

Refero – an Anti-plagiarism tutorial

Introduction

During your time at university you will write texts where you should demonstrate your knowledge within your field of study and where you should show that you have mastered academic writing. This method of writing is adapted to building an argument which supports your own research results. In the argumentation it is important to integrate other people's research in your own line of argument. Scientific work always builds on work done by earlier researchers.

If you do not refer to other research properly you risk plagiarizing. Because of this it is important that you learn how you can use other people's texts and how you should refer to those by adding references.

Refero is a web based tutorial which shows you how to implement other people's texts in your writing and how to avoid plagiarism. The tutorial contains 24 pages and takes about 30 minutes to go through.

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What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is passing off the content of someone else's work as your own. This applies to formulations as well as facts and ideas, regardless of whether the source you use is published or unpublished.

- You plagiarize if you submit someone else's work as your own.
- You plagiarize if you, *without* referring to the source:
 - copy phrases, sentences or passages from somebody else's work, regardless whether you use citation marks or not
 - rewrite a passage from somebody else's work in your own words
 - use somebody else's idea, theory, method or data
 - copy images¹, diagrams or tables
 - copy from computer programs, musical compositions, multimedia (sounds, films)
- You plagiarize if you only replace a few words with synonyms.
- You plagiarize if you keep characteristic words or phrases from the original work without marking it as a quote.
- You plagiarize if you make a direct translation from another language without adding a 'my translation'-comment.
- Even if you have added a reference and rewritten the text in your own words, alternatively marked it as a quote, you must not base your text completely on other sources. You must also contribute with your own comments and reflections.

¹In addition, there are special regulations for images. Copying and using images without permission from the copyright holder, may be a crime against copyright law, even if you have cited the source (See SFS 1960:729, 22-23 §).

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Why should you cite your sources?

When you as a student write a paper it is part of scientific communication and should therefore follow the same rules as other scientific work. The academic method involves not taking credit for other people's work. Instead it is important to show that you are familiar with the research that has been done within the subject field and which relates to the question you are trying to answer. Below you will find more reasons for citing your sources.

- By citing your sources, you document the work you have put into getting background information, and it also shows that you are familiar with current research in your field. This increases your own credibility.
- By citing your sources you can show that you have collected facts for your work from relevant and credible sources. Furthermore you will not be questioned in case the sources you have used turn out to contain incorrect information.
- When you copy someone else's words and use them as your own, you miss the chance to comment on and discuss them.
- By writing correct references you make it easier for the reader to retrieve the sources you used for further reading or for checking information.
- By adding correct references you avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism can lead to disciplinary consequences, e.g. suspension from studies for some time.
- Plagiarism creates unfair conditions between students and can undermine people's trust in university education.

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When do you not need to add references?

You can use common knowledge without referring to a source. This concerns knowledge that many people are familiar with, or which can easily be found in a general encyclopedia.

For example, you don't need to cite the following:

- Generally accepted dates for military, political, literary and other historic events:
 - In 1865, following the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Johnson was elected as the 17th President of the United States.
- Date of birth and death for well-known people:
 - William Shakespeare was born in 1564 and died in 1616.
- Facts you can find in many different standard works:
 - DNA and proteins are the main constituents of chromosomes.
- General observations that anyone can make:
 - Little babies may cry for many different reasons.
- Common traditions and folklore:
 - Little Red Riding Hood and her grandmother were eaten by the wolf and saved by a hunter.

In each subject field there is also a mass of knowledge which is seen as common knowledge among those people who work in this field. It may include facts, methods and theories. What is seen as common knowledge differs between courses depending both on which subject you are studying and what level you are at.

For example you probably need to cite the source for information about the different signal substances of the brain if you are taking a course in pedagogy, while this might be considered common knowledge in an advanced course in neurobiology. However, you must be certain that the knowledge is well-known in the subject field that your readers or your audience are familiar with it.

Even if you are using common knowledge you still need to use your own words and not copy the wording of other sources.

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How can you avoid plagiarism?

There are many different contexts where you might need to refer to other sources. For example to provide background for and motivate a problem, summarize and critically examine research, compare different researchers' results with each other or with your own results.

When you want to use other people's research results you can quote or paraphrase to avoid plagiarizing. A quote is identical to the original text while a paraphrase accounts for or summarizes the original text. In both cases you must name the source of the information by adding a reference. Further on in the guide on the page *Citations and citation styles* you can read about how to cite sources.

