

## Plagiarism

Good writers read widely and make use of what they read. However, there are correct and incorrect ways of making use of the words and ideas of other writers.

***What is plagiarism:*** When you use the words or ideas of another writer, even a few words or a single idea, you must make it absolutely clear to your reader which words and ideas are your own and which come from another source. If you fail to do this, you are guilty of plagiarism. This holds true for both print and online sources, and for sources with or without a listed author.

***Why plagiarism is a problem:*** In the academic community, words and ideas are of value. Thus plagiarism is considered a serious crime because the plagiarist is stealing the words or ideas of others without giving them credit. In addition, plagiarism is viewed as dishonest because the plagiarist misleads the reader into giving him/her credit for someone else's words or ideas.

***Consequences of plagiarism:*** At Frostburg State University, plagiarism is taken very seriously. In the Department of English, the consequences of plagiarism are as follows: students will receive a grade of "F" for any paper that contains plagiarized material and may also fail the course. Furthermore, English department policy requires instructors to refer students guilty of plagiarism for Judicial Board disciplinary action, which may result in sanctions as severe as expulsion. Expulsion for plagiarism becomes part of a student's permanent record.

### ***Plagiarism includes:***

- Buying or otherwise obtaining someone else's paper and submitting all or part of it as your own work, even if you make a few changes.
- Incorporating someone else's phrases, sentences, or paragraphs into your writing without quotation marks (or block quote format) and proper crediting.
- Using any information or ideas you obtained in the research process without properly crediting the sources.
- Using someone else's narrative or expository structure--*even if the source is credited*--instead of your own. This type of plagiarism involves paraphrasing that is too close to the wording or structure of the source text.

***Citing sources:*** In college, you will learn one or more systems or styles for citation (MLA, APA, etc.). You cannot make up your own system or style.

Citing your sources correctly will strengthen your writing because it shows that you have done your homework; when you cite your sources, you demonstrate that you know what other people have written about your topic.

**Examples of plagiarism:**

Note: MLA citation style is used for all of the examples on the handout and test.

1. Using one or more sentences from the source without using quotation marks and a citation.

<b>Original Source</b>	<b>Student Version</b>
<p>By 1946 one in every three marriages was ending in divorce. Even couples who stayed together went through rough times, as an acute housing shortage forced families to double up with relatives or friends. Tempers frayed and generational relations grew strained.</p> <p>Source: Coontz, Stephanie. "What We Really Miss About the 1950s." <i>Rereading America: Cultural Contexts for Critical Thinking and Writing</i>. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Ed. Gary Colombo, Robert Cullen, Bonnie Lisle. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007. p. 34.</p>	<p>The 1940s were not very stable. By the late 1940s, one in every three marriages was ending in divorce, and even couples who stayed together went through rough times, as an acute housing shortage forced families to double up with relatives or friends. This just shows that throughout history it has always been hard to keep a family together.</p> <p>Works Cited Coontz, Stephanie. "What We Really Miss About the 1950s." <i>Rereading America: Cultural Contexts for Critical Thinking and Writing</i>. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Ed. Gary Colombo, Robert Cullen, Bonnie Lisle. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007. 31-47. Print.</p>
<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Corrected Student Version</b>
<p>The student has lifted two entire sentences from the original source without making it clear to the reader that these are someone else's words. Even though the source is listed in the Works Cited at the end of the paper, the reader has no way of knowing which words come from the source. Thus, the student is claiming someone else's words as his/her own.</p> <p>The corrected version uses quotation marks around the words from the source, and gives the name of the author and the page number.</p>	<p>The 1940s were not very stable. According to Stephanie Coontz, by the late 1940s, "one in every three marriages was ending in divorce, and even couples who stayed together went through rough times, as an acute housing shortage forced families to double up with relatives or friends" (34). This just shows that throughout history it has always been hard to keep a family together.</p> <p>Works Cited Coontz, Stephanie. "What We Really Miss About the 1950s." <i>Rereading America: Cultural Contexts for Critical Thinking and Writing</i>. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Ed. Gary Colombo, Robert Cullen, Bonnie Lisle. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007. 31-47. Print.</p>

2. Using one or more sentences from the source and citing the source but failing to use quotation marks.

<b>Original Source</b>	<b>Student Version</b>
<p>Celebrated and censored, revered and reviled, <i>Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i> has fueled heated debate since it was first published in 1885, yet it remains one of America’s most enduring literary classics.</p> <p>Source:  “Born to Trouble: <i>Adventures of Huck Finn</i>.”  <i>Culture Shock</i>. PBS Online, 2000. Web. 30 Nov. 2009.</p>	<p>Mark Twain’s classic, <i>Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i>, is a controversial work of literature. Celebrated and censored, revered and reviled, <i>Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i> has fueled heated debate since it was first published in 1885, yet it remains one of America’s most enduring literary classics (“Born to Trouble”).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Works Cited</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“Born to Trouble: <i>Adventures of Huck Finn</i>.”  <i>Culture Shock</i>. PBS Online, 2000.  Web. 30 Nov. 2009.</p>
<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Corrected Student Version</b>
<p>The student has used exact wording from the original source. Even though the source is indicated within the text and listed in the Works Cited at the end of the paper, the reader has no way of knowing that these specific words come from the source. Thus, the student is claiming someone else’s words as his/her own.</p> <p>The corrected version uses quotation marks around the words from the source.</p>	<p>Mark Twain’s classic, <i>Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i>, is a controversial work of literature. As the PBS Web site <i>Culture Shock</i> notes, Twain’s work “has fueled heated debate since it was first published in 1885, yet it remains one of America’s most enduring literary classics” (“Born to Trouble”).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Works Cited</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“Born to Trouble: <i>Adventures of Huck Finn</i>.”  <i>Culture Shock</i>. PBS Online, 2000.  Web. 30 Nov. 2009.</p>

