

1. READ AND ANALYZE THE ORIGINAL TEXT

- Skim and divide the text into sub-sections;
- Read and analyze the topic of each sub-section;
- Highlight only critical (and easily forgotten) details (e.g., researcher's name, dates, stats).

2. TAKE NOTES IN YOUR OWN WORDS

- Make brief notes, or title-like summaries, in your own words, of the **key concepts**;
- Always connect key concepts with their sources (i.e., speakers or other authors);
- If you need to use the author's language in your notes, put it in quotation marks.
Remember: Common technical terms do not need to be paraphrased or quoted.

3. DRAFT FROM MEMORY OR NOTES ONLY

- Hide the original text; do not look at it while you write; give yourself a chance to think;
- Draft your summary of key concepts from memory or your notes, in your own words, writing 1-2 sentences per sub-section.
Remember: The mind is a good editor.

4. CONDUCT A R.A.P. TEST: Review your draft summary with the author's original text for R.A.P., then correct and revise.

- Is your summary **Relevant**?
- Is your summary **Accurate**? Check the highlighted/underlined details first.
- Is your summary **Paraphrased** (in *your* words, *not* the author's)?

5. CITE RE: THE 3-STEP RULE

- Paraphrase, quote, or indent any original language/ideas from the author;
- Cite the original source in the paragraph;
- Cite the original source again in the reference list; check style guidelines for details.

What is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism, a violation of UAB's Academic Honor Code, is defined as claiming as your own the ideas, words, data, computer programs, creative compositions, artwork, etc., done by

someone else. Examples include improper citation of referenced works, the use of commercially available scholarly papers, failure to cite sources, or copying another person's ideas.

The full text of the UAB Honor Code, along with the procedure for suspected violation, is available online in the Graduate Student Handbook, http://www.uab.edu/graduate/UAB_Grad_Handbook.pdf

Adopting Best Practices

Avoiding plagiarism may seem like an easy matter, but research shows that it's a complex one. This complexity stems from the fact that research writing from sources is a highly demanding cognitive activity. In selecting, summarizing, and documenting a source, a writer engages in higher-order ethical decision-making, reading, evaluating, and writing skills that are not used everyday and that only improve with practice and mentorship.

The best ways to avoid plagiarism are to adopt best practices, like the ESP and the Three Step Rule. Additionally, research writers should recognize risky writing practices and reject them. Risky practices include:

- Overreliance on a highlighter, instead of taking notes in your own words
- Failure to mark original text with quotations or indentions, (i.e., copying)
- Noting incomplete citations in the body of the text and in the bibliographic references
- Failure to credit and document Internet sources with the respect given other published sources
- Failure to distance one's self from source material for a couple of days before writing about it, which can lead to inadvertent borrowing
- A habit of writing summaries while looking at the source material or copies of it, which can lead to inadvertent borrowing
- Failure to check summarized text with the original source material, after summarizing, to verify the accuracy of the new interpretation.

Remember: If you use more than 6 words of original text from a source, without putting it in quotes, a computer software program can identify that as an exact match, raising a red flag.

What's online? Cool Tools for Authors

- For a humorous student perspective on avoiding plagiarism <http://www.library.ucla.edu/b Bruinsuccess/>
- For a U.S. government position on plagiarism in research <http://ori.hhs.gov/education/products/plagiarism/>
- For a great, all-purpose online writing lab <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>
- For advice from UAB experts on copyright law <http://www.uab.edu/copyright/index.php>
- For information on "fair use" and how to use source material in teaching <http://www.copyright.cornell.edu/>
- For information about a new set of copyright licenses and tools designed for the Internet <http://creativecommons.org/>
- For access to rights-free online material http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page

Need Help?

Mervyn H. Sterne Library offers Term Paper Research Clinics and Citation Clinics. For more Information, visit the Library's Website at <https://www.mhsl.uab.edu/>, or contact the Reference/Information department at 934-6364.

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Ethics for Authors

For research writers who want to follow best practices while incorporating prior source work and writing for publication



By Jennifer L. Greer & Julia S. Austin



Graduate School

www.uab.edu/graduate
www.uab.edu/ethicsforauthors

Crediting Your Sources

Some experts estimate that as much as half of the writing that graduate students, academicians, and researchers do is knowledge-transforming (i.e., based on a review, synthesis, and integration of previous scholarship). This kind of writing differs greatly from more common types of writing, such as personal narratives, descriptions of experiences, even lab or field notes. As a result, research writers document their sources much more often than do other kinds of writers.