You use quotes or paraphrases to support your own thoughts and arguments not to replace them. It is important to *not* make a patchwork of borrowed texts but to contribute with your own text. When you weave quotes or paraphrases into your own text it is important that it is clear what are your own comments and what you have got from others.

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Quoting

Quoting means rendering word for word what somebody has written or said. Quotes are mainly used when you want to refer to a wording which is striking or ground-breaking, or if you risk altering the meaning by rephrasing it. You can also use quotes when you present a statement which you question and want to discuss. In most other cases it is better to paraphrase the content.

To separate quotes from the rest of the text they are either marked as run-in quotations or block quotations. If the quote only consists of a few words or a single sentence it is suitable to make a *run-in quotation* which is marked with quotation marks. Run-in quotations are therefore embedded in the text. If the text you are quoting consists of several sentences you make a *block quotation* instead. This is placed as a separate block without quotation marks. It is marked with an indent in the left and possibly also the right margin and can have a smaller font size and line spacing.

With both run-in quotations and block quotations you should state the source with a text reference in direct connection to the quote and with a full reference in the list of references. In addition, text references with quotes should always contain a page reference.

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How to quote

Below you will find examples of how to make run-in quotations and block quotations. In the box there is an excerpt from page 9 from the book:

Wells, P. (2000). *The horror genre: From Beelzebub to Blair Witch*. London: Wallflower.

Excerpt

The horror genre has become increasingly concerned with the relative and fragile nature of existence.

Text with run-in quotation

Horror films often examine the “relative and fragile nature” of humanity and what it means to exist (Wells, 2000, p. 9).

Text with block quotation

The horror genre is constantly changing to reflect the fears of contemporary society. In modern horror films a commonly occurring theme is how fragile human life is and the question if humanity is going to survive. As Paul Wells puts it:

The horror genre has become increasingly concerned with the relative and fragile nature of existence. (Wells; 2000, p. 9)

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Paraphrasing

When you refer to someone else's text or part of a text, it is often better to summarize or rewrite in your own words instead of making a word for word quotation. This is called paraphrasing.

To be able to paraphrase you need to read the original text, understand what the author says, summarize the information, and then express in your own words how you understand the content. Even if you use your own words, you must name the source by adding a text reference in direct connection with the paraphrase, and also a complete reference in the list of references.

As in the case with quotes, it must be clear which thoughts are your own and which you have got from somebody else. By using reporting words you show the reader that you are referring to someone else's text:

According to Johansson (2003)...

Johansson (2003) argues that...

Thereby you facilitate for the reader to distinguish your own ideas from others.

When you paraphrase correctly you do not only avoid plagiarism, but it also helps you to really understand the original source. You will also practice your ability to express yourself when you write in your own words, which is necessary for becoming a good writer.

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How to paraphrase?

Here is an example of a paraphrase.

In the box there is an excerpt from page 10 from the book:

Wells, P. (2000). *The horror genre: From Beelzebub to Blair Witch*. London: Wallflower.

After that you can see how a student has made a paraphrase which is based on the original text in the excerpt. The marking [...] indicates that part of the text has been excluded.

Excerpt

[...] if established social and historical frameworks preserve purpose and order in human endeavour, they also come to define the terms and conditions of life itself, and the implied promise of the finite and eternal. The collapse of these frameworks is thus at the heart of the horror text.

Text with paraphrase

According to the British Professor of Cultural Studies, Paul Wells (2000, p. 10), a key theme in the horror genre is the breakdown of the socio-historical structures of society.

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Citations and citation styles

Each time you use information from another source you should write an in-text reference. The in-text reference can consist of a parenthesis which contains the author's last name and publication year, and possibly also page number, but it can also consist of only a number (notes). In both cases it should refer to the complete reference in the reference list. For word-for-word quotes you should always give a page reference. When you paraphrase, you should give a page reference if you refer to a certain page or certain pages in a work, but not however if the paraphrase concerns the whole work.

All sources that you quote or paraphrase must be included in a reference list, also called bibliography. This list should contain all the information about the different sources which is needed for them to be distinguished from other sources, and for them to be retrieved easily.