3. Using unique phrases from the source without using quotation marks and a citation.

<b>Original Source</b>	<b>Student Version</b>
<p>No GOD of Greece could be heroic. All the Olympians were immortal and invincible. They could not feel the glow of courage; they could never defy danger. When they fought they were sure of victory and no harm could ever come to them.</p> <p><i>Source:</i> Hamilton, Edith. <i>Mythology</i>. Boston: Little, Brown &amp; Co. 1945. p. 454.</p>	<p>Greek gods could not be heroic because they were never really at risk. They could not feel the glow of courage or defy danger. As immortals, they never faced death.</p>
<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Corrected Student Version</b>
<p>The student has used two unique phrases from the source: “feel the glow of courage” and “defy danger.”</p> <p>The corrected version uses quotation marks around these phrases and includes a citation. It also has a Works Cited list.</p>	<p>Greek gods could not be heroic because they were never really at risk. They could not “feel the glow of courage” nor “defy danger” (Hamilton 454).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Works Cited</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Hamilton, Edith. <i>Mythology</i>. Boston: Little Brown&amp; Co. 1945. Print.</p>

4. Using ideas from a source without citing the source.

<b>Original Source</b>	<b>Student Version</b>
<p>He [Odin] had the responsibility more than all the other gods together of postponing as long as possible the day of doom, Ragnarok, when heaven and earth would be destroyed. He was the All-father, supreme among gods and men.</p> <p><i>Source:</i> Hamilton, Edith. <i>Mythology</i>. Boston: Little, Brown &amp; Co. 1945. p. 455.</p>	<p>Odin is the sky-father like Zeus, but unlike Zeus, he cares about humans. He even tried to postpone doomsday.</p>
<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Corrected Student Version</b>
<p>The student begins with general knowledge (that Odin is similar to Zeus), but then includes information that is more specialized and not something everyone would know (postponing Doomsday).</p> <p>The corrected version cites the source in the text and also includes a Works Cited list.</p>	<p>Odin is the sky-father like Zeus, but unlike Zeus, he cares about humans. He even tried to postpone doomsday (Hamilton 455).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Works Cited</p> <p>Hamilton, Edith. <i>Mythology</i>. Boston: Little, Brown &amp; Co. 1945. Print.</p>

5. Faulty paraphrasing.

<b>Original Source</b>	<b>Student Version</b>
<p>Some of the women we call our friends we never see alone – we see them as part of a couple at couples’ parties.</p> <p><i>Source:</i> Viorst, Judith. “Friends, Goods Friends – And Such Good Friends.” <i>The Brief Pocket Reader</i>. Ed. David Munger. NY: Longman, 2000. p. 119.</p>	<p>Many of the females we call friends we never see by themselves – we see them as half of a couple at couple’s gatherings.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Works Cited</p> <p>Viorst, Judith. “Friends, Goods Friends – And Such Good Friends.” <i>The Brief Pocket Reader</i>. Ed. David Munger. NY: Longman, 2000. 117-121. Print.</p>
<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Corrected Student Version</b>
<p>The student has used the narrative structure of the source and simply plugged in synonyms or rephrasings. Even though the student has changed specific words, he/she has not expressed the ideas using his or her own words and structure. The student version is also missing an in-text citation.</p> <p>In the corrected version, the student not only cites the source immediately after the paraphrase, he/she also uses his/her own words and structure, thereby demonstrating a more complete understanding of the ideas in the original source.</p>	<p>One type of friend many people have is the friend who is in a relationship with someone we know (Viorst 119).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Works Cited</p> <p>Viorst, Judith. “Friends, Goods Friends – And Such Good Friends.” <i>The Brief Pocket Reader</i>. Ed. David Munger. NY: Longman, 2000. 117-121. Print.</p>

## Five Steps for Writing a Plagiarism-Free Research Paper

1. **Take accurate notes in your own words from research sources.** When you come across passages that you think might be effective if directly quoted (where what someone else says or writes is important for the actual *wording* as well as for the *idea*), be sure to mark them so you can find them later.
2. **Do enough research to understand thoroughly the concept(s) you'll be writing about.** Seek advice from your instructor and do additional research as necessary until you're confident about your knowledge of the subject. If you don't understand the material, you can't write a good paper. Period.
3. **Take control of the paper's structure.** Decide what *you* want the paper to say and try to express your most important ideas in a few key sentences. Expand those sentences into a coherent outline (formal or informal, as your preferences and/or the instructions of your teacher may dictate).
4. **Write the paper from your notes and outline, not directly from the sources.** This may be the most important step in producing a paper that is truly yours, not a source-driven "cut and paste" collage of other people's ideas.
5. **Credit your sources.** Direct quotes, facts you discovered in your research that are not general knowledge, and opinions derived from your sources--either directly or through your interpretation--must be credited. Follow the citation/reference system specified by your instructor.