New authors sometimes mistakenly view documentation as a bother or a sign that they are uninformed. Yet academic writing scholars John M. Swales and Christine B. Feak (2004) observe that we cite other sources for a variety of beneficial reasons, all of which help researchers build credibility, contacts, and knowledge. Specifically, they point to research by linguists and rhetoricians that offers the following rationales:

- To acknowledge another author's intellectual property rights, act ethically, and avoid plagiarism.
- To respect the achievements of scholars who have come before us and build on their knowledge (a core principle of scholarship).
- To recognize an influential thinker among our peers or a contributor to our research.
- To give our arguments more credibility by association with respected, established science.
- To prove that we know the rules of scholarly integrity and honor them, hence can be trusted in the academic community.
- To show gaps in the knowledge and open up a valid question for our new research.

Reference: Day, R.A., & Gastel, B. (2006) *How to Write and Publish a Scientific Paper: Sixth Edition*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Swales, J. M., Feak, C. B. (2004) *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills: Second Edition*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

The Three-Step Rule

All information from sources MUST be

1. Paraphrased, summarized, or marked (with quotes or indentation)
AND
2. Cited in the same paragraph
AND
3. Cited again in the list of references at the end of the document.

Note: You must complete *all three steps*. Conventions vary by discipline, with some fields accepting direct quotations, and others preferring only paraphrase and summary.

What Exactly is Documentation?

Documentation is a systematic way of indicating the original source of the material used in your text. Each field follows a documentation format, such as APA, MLA, CBE, IEEE, etc., depending upon the intended publication and the author's guidelines. For quick access to common citation guidelines, check out this Mervyn H. Sterne Library link: <http://www.mhsl.uab.edu/2009/guides/cys/>

What needs to be documented?

- quoted material whether published, written (but not published), or spoken
- another person's idea or opinion (in contrast to common knowledge)
- interpretations and progression of thought
- your own previously published work
- drawings or photographs
- charts and graphs
- lab results
- lecture notes
- professional presentations
- techniques and procedures
- surveys and test instruments
- World Wide Web page materials

What does NOT need to be documented?

Common Knowledge

- bare-bone facts from a dictionary or other basic reference books (dates, titles of principal works or studies, proper names)
- scientific and technical terms

Example of common knowledge: Crick and Watson proposed a spiral model of DNA, the double helix.

Note: Common knowledge varies by discipline and audience.



Source Writing Techniques

Summary: A simple summary is a concise overview of an entire piece of text; by definition, a summary is a distillation, that is, much shorter than (less than 10% of) the original text. One common academic summary is an abstract for a journal article, a conference presentation, or a thesis or dissertation. Two other types of summaries are a generalization and paraphrase.

Generalization: A generalization is a high-level synthesis that combines common ideas from several sources to support a single claim or point of view, referencing all of the works. It is brief and value-added, offering a big-picture perspective.

Paraphrase: A paraphrase is a short piece of text – a sentence or paragraph – that restates the key ideas or concepts of a targeted piece of original text, not the whole work. A paraphrase may or may not be shorter than the original text, but it is always different in language and often in a new context.

Direct Quotation: A direct quotation includes the exact words of a source and marks them with either double quotes at the beginning and end, or a clear indentation of the text. Quotations are common in the humanities and social sciences, but are almost never used in the lab sciences, math, or engineering.

EXAMPLES

Original source: "Research at many levels, however, indicates that [students who copy are] more likely to be driven by desperation and a desire for success (or fear of failure) than by a simple desire to cheat.... When a paper displays unintentional plagiarism, we have a teaching opportunity..." (Williams, 2008).

Reference: Williams, Bronwyn T. (2008) Trust, betrayal, and authorship: Plagiarism and how we perceive students. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 51:4, p. 350.

Generalization: Many researchers advocate educating and training students in plagiarism prevention through case studies, text analysis, and paraphrase and citation practice (Day & Gastel, 2006, Swales and Feak, 2004, Williams, 2008).

Paraphrase: Some professors argue that many students who plagiarize have understandable motives and present opportunities for teachers to model more ethical conduct in the classroom (Williams, 2008).

Direct Quotation: Williams asserts that "desperation and a desire for success" motivate students, more than "a desire to cheat" (Williams, 2008).

Ethical Summary Protocol (ESP)

The Ethical Summary Protocol (ESP) was developed at UAB to help research writers approach critical reading, note-taking, and summarizing *systematically*. When writers employ this kind of ESP, they remember more of what they read, synthesize that knowledge when writing, and waste less time. Basically it involves *drafting mostly from memory and your notes followed by checks for quality and accuracy*.

If you do not use an ESP and pick up the habit of looking at the original text while you write, you will work more slowly (as a result of information overload), risk losing confidence in your own voice, and possibly write a summary or paraphrase that is too long or too close to the original article.