To find out how you should write your references depends on the citation style. There are a number of different citation styles, but they have one thing in common, namely that they describe exactly which information about the original source you need to give, and what the text reference and the complete reference should look like. Because different disciplines use different citation styles, it is important to use one which is generally accepted in your subject and use it consistently throughout the whole text. Check with your lecturer which style is recommended for your subject.

Here are some commonly used styles:

- APA – mostly used in behavioral and social science
- Harvard – used in several disciplines
- IEEE – used in the field of technology
- MLA – used in literature studies
- Oxford – used in history, law, theology and other fields where many unpublished sources are used
- Vancouver – used mainly in medicine and biomedicine

Guides to these styles and others can be found on the Internet and as books. Ask at your university library.

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Examples

On the following pages there are excerpts from original texts with examples of plagiarism and correct paraphrases. The excerpts we have chosen are relatively short for the purpose of making the guide easier to read. Usually longer pieces of text are summarized in a shorter paraphrase. In the examples of student's texts we have not included comments to the quotes and paraphrases, despite the fact that such comments are needed in academic texts.

You can choose between examples which focus on humanities and social sciences, on science and medicine or on engineering.

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Humanities & Social Sciences

Example 1a for Humanities & Social Sciences

In the box there is an excerpt from page 5 from the book:

Lebo, H. (1997). *The Godfather Legacy*. New York: Fireside.

After that you can see how a student has integrated information from the excerpt into his own text. Please notice that the reference list is not included in the example. It should contain the complete reference for the source, in this example according to the Harvard-style.

Excerpt

Superficially, *The Godfather* was a pulp novel about sex, violence, and crime in America's gangland underworld. But at its core were solid storytelling and vivid characters.

Student text

The Godfather seemed to be a pulp novel about sex, violence, and crime in the American mafia. On a deeper level, the novel is a tightly woven epic story of life with dynamic characters.

Is this a correct paraphrase?

No, this paraphrase is plagiarism. The writer of this paraphrase only changed a few words and phrases, but did not synthesize the original paragraph or change it into his own words. Furthermore, a portion of the paraphrase is a direct quote and should be within quotation marks. The writer also failed to cite the original source.

Example 1b for Humanities & Social Sciences

In the box there is an excerpt from page 1 from the book:

Wiegand, W. A. (1998). Introduction: theoretical foundations for analyzing print culture as agency and practice in diverse modern America. In Danky, J. & Wiegand, W. (Eds.), *Print Culture in a Diverse America*. Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, pp. 1-16.

After that you can see how a student has integrated information from the excerpt into his own text. Please notice that the reference list is not included in the example. It should contain the complete reference for the source, in this example according to the IEEE-style.

Excerpt

For the past five hundred years, most of humankind has been informed by print. In the United States, for example, all people in the America's multicultural and multiclass society have for two centuries used or been influenced by print.

Student text

People worldwide have been influenced by print for more than five hundred years. For more than two hundred years in the United States, "America's multicultural and multiclass society" has been informed by print (Wiegand, 1998, p. 1).

Is this a correct paraphrase?

Yes, this time, the writer used his own words. The ideas presented in the original passage remain, but the words are now his own. The part that is taken verbatim from the source is marked with quotation marks. The original author is given credit with a text reference.

Example 2 for Humanities & Social Sciences

In the box there is an excerpt from page 1 from the book:

Abrams, M.H., (ed.) (1962) *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. Vol. 1. New York : W.W. Norton & Co.

After that you can see how two students have integrated information from the excerpt into their own text. Please notice that the reference list is not included in the example. It should contain the complete reference for the source, in this example according to the IEEE-style

Excerpt

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-on-Avon in April (probably April 23), 1564. His father was a citizen of some prominence who became an alderman and bailiff, but who later suffered financial reverses. Shakespeare presumably attended the Stratford grammar school, where he could have acquired a respectable knowledge of Latin, but he did not proceed to Oxford or Cambridge. There are legends about Shakespeare's youth but no documented facts.

Student text 1

William Shakespeare was born in 1564 in Stratford-on-Avon. His father was a prominent citizen who suffered financial losses after becoming an alderman and bailiff. Shakespeare may have attended the Stratford grammar school and learned Latin, but he did not go on to Oxford or Cambridge. There are no documented facts about Shakespeare's youth so scholars have to rely on legend.

Is this a correct paraphrase?

