

AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

MASTERING THE ART OF SCHOLARSHIP

In writing, we draw upon others' words and ideas and the intellectual heritage underlying human progress. Scholarship entails researching, understanding, and building upon others' work, but also requires that proper credit be given for any "borrowed" material. UC Davis students are responsible for ethical scholarship, and for knowing what plagiarism is and how to avoid it.

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is using another's work without giving credit. If you use others' words, you must put them in quotation marks and cite your source. You must also include citations when using others' ideas, even if you have paraphrased those ideas in your own words. This includes work generated by artificial intelligence (AI).

"Work" includes the words and ideas of others, as well as art, graphics, computer programs, music, and other creative expression. The work may consist of writing, charts, data, graphs, pictures, diagrams, websites, movies, TV broadcasts, or other communication media.

The term **"source"** includes published works (books, magazines, newspapers, textbooks, websites, movies, photos, paintings, and plays) and unpublished sources (materials from a research service, blogs, class handouts, lectures, speeches, other students' papers, and content generated by AI). Using words, ideas, computer code, or any work without giving proper credit is plagiarism. Any time you use information from a source, of any kind, you must cite it.

Why be concerned about plagiarism?

- **If you plagiarize, you are cheating yourself.** You don't learn to write out your thoughts in your own words, and you won't receive specific feedback from your instructor geared to your individual needs and skills.
- **Plagiarism is dishonest and/or misleading** because it misrepresents work from another source as your own.
- **Plagiarism violates the [Code of Academic Conduct](#)** and can lead to Suspension or Dismissal.
- **Plagiarism devalues others' original work.** Using and submitting a professional's work as your own is taking an unfair advantage over students who do their own work.
- **It is wrong to take or use property** (an author's work) without giving the owner the value or credit due. Furthermore, copyright violations can result in damages, fines, or worse.
- **The reputation of UC Davis affects the value of your degree;** student dishonesty hurts UC Davis' standing and can diminish the worth of your diploma.

Guidelines for Avoiding Plagiarism

- When using sources, **take notes from the source material** and include the necessary information about the source that will later be used for your reference list and your citations.
- When **writing your paper drafts, include citations.** Attempting to add citations after you've written your paper will likely lead to missing or incorrect citations to source material.
- **Use your own words and ideas.** Practice is essential to learning. Each time you choose your words, order your thoughts, and convey your ideas, you can improve your writing. Paraphrasing software, including AI paraphrasing, generates text that you didn't write and might not be permitted. Check with your instructor.
- **Give credit for copied, adapted, or paraphrased material.** If you copy and use exact words from another source, you *must* use quotation marks *and* cite the source. If you adapt a chart or paraphrase a sentence, you must still cite your source. Paraphrasing is restating the author's ideas, information, and meaning in your own words.
- **Ask if you can use spelling, grammar, paraphrasing, or translation applications.** Using Microsoft Word or Grammarly for spelling and grammar suggestions is more likely to be permitted than using a chatbot (e.g., ChatGPT or GrammarlyGo) for paraphrasing.
- **Avoid using others work with minor "cosmetic" changes.** For example, using "less" for "fewer," reversing the order of a sentence, or changing terms in a computer code. If the work is essentially the same as your source, give credit.
- **Don't assume information is "common knowledge".** It is safer to cite than not.
- **Know what plagiarism is:** Unintentional plagiarism may result from not knowing how to cite sources properly or sloppy research and note-taking, but it still violates the UC Davis Code of Academic Conduct.

How to Cite Sources

In-Text Citations identify the source in the text, putting the author's last name and publication year in parenthesis and giving the page number where the cited information appears. The author's name links the reader to a list at the end of the paper giving full publishing information.

Footnotes and endnotes use raised numbers at the end of an idea or quoted words to link the reader to the source which is given either at the bottom of the page (footnote) or at the end of the paper (endnote).

For all three methods, you must include the source in a reference list at the end of the paper, fully identifying each source by author's name, title, publisher's name, year of publication, and page numbers. Citations to electronic resources such as websites should include the exact URL, the date last revised, and any available information about the writer, publisher, and/or creator of the site.

Resources on citation can be found from the [UC Davis Library](#).

Examples

PARAPHRASE VS. PLAGIARISM

Original Source: *'[A totalitarian] society ... can never permit either the truthful recording of facts, or the emotional sincerity, that literary creation demands. ... Totalitarianism demands ... the continuous alteration of the past, and in the long run ... a disbelief in the very existence of objective truth.'*³

Student Version A: Plagiarism ✘

A totalitarian society can never permit the truthful recording of facts; it demands the continuous alteration of the past, and a disbelief in the very existence of objective truth.

The student has combined copied pieces of the author's language, without quotation marks or citations.

Student Version B: Improper paraphrase, also plagiarism ✘

A totalitarian society can't be open-minded or allow the truthful recording of facts, but instead demands the constant changing of the past and a distrust of the very existence of objective truth (Orwell).

The student has woven together sentences and switched a few words ("open-minded" for "tolerant," "allow" for "permit") has left out some words, and has given an incomplete and inaccurate citation.

Student Version C: Appropriate paraphrase, *not* plagiarism ✓

Orwell believed that totalitarian societies must suppress literature and free expression because they cannot survive the truth, and thus they claim it does not exist (Bowker 336-337).

This student has paraphrased using her own words, accurately reflecting and citing the author's ideas.

Student Version D: Quotation with cite, *not* plagiarism ✓

In his biography of George Orwell, Gordon Bowker discusses the themes of 1984, quoting a 1946 essay by Orwell: "Totalitarianism demands ... the continuous alteration of the past, and in the long run ... a disbelief in the very existence of objective truth" (337).

The student introduces the source. Verbatim words are in quotation marks, omitted words are marked by ellipses, and both the book used and the original source of the quote are cited.

³Bowker p. 337, quoting Orwell, G., "The Prevention of Literature," *Polemic*, No. 2, January 1946

Getting Help

Read the syllabus and assignment, make note of the required citation format, and ask your instructor if you have questions. Use resources such as the [AATC Writing Support Center](#) or [our website](#).