

# RESEARCH, CITATION, AND PLAGIARISM

## ✚ Plagiarism: What It Is and How to Avoid It

### Avoiding Plagiarism

What is plagiarism? If you recall from "An Introduction to APA Citation," the goal of citation is two-fold: first, to make it easy for your readers to find your sources (in case they want to know more); second, to give credit to the original author.

Most of us have experienced someone else taking credit for something we did, be it an older sister who claimed she was the one who mowed the lawn, or a supervisor who took our proposal and claimed it was his or hers. These experiences are always unpleasant. We all want to get credit for what we have done, so in return, we need to give credit to others for what they have done. APA citation allows us to do just that. Not citing the original source is considered plagiarism.

According to the Kaplan University Plagiarism Policy (found in your class syllabus, the University Catalog, and the section titled "Kaplan University's Plagiarism Policy"), plagiarism is defined as "using another person's words, ideas, or results without giving proper credit to that person; giving the impression that it is the student's own work."

The *Indiana University* website

(<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>) offers the following advice on avoiding plagiarism:

*To avoid plagiarism, you must give credit whenever you use:*

- *another person's idea, opinion, or theory;*
- *any facts, statistics, graphs, drawings -- any pieces of information -- that are not common knowledge;*
- *quotations of another person's actual spoken or written words;*
- *or paraphrase of another person's spoken or written words.*

The bottom line: if it did not originally come out of your own head, you have to say where you found it.

To give appropriate credit to a source, you will use APA citation, a format generated by the American Psychological Association and the standard for all courses at Kaplan University. You will find it helpful to refer back to the section titled "Introduction to APA Citation." In addition, general citation guidelines and links are available in the Kaplan Library at [http://libsys.uah.edu/kaplan/test/res\\_guides/kap.citing\\_guide.htm](http://libsys.uah.edu/kaplan/test/res_guides/kap.citing_guide.htm).

As you should recall from "An Introduction to APA Citation," when you use information found in another source, you have two choices. You can use the exact words of the original author, surrounded by quotation marks and followed by a citation, or you can paraphrase the author's idea (put it into your own words) and follow that by a citation. **The citation must follow the information directly in the text itself.** It is not enough simply to list the reference on your reference page.

Exact quotations should be used rarely, reserved for actual dialogue (something someone said); for original wording that is so perfect, there's no better way to state it; or for critiquing someone's actual words. Quotations should also not be too long. Most should range from a few words to a couple sentences. None should be longer than a paragraph.

There are three correct ways to cite quotations (which, for books, require the author's last name, publication date, and page numbers). It is always important to lead into quotations with a few words of your own:

Although not the most noble or impressive speech, "[T]he words 'Mary had a little lamb,' spoken by Thomas Edison on November 20, 1877, into his latest invention, the phonograph, were the first words of recorded human speech" (Panati, 1987, p.193).

According to Charles Panati, "the words 'Mary had a little lamb,' spoken by Thomas Edison on November 20, 1877, into his latest invention, the phonograph, were the first words of recorded human speech" (1987, p.193).

According to Charles Panati (1987), "the words 'Mary had a little lamb,' spoken by Thomas Edison on November 20, 1877, into his latest invention, the phonograph, were the first words of recorded human speech" (p.193).

Paraphrasing is the preferable way to incorporate outside research into your paper, and in fact, the example above would work best paraphrased since it's not actual dialogue (Panati wrote it), it's not incredibly exceptional wording, and what he wrote is not being critiqued. Here are two correct ways to cite paraphrases (which, for books, require only the author's last name and the publication date):

Thomas Edison, testing his new invention, recorded the words "Mary had a little lamb," making this poem the first recording of the human voice (Panati, 1987).

According to Charles Panati (1987), Thomas Edison, testing his new invention, recorded the words "Mary had a little lamb," making this poem the first recording of the human voice.

Notice how paraphrases do not need a page number in the parenthetical citation.

Plagiarism carries serious penalties, but it's also important to remain level-headed about this. One misplaced period in a citation does not constitute plagiarism. Copying and pasting material from Web pages or other sources without giving credit (or not including quotation marks if the wording is the same) does. Having a friend write your paper or purchasing a paper from the Internet qualifies as plagiarism as well. How can you avoid plagiarism? Simply—just make sure you give credit to the original source of the information you are including.