No, this paraphrase is plagiarism. The writer of this paraphrase changed a few words and phrases, but did not synthesize the original paragraph or change it into her own words. The writer used the structure of the original paragraph with minor changes, and failed to cite the original source.

Student text 2

William Shakespeare was born in 1564 in Stratford-on-Avon. His father was an affluent member of the community. At one time a well-known and respected alderman and bailiff, he later lost his financial security. Experts suspect that Shakespeare went to the Stratford grammar school where he probably obtained a command of the Latin language; however, since there are no documented facts about his childhood, scholars rely on rumors and stories believed to be historically accurate. They do know that he did not continue his education at Oxford or Cambridge (Abrams, 1962, p. 629).

Is this a correct paraphrase?

Yes, this time, the author has written the paraphrase in her own words, changing it significantly from the original passage. The ideas presented in the original passage remain, but the words are now her own. She has also given the original author credit.

Science & Medicine

Example 1 for Science & Medicine

In the box there is an excerpt from page 207 from the article:

Rovio, S., Kåreholt, I., Helkala, E.-L., Viitanen, M., Winblad, B., Tuomilehto, J., Soininen, H., Nissinen, A. & Kivipelto, M. (2005) Leisure-time physical activity at midlife and the risk of dementia and Alzheimer's disease. *Lancet Neurology* vol. 4:11, pp.705-711.

After that you can see how two students have integrated information from the excerpt into their own texts. In the text the abbreviation AD is used for Alzheimer's disease. The marking [...] indicates that part of the text has been excluded. Please notice that the reference list is not included in the example. It should contain the complete reference for the source, in this example according to the Harvard-style.

Excerpt

Individuals participating at least twice a week in a leisure-time physical activity had 50% lower odds of dementia compared with sedentary persons. The association was somewhat stronger for AD than for overall dementia; those in the active group had 60% lower odds of AD compared to those in sedentary group, even after adjusting for a wide array of potential confounding factors. [...] Our results indicate that regular leisure-time physical activity at midlife may be protective against dementia and AD later in life. These findings may have wide implications for preventive health care; if an individual adopts an active lifestyle in youth and at midlife, this may increase their probability of enjoying both physically and cognitively vital years later in life.

Student text 1

A Swedish-Finnish research-group has shown that regular physical activity in the middle-age can lower the risk of getting dementia and Alzheimer's disease by 50% and 60%, respectively. Their results may have wide implications for preventive health care. If a person adopts an active lifestyle in youth and in the middle age, this may increase his probability of getting physically and cognitively vital years when he gets old.

Is this a correct paraphrase?

No, the student has not given the original authors credit with a text reference. Even if the reporting words *A Swedish-Finnish research-group has shown...* shows that the information comes from an external source, a text reference is also needed to indicate the source referred to. You can either use a note or an author-date reference, depending on which citation style you are using. Furthermore, the second and third sentences are almost identical to the last sentence in the original text, only a few words have been changed. It is better to try to summarize also this part in one's own words. If you would like to keep an original sentence like this, you must show that it is a quote by using quotation marks.

Student text 2

A Swedish-Finnish research-group (Rovio et al. 2005) has shown that regular physical activity in the middle-age can lower the risk of getting dementia and Alzheimer's disease by 50% and 60%, respectively. They suggest that the results may be important for preventive health care: "These findings may have wide implications for preventive health care; if an individual adopts an active lifestyle in youth and at midlife, this may increase their probability of enjoying both physically and cognitively vital years later in life" (Rovio et al. 2005, p. 710).

Is this a correct paraphrase?

Yes, the student has summarized most of the text in the first sentence. In the second sentence, the part that is taken verbatim from the source is marked with quotation marks. The original authors are given credit with text references in the Harvard-system. Since the student has used a verbatim quotation the text reference must include a page number, in addition to author and publication year. Note that in most citation styles using the author name in the text reference, you do not have to write all the authors in the text reference if they are more than three. Instead you write the name of the first author, followed by et al. (= and others).

Example 2 for Science & Medicine

The following text comes from an article discussing the risks with xenotransplantations, i.e. when organs or tissues from a donor of one species are transplanted to a recipient of another species (e.g. from pig to human).

In the box there is an excerpt from page 207 from the article:

Günzburg WH, Salmons B. Xenotransplantation: Is the risk of viral infection as great as we thought? *Mol Med Today*. 2000;6:199-208.

