and learn something new

Harris, R. (2002)
Paraphrasing plagiarism is committed when a writer summarizes an idea taken from another source and fails to both cite the author(s) and to provide the corresponding reference.
Plagiarism
Word for Word

• Word-for-word plagiarism is committed when:
  • A writer takes a sequence of 7 or more words from another source, but fails to identify the quoted passage (i.e. cutting and pasting from a Website)
  • Fails to provide the full in-text citation crediting the author(s)
  • Fails to provide the bibliographic reference (works cited)

Provided by the School of Education, Indiana University-Bloomington
In 2002, Cummings et al. stated that the evidence from their research conflicted with other data examining the effectiveness of online social relationships. This statement is supported by the aforementioned discussion of other research. There may be a few possible theoretical explanations for these discrepancies.

The discrepancies identified may result from a number of limitations found in the materials reviewed by Cummings et al. These limitations can result from “technological constraints, demographic factors, or issues of modality” (Cummings, et al., 2002). Each of these limitations will be examined in further detail below. First, one reviewed study by Cummings et al. (2002) examined only email correspondence for their CMC modality.

References
Plagiarism
Citation Exception – Common Knowledge

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

- Barack Obama was the President of the United States from 2008-2016
- John F. Kennedy was elected President of the United States in 1960
- Water freezes at 32 degrees Fahrenheit
- Tires are made from rubber

This is generally known information or “common knowledge” and therefore, you do not need to document this fact.
Plagiarism
Interpretation of facts

Facts that are *not* generally known, ideas, and statements that interpret fact must be cited


The idea that “Bush’s relationship with Congress has hindered family leave legislation” is **not a fact but an interpretation**; so the source must be cited.
Plagiarism

Interpretation of facts

Facts that are not generally known, ideas, and statements that interpret fact must be cited

• Example: 24% of children under the age of 18 live in households headed by single mothers

This is not a fact that would not be known by most individuals, so therefore it is not common knowledge and must be cited

Provided by Academic Integrity at MIT Website and Handbook
Plagiarism
Citation Myth

Myth: The World Wide Web is common knowledge so you can use it without attribution.

Much of the information on the web is not common knowledge. The Web is full of creative works and original articles

Harris, R. (2002)
Plagiarism

Avoidance Strategies

• **Quotation**: using someone’s words.

When quoting, place the passage you are using in quotation marks, and document the source according to a standard documentation style, such as APA. Example:

The author stated, “I wanted to make the horrific character in my Broadway play more likeable by featuring him in a whimsical, funny situation” (Author, 2012).

• **Paraphrase**: using someone’s ideas, but putting them in your own words.

Although you use your own words to paraphrase, you must still acknowledge the source of the information. Example:

I like that the author wanted to make his mean character liked by the audience so decided to feature him in a comical situation on the stage (Author, 2012).
Plagiarism Avoidance Strategies

1. Put in quotations everything that comes directly from the text especially when taking notes.
2. It is ok to paraphrase, but be sure you are not just rearranging or replacing a few words – AND give credit to the original source.

TIP: Read over what you want to paraphrase. Cover up the text with your hand, close the book or article so that 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. Since you are paraphrasing an authors words, you still need to cite it.

4. When in doubt, its best to cite!

Provided by Writing Tutorial Services, Indiana University
Citation Help

• Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)
  http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/
• Both MLA and APA citation styles
• Visit librarian in the student support center (room 205)
Sources


plagiary. (n.d.). In Random House online dictionary. Retrieved from:  
http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/plagiary


School of Education. (2005). How to recognize plagiarism. Retrieved from:  
https://www.indiana.edu/~istd/example4word.html


http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml