



FUNDAMENTALS III



THE BASICS OF BORROWING

1. Plagiarism (etymology and three keys)
2. Citation
3. Quotes, Paraphrases and Summaries
4. The Signal Phrase
5. Incorporation (Synthesis)

All academic writers need to know how to **effectively** and **correctly** borrow material from other writers and sources. Not only are writers expected to have sources, but borrowing and building upon the work and ideas of others is the very fuel of academic progress. So, it is **not only** important to correctly show your sources **but also** to do it well.

This guide covers the **BASIC ISSUES** involving the borrowing of ideas that all proficient writers must understand. The details of citation can be complicated and cannot be covered in any simple or short guide. While students should never hesitate to ask their teachers and classmates questions, **but remember** that you will always encounter more questions and that, ultimately, it is **your responsibility** to know where and how to find the answers to those questions.

PLAGIARISM (WRONGFUL INTENT)

The Latin word *plagiaries* originally referred to those who kidnapped children and slaves. A serious offense. It was used by the Roman poet, Martial, to convey his feelings when another poet had stolen his verse. While today what, specifically, can be defined as plagiarism proves troublesome for many students, it is the underlying meaning of theft that is what determines plagiarism from inappropriate borrowing.

Different cultures and different societies throughout the world and throughout history have had varying views on what is acceptable borrowing. But it is noteworthy that the word Plagiarism was introduced into English around the time of the Printing Press. When the technology to make lots of copies combined with the concepts of capital and property, not only did paper begin to make money, but also the words and ideas printed on them. While it has never been a criminal offense, it carries serious consequences. In academia, journalism, government and business it can lead to termination, expulsion, suspension and shame.

The first thing to remember is that Plagiarism is an action of Wrongful Intent. Incorrect Citation is not plagiarism, and borrowing too much is simply weak writing. So students who show their sources are safe. However, a teacher or reader can never really know if your intent is theft or simply laziness and will usually not give you the benefit of the doubt.

The second thing to remember is that Close Imitation is considered plagiarism. This includes two or three words together and sentences with only minor changes. This is and will always be a grey area. Replication of common and minor wording has degrees and different perceptions of appropriateness. The answer always falls on intent.

The third thing to remember is that borrowing does not simply involve WORDS, but also the ideas and thoughts they express and even the way that they express them.

So what should we do? When in doubt, CITE! It is far worse to not cite than to cite incorrectly. Now that it is easier to access information, it is also easier for the student to keep records. Keep a log of what you read, print copies, save files and keep bookmarks.

Remember that **you are expected** to have sources. And that gathered information cannot speak itself. An academic reader expects you to comment on your sources and add to them.

CITATION (SHOWING YOUR SOURCES)

There are many styles of citation, but MLA and APA are the most common. It is the teacher and the editor who will decide what style or styles should be used for any writing. But all styles involve two basic methods.

1. **IN-TEXT CITATION:** This refers to signal phrases and parenthetical elements within your paper.
2. **BIBLIOGRAPHY:** This refers to the sources, or bibliographic entries, that are listed at the end of your paper. This is also known as a Works Cited Page.

People who know exactly how to cite every type of source are far from common. Most people refer to a printed guide or a particular website and follow it, and some use software to format citations for them. But errors in formatting citation are an error in correctness or style, and not plagiarism.

Citation CAN be overdone. Common knowledge (where NO disagreement can be easily found) or facts that are easily verifiable (via an encyclopedia or dictionary) do not need to be cited. These include dates and measurements, but what can be “easily” found changes from audience to audience. The population of Arizona is easily verifiable, but that 67% dislike snow is not. Even if it is commonly known.

QUOTES, PARAPHRASES, AND SUMMARIES

There are Three Ways to borrow information. **All three require citation.** In choosing which one to use, remember that the most significant difference is that quotes focus on the words or how an idea is worded. When speaking of quotation, people are almost always referring to Direct Quotation, which is always marked by “quotation marks” and one or more commas. When they are longer than three lines they may be set off in an indented passage following a colon.

Indirect Quotation, or Paraphrasing, is phrasing a specific passage in your own words. Paraphrases focus more on the idea than the word. Small ideas can be paraphrased well, but big and complex ideas require summarization. Summaries focus on the main ideas and can contain both quotations and paraphrases within them that refer to specifics.

REASONS TO QUOTE: While it is tempting to sprinkle quotations throughout your paper, try to use each quote for one of the following reasons.

Words import authority because of who said them.

“I hate quotations. Tell me what you know.” ~Ralph Waldo Emerson

“I quote others only in order the better to express myself.” ~Michel De Montaigne

Words are vivid, precise, powerful or well chosen.

“The ability to quote is a serviceable substitute for wit.” ~Somerset Maugham

“Proverbs were bright shafts in the Greek and Latin quivers.” ~Benjamin Disraeli

Words analyze meaning and intent.

The president said that “it would probably be next month.”

Wording is under discussion (technical accuracy) or called into question or interpretation.

What Shakespeare meant by “to be or not to be,” is not commonly understood.