After that you can see how two students have integrated information from the excerpt into their own texts. The marking [...] indicates that part of the text has been excluded. Please notice that the reference list is not included in the example. It should contain the complete reference for the source, in this example according to the Vancouver-style.

Excerpt

[...] there is a certain level of risk of viral infection associated with xenotransplantation, and caution is warranted to prevent the emergence of new diseases, but it is difficult to quantitate these risks. In view of the enormous potential benefits associated with xenotransplantation, and the fact that no further progress can be made in the absence of further experimentation, it would be unwise to discontinue work in this area. The most probable candidates for viruses that could be a danger to society are those that show good infectivity and are difficult to contain, namely the persistent viruses with a long latency period. Thus, it is imperative that xenotransplanted patients are centrally registered and closely followed for health- and virus-status to detect emerging viruses over extended periods. A battery of screening tests, based on our considerable knowledge of potentially zoonotic agents, as well as of physiological changes associated with viral infections in general, are essential to minimize potential risks to society, at least at present.

Student text 1

Xenotransplantations can bring about the emergence of new viral diseases. Care must be taken to avoid the spread of new diseases, but the actual risks are hard to estimate. However, the immense range of possible benefits associated with xenotransplantations, makes it wise to continue research in this area. Furthermore, without research there will be no more progress. Viruses that show good infectivity and are difficult to contain, i.e. persistent viruses with a long latency period, are the most likely candidates to become a threat to society. It is therefore essential that information on xenotransplanted patients is kept in a central register, and that their health- and viral-status is closely followed over extended periods of time, in order to detect emerging viruses⁽¹⁾.

Is this a correct paraphrase?

No, the student rearranged some of the sentences and changed a few words, but most of the original wording was kept and the structure of the original text was closely followed. Even though there is a text reference in the Vancouver-style at the end of the paragraph, the text is quite long, and the reader cannot be certain that everything comes from the source or if part of the text is the writer's own thinking. If you do not want to cut down on the text, and if you feel that you need to stay close to the original text, it is better to make a block quote of the whole passage. If you decide to do that, do not forget to comment on it, to show the reader your own opinion and the reason why you included the quote. Usually, however, it is better to try to summarize the original text and change it into your own words. In doing so, using reporting words is a way of making it clear to the reader which parts come from another source. Some examples of reporting words: *according to/as reported by/as argued by/they conclude/they suggest*.

Student text 2

Günzburg and Salmons⁽¹⁾ argue that the benefits of xenotransplantations are big enough to justify further research, in spite of the potential risks. To avoid the spread of new viral diseases, they suggest a comprehensive, long-term screening program for treated patients.

Is this a correct paraphrase?

Yes, the student has summarized the information with his own words. The source is properly credited, and the reporting words (...*argue*.../*they suggest*...) clearly show which parts he got from the source. The content of a summary naturally depends on how you are going to use it. You should focus on the information that is vital to your own argumentation, without omitting anything that would change the interpretation.

Engineering

Example 1 for Engineering

In the box there is an excerpt from page 314 from the book:

T. Gorschek, "Requirements engineering supporting technical product management." Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. Syst. Software Eng., Blekinge Inst. Technology, Ronneby, Sweden, 2006.

After that you can see how a student has integrated information from the excerpt into his own text. The marking [...] indicates that part of the text has been excluded. Please notice that the reference list is not included in the example. It should contain the complete reference for the source, in this example according to the IEEE-style.

Excerpt

The successful transfer of knowledge and technology from research to practice implies symbiosis. Close cooperation and collaboration between researchers and practitioners benefit both parties. Researchers get the opportunity to observe first-hand the challenges facing industry, making it possible for research not only to be based on interesting issues, but industry relevant ones. This entails on-site observations and process assessments, as well as collaboration with industry champions when designing and validating new methods, tools and techniques. Industry practitioners benefit as new technology (e.g. methods, tools and techniques) are developed based on tangible and real issues identified on-site, [...]

Student text 1

When knowledge and technology is transferred successfully from research to practice it involves symbiosis. Cooperation and collaboration between researchers and practitioners will benefit both sides. Researchers can observe first-hand the challenges facing the industry, and thus base their research on relevant issues, not only interesting ones. The benefit for the industry is that new technology based on the issues identified on-site is developed.

Is this a correct paraphrase?

