

PART 3—Recognizing and Avoiding Plagiarism

By the time you reach Part 3 you should have a clearer understanding of what needs to be cited and what does not.

But how do I know when to use a citation by itself and when I need quotation marks and a citation together?

First, understand the parts of a source. Each source is made up **two parts**:

- the **idea(s)** expressed (some ideas will be intellectual property and some will be common knowledge—see Part One of this tutorial to tell the difference)
- the **words** used to express that idea arranged into a **sentence structure** (refers to the way the sentence is put together—arrangement of independent and dependent clauses, transitions, punctuation)

By now you know that you can reword common knowledge and use that information in their papers without a citation. Rewording makes the sentence a common idea in your own words and with your own structure.

But when the part of the source you want to borrow is intellectual property and not common knowledge, things change. Now all three parts belong solely to the source. You must **indicate you have borrowed the IDEA. That part still doesn't belong to you. Cite the idea by including a citation after the borrowed idea.**

Can I use a source's exact words without quotation marks?

No, you can't. You can't take strings of words (phrases that seem to be cut-and-pasted from the original source) and put those into your paper without including quotation marks around the borrowed part.

Why not?

Remember that the citation covers the IDEA ONLY, not words.

When strings of original words show up, you have taken much more than the idea. You have taken words and structure as well.

In this respect, the citation is like a limited warranty on a stereo that covers only certain parts in certain situations. *Citations by themselves are not always full warranties against plagiarizing.*

So what options do I have when I am using other people's **intellectual property**?

You have two options: (Yes. Only two.)

DIRECT QUOTE--Use the source's words in exactly the same order with quotation marks and a citation. Sentence structure is the same.

EX:

Original-- Most hostage takers want to resolve the situation peacefully, but are scared and need someone to show them a way out". --from page 44 of the book *Three-Day Night* by Jim Cavaness

Student Writer: Hostage negotiator Jim Cavaness emphasizes that "most hostage takers want to resolve the situation peacefully but are scared and need someone to show them a way out" (44).

Quotation marks indicate that the student has borrowed the source's words in exactly the order they appear, and the citation () indicates that the source's idea was borrowed as well. Because the source's name—Cavaness—is mentioned just before the quote, only the page number appears in the citation.

Also note that direct quotes should be **worked smoothly into** your own ideas. Ease into and out of these quotes. Spend some time integrating them properly. Introduce the speaker and his or her credentials, then give the quote from that person. After the quote add a few sentences where you tell the reader how the quote helps prove YOUR thesis. That's why you quoted the source, right? Because it helps prove your thesis? **Show the reader a clear connection between your thesis and the quote** before moving on to your next point in the paper.

SUMMARY / PARAPHRASE

Students borrow less from sources when they opt to PARAPHRASE or SUMMARIZE the source. The paraphrase will be about the same length as the original section you are paraphrasing. A summary, however, will be shorter than the original. In both summary and paraphrase, the student **borrow the idea only**

and uses his or her **own words** to express that idea. The sentence structure should be COMPLETELY DIFFERENT than the original.

EXAMPLE:

Original-- article by Beth Forrester, page 12

In my study I interviewed two hundred adults over a three-year period between 1996 and 1999. All had indicated on a survey that they had been physically abused as children. I found that as adults nearly 80% inflicted on others the harm that had been done to them. Sadly, most journeyed full-circle, becoming violent with their own children, their spouses, or both.

Student writer: According to psychologist Beth Forrester, children who are physically abused are very likely to become abusive parents or spouses later in their lives (12).

The presence of a citation here tells the reader that the ideas are not the student writer's. But there are no quotation marks, which indicates that both the language and the structure are the writer's alone. The sentence structure does not resemble the original structure.

AVOID "PATCH" WRITING

Your use of a source's material should clearly be a direct quote or clearly a paraphrase. But sometimes students fall in to "patch" writing where they throw together a few of their own words and a few pieces of the original sentence. It's not cited effectively enough to be a direct quote, but it's not really a paraphrase either because exact phrases are used. Because it's in "no man's land" and usually takes more from the source than it cites, **"patch" writing should be avoided.**

How can I tell if what I wrote is "patch" writing?

- It's neither a true direct quote nor a true paraphrase but seems to be something in between
- It takes whole **strings of words** from the original without quotation marks, though it might not take whole sentences
- It substitutes **synonyms** for words in the original or **leaves out words** like transitions
- The **sentence structure** (how sentence is put together) is identical or nearly identical to the

original.

Here's an example of "patch" writing:

ORIGINAL PASSAGE

from "Pros and Cons of Camera Cell Phones" by Declan Tobin

Camera cell phones have a number of disadvantages over standard cell phones. Firstly they are generally more expensive to buy. Sending photos to friends or family from your cell phone is a costly activity. You need to check with your cell phone carrier to see the rates. It is much more expensive than sending a general text. Sometimes the quality of the photo is not as clear as you may have expected. Some people find it difficult to focus the lens using the phone. It can be costly if the lens gets cracked and needs to be replaced (some camera phone lens cannot be replaced and the whole phone will need to be changed). Remember if you are purchasing a camera cell phone go the extra mile and get insurance. Unfortunately in today's world they are the type of gadget that pick pockets only

love. <http://www.articlegeek.com/arts/photography/camera-cell-phone-pros-cons.htm> Copyright-free article

STUDENT WRITER

Camera cell phones have disadvantages over regular cell phones. First of all, they are more expensive. Sending photos from your cell phone is a costly activity, much more expensive than sending a general text. You need to check with your cell phone carrier to check the rates. Sometimes the quality of the photo is not as clear as you want it to be. Some people find it difficult to focus the lens using the phone. It can be costly if the lens gets cracked and needs to be replaced (some camera phone lenses cannot be replaced and the whole phone will need to be changed). If you are purchasing a camera phone go the extra mile and get insurance. In today's world they are the type of gadget that pick pockets love to steal (Tobin).

Is the above paragraph an acceptable use of the material?

No. It's essentially the same structure with many of the same words, a few added, a few taken a way, a few changed to a synonym. It's cited as a paraphrase but it's really closer to a direct quote in places. **This is "PATCH" WRITING, and it's not acceptable.**

Look below at the words in **green**. Those are word strings from the original. Words in **blue** are synonyms for words in the original. Words left out are indicated in pink ellipses . . .

Camera cell phones have . . . disadvantages over regular cell phones. First of all, they are generally more expensive. Sending photos . . . from your cell phone is a costly activity, much more expensive than sending a general text. You need to check with your cell phone carrier to check the rates. Sometimes the quality of the photo is not as clear as you want it to be. Some people find it difficult to focus the lens using the phone. It can be costly if the lens gets cracked and needs to be replaced (some camera phone lenses cannot be replaced and the whole phone will need to be changed). . . . If you are purchasing a camera phone go the extra mile and get insurance. . . . In today's world they are the type of gadget that pick pockets . . . love to steal (Tobin).

Look at all that green! There's no way that's a paraphrase! It looks more like a bunch of direct quotes without quotation marks. **Do you see how the citation does not cover all that was taken from the original?** It's like trying to buy a \$30 sweater with a \$10 gift card.

How about this one?

Owning a camera phone might seem like a necessity, but consumer advocate Declan Tobin warns that these phones have drawbacks. He notes that the primary problem is expense: the initial purchase price is higher than that of base-model phones, customers are charged hefty fees to transfer the images off the camera, and sometimes broken camera parts are not replaceable (Tobin).

Why is this acceptable?

- the writer credits Tobin for the information twice (once in the opening sentence and again in the citation)
- the writer does not use Tobin's exact wording
- the writer interprets the content of the original and adds his own judgment: "The primary problem is that of expense[.]"
- The writer does not try to hit all Tobin's original points, just those having to do with expense. The scope is narrower than in Tobin's.

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is a word for using someone else's intellectual property without indicating that you have done so. **It's a failure to put "flags"** (citations/quotation marks) **on what's not yours.**

To avoid plagiarism, identify what part of the source is intellectual property and document it correctly.

Why is it not okay to plagiarize?

Well, there are a couple of reasons. One is that the work you are getting a grade for is not your own, though is it presented as if it were. You get something—a real grade—for nothing (very little effort). Another is that someone else's ideas and words have been used in an unacceptable way. Most faculty members have a problem with both of those. In addition, it makes people more likely to plagiarize when they get a job, and the penalties in the workplace are severe. Employers will likely fire, disbar, or demote the employee.

Is "patch writing" plagiarism?

Technically, *yes*. That's why it is not acceptable. But more often than not, patch writing reveals a lack of skill in research writing. It shows some intent to reword the source's information, but it doesn't quite make it all the way to an acceptable paraphrase. When you find yourself patch writing, go back and make that part **clearly a paraphrase or clearly a direct quote.** Don't leave it a jumble of both.

One more Practice question: Read the following paragraph.

Terms to Know: Anime (**AN**-a-may) is "a Japanese animated film or television program[], drawn in a meticulously detailed style, usually featuring characters with distinctive large, staring eyes, and typically having a science-fiction or fantasy theme, sometimes including violent or sexually explicit material." definition from *Oxford English Dictionary*

from "Anime 101" by Jason Hahn

Needless to say, not all animes are just cartoons for kids. In fact, the majority of animes feature violence, sexual innuendos, and language that may not be suitable for children. This is likely a major reason why anime's popularity has exploded in

the past few years across the world. With animes, cartoons are no longer just for kids, and even adults can find themes of romance and drama that they might otherwise find only in real-life television shows. The unique blend of animated characters with more mature themes is undoubtedly an enticing combination for adult-viewers. http://www.articlegeek.com/arts/movie_articles/anime-101.htm Copyright -free article

Which of the following is an acceptable use of the original material?

TIP: Look for identical **word strings**, **synonym substitution** and **sentence structures** that are exact or near-exact.

Student A Anime's popularity has exploded in the past few years across the world. But all animes are not just cartoons for kids. In fact, the majority of animes feature violence, sexual innuendos, and language that may not be suitable for children. Even adults can find themes of romance and drama that they might otherwise find only in real-life television shows (Hahn).

Student B Adults audiences gravitate to anime because they are attracted to its often explicit content (Hahn).

Student C With animes, cartoons are not just for children, and even older viewers can find romance and drama that they see only in real-life television shows. The one-of-a kind blend of animated characters with more mature elements is without a doubt an enticing combination.

Let's start with **Student C**. There's no citation AT ALL, which means the writer is claiming everything in the paragraph as either his own ideas or common knowledge. What do you think? Is everything in the paragraph the writer's ideas or common knowledge?

Right! It's basically Hahn's sentence structure with a few words changed. It's patch writing and should be redone so it's either a direct quote or a paraphrase. Right now it's neither.

Student A takes whole chunks of the original and rearranges them into different sentences. The structure IS different, but the wording is essentially the same, with strings of words cut and pasted in. Still patch writing. Still not acceptable.

Student B's example, while brief, does the best job of taking out the idea and putting it into his own words. Student B cites the sentence correctly as a paraphrase.

Why are some words okay to use in a paraphrase and others are not? With some words--especially common nouns-- there's simply not another name for it. If quilts are stolen from a museum, you must use the noun "quilts." Other times you must use factual information such as a person's name or the year an even happened. If a German Shepherd named Buddy saved a drowning toddler named Darbee Harrison in 2002, you must use those names and that year. They are facts. Just use your own sentence structure.

Other words are more subjective—they show an opinion or creativity on the part of the original writer. Verbs ("lingered," "rocketed") and adjectives ("ephemeral," "desperate") should always be changed **OR** quoted directly. Comparisons ("the manager sprang over the counter like an angry tiger"), as well as nouns that imply judgment ("hero," "jerk") should be changed **OR** quoted directly.

Are you ready to take the quiz over QUIZ 3? If so, click on that link on your left. If not, read over this section again.

You must get all **10** questions correct (100%) to successfully complete the tutorial. Good luck!