REASONS TO PARAPHRASE: There is no set number for how many quotations you can use in your paper, but depending on the subject and teacher, 10-20% is the maximum, so the most common reason for paraphrasing is to include more ideas into your writing. Paraphrasing also allows you to provide more analysis and commentary on the idea as you are choosing not only the ideas but the words to describe them. Lastly, and of great importance to the objectivity of science, paraphrasing suppresses the significance of the author and raises the importance of the idea. Remember, however, that readers are sensitive to your reasons and choices.

PARAPHRASING STRATEGIES: While paraphrasing is an essential skill of academic writing, it can also be the most difficult. Especially since a primary goal of paraphrasing is to express an idea in a shorter and clearer manner. However, the better a student is at a language, the better they are at paraphrasing since it is basically translating an idea within a language. A good understanding of sentence structure and a good vocabulary are key, but it also requires a good understanding of the idea

If you find the passage difficult, then you are probably not alone, and your job as a writer is to make the passage more comprehensible to your readers. If you are having trouble, a good strategy is to walk away from what you are reading, wait awhile and then try to explain the idea to a roommate, friend or family member.

PARTS OF SPEECH: Changing adverbs to adjectives and nouns to verbs is great way to start, but this method is usually insufficient. Changing **only a few words** is considered Close Imitation and is inappropriate.

SYNONYMS: Make a habit of using both a thesaurus and a dictionary, and make sure the substitution does not change the meaning of the main idea.

SENTENCE ORDER: There is much more to a sentence than just the subject, object and verb. And sentences contain clauses and phrases that can be moved around in numerous ways. Take small ideas and imbed them in relative clauses. Change verbs from active to passive and vice versa to move subjects and objects

REWORDING THE IDEAS: Look at the transition words of a passage to help rearrange the way they are presented. Combine smaller ideas into lists.

Identify the various strategies used in the following paraphrases, and discuss their appropriateness

Scientists have researched this issue extensively
Scientist have extensively researched this issue
Scientists have extensively studied this issue.
Scientists have extensively studied this topic.
Extensive Scientific research has been undertaken.
100% of teachers feel that citation is important.

THE SIGNAL PHRASE

The teacher said, "You may begin with a signal phrase."

"Or you may end with a signal phrase," added a student.

"But when you want to create a pause," mentioned one reader, "you may place it in the middle."

The Signal Phrase is simply the part of the sentence that introduces the Quotation or Paraphrase. All Direct Quotations **must** have a Signal Phrase. Without a signal phrase, the borrowed words create a **Floating or Dropped Quotation**. This looks sloppy or presumptuous even if the source is clear. Your relationship to the ideas and to your thesis is important. The verb you choose helps contextualize the information **to** your opinions **about** the information or its source.

Indirect Quotations **may** have a signal phrase but **must** have a citation. For scientific papers and technical points, a writer can rely on citations only, but in most papers the ideas discussed can't stand on their own. Also, remember that variety, when accurate, enhance style.

acknowledges	asserts	confirms	emphasizes	insists	refutes
adds	believes	contends	endorses	notes	rejects
admits	claims	declares	grants	observes	reports
agrees	comments	denies	illustrates	points out	responds
argues	compares	disputes	implies	reasons	suggests

The verb in the signal phrase should be precise and non-monotonous. Hacker advises that you ask yourself what your purpose is, “are you providing background, explaining a concept, supporting a claim, lending authority, or refuting a belief?” (421). Also, be aware that **MLA prefers present tense** as the texts are considered eternal **while APA prefers past tense**.

INCORPORATION (SYNTHESIS)

Once writers have a good understanding of the three types of borrowing, they can begin to practice Incorporation. Much as shareholders become an abstract corporation, and neighborhoods grow to have the authority of a government, incorporation blends the ideas and words of other authors more tightly into the body of your paper.

Just as Massey felt “objectified” as a women when seeing the nude paintings “of women seen through the eyes of men” at the art gallery, Stuart physically objectifies his wife, and the young girl found in the river. He is always looking for a way to exercise his power against females.

“Three of every four of these victims,” those living in shelters, “will return- the men will go back to prison, and the women will return to the battering relationships. The battered child will grow into the child batterer.”

Congress may regulate speech if that speech would “create a clear and present danger” of a specific harm against which Congress may legislate.

To help the writer weave ideas and words into their own, the following punctuation marks are often employed.

THE ELLIPSIS ... allows you to delete words and sentences within a single quote to remove unnecessary wording or do connect ideas more closely.

... Three periods show that you are cutting out WORDS ...
 Four periods show that you are cutting SENTENCES

A common mistake is to place ellipses at the beginnings and ends of quotations. Remember that the quotation mark serves the purpose of marking where a quotation begins and ends. An ellipsis at the end of quotation to mark an unfinished sentence is acceptable, but not necessary. Also, in academic writing ellipsis outside of quotation marks are informal.

THE BRACKET [] is the only acceptable way to Change words **within** a direct quotation. They are used to change the tense of verbs so that the borrowed words fit your sentence.

She said, “the industry [was] on the verge of collapse.”

They also identify pronouns with their antecedents.

The president announced that “the law would not eliminate [spending cuts] until next year.”

A bracketed [sic] is inserted after an error in the quotation.

The president stated “our children isn’t [sic] learning.”

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1. Hacker, Diane. *Writing as Revision*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2006. Print.