No, the student has rephrased a few words and phrases but not summarized the text in his own words. The student has also used ideas from the original text without citing the original source.

Student text 2

According to Gorschek [1], close cooperation will aid the transfer of knowledge and technology between researchers and the industry. This relationship enables researchers to find research topics that are useful for the industry, while the industry will get access to new technology which is suited to their needs.

Is this a correct paraphrase?

Yes, this time the paraphrase was written in the student's own words. The ideas from the original text are included but they have been rephrased. The reference to the source is given with a text reference in the IEEE style. The reporting words *According to...* make it clear to the reader that the ideas stated are taken from another text.

Example 2 for Engineering

In the box there is an excerpt from page 24 from the book:

T. Gorschek, "Requirements engineering supporting technical product management." Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. Syst. Software Eng., Blekinge Inst. Technology, Ronneby, Sweden, 2006.

After that you can see how two students have integrated information from the excerpt into their own texts. Please notice that the reference list is not included in the example. It should contain the complete reference for the source.

Excerpt

Requirements *prioritization* has to be conducted taking several aspects into account. The central notion is that all requirements should be compared and prioritized independent of source. The *objective* of the prioritization is to get input for requirements selection for subsequent release planning. The overall goal is to deliver the right product to the market at the right time and thus selling and generating revenues. Success is defined by outperforming competitors in the market and delivering a high perceived benefit to customers. From this perspective customer satisfaction is central and optimally customers (and potential customers) should perform prioritizations.

Student text 1

As shown by Gorschek [1], requirements prioritization is a multi-layered process which aims to gain knowledge about the market's needs in order to make more informed decisions about what kind of products should be developed, and at which time. Success is defined by outperforming competitors in the market and delivering a high perceived benefit to customers.

Is this a correct paraphrase?

No, a reference to the source is given, but the last sentence in the paraphrase is identical to the original text and it was not marked with quotation marks. The reader cannot decide which parts of the paraphrase come from the original text and which are exact quotations.

Student text 2

In his dissertation, Gorschek discusses the concept of requirements prioritization. The main objective of this process is to prioritize customers' requirements in order to be able to "deliver the right product to the market at the right time and thus selling and generating revenues" [1, p.24].

Is this a correct paraphrase?

Yes, the student begins with a paraphrase and then makes a run-in quotation, marked with quotation marks, of a phrase which was collected from the original text. A reference to the source is given in the IEEE style.

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What is a plagiarism detection service?

Swedish universities use different plagiarism detection services, e.g. Turnitin, Urkund and GenuineText, to see if the whole paper, or part of it, has been plagiarized. These systems compare the student's text with texts from the Internet as well as papers and theses.

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What happens if you plagiarize?

Plagiarism often occurs unintentionally due to unfamiliarity and lack of knowledge about the academic way of writing. Only when plagiarism is done deliberately and with the intent to mislead about your knowledge is it considered as cheating.

When a student is suspected of having plagiarized the case may be handed over to the disciplinary board. If it turns out that the student has plagiarized deliberately with the intent to mislead about his knowledge the board can decide on warning or suspension from studies for up to 6 months (Higher Education Act SFS 1993:100, 10 chapt. 1 and 2 §§).

A student who reuses his own work or group work from an earlier course without mentioning this can be reported for misleading. Students also risk disciplinary measures if they participate in group work and somebody in the group has plagiarized with the intent to mislead about his knowledge. In that case everyone in the group will become the object of investigation regarding their responsibility.

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Summary and tips

- When you cite – remember to write in your own words and use reporting words to clearly distinguish the author's ideas from your own.
- Mark quotations with quotation marks or make block quotations when you use exact phrases, sentences or passages from the original source.
- Cite the source, both in your text and in the list of references.
- Learn to use a citation style which is generally accepted within your subject field.

Tips!

Always carefully and directly note from where you got material for your work. It is often difficult to reconstruct afterwards where the information was found.

If you want to read more about academic writing there are many different books, both subject specific and general. Ask at the library and check with your teacher if your institution has a writer's guide where you can get more tips. It can also be useful for you to read scientific texts within the subject field, e.g. scientific articles and dissertations. Through them you will get an insight into what the convention is like for your subject.

If you are a student at Linnaeus University you can get individual guidance from the [Academic Support Centre](#).

In the book *Hållbara texter* there is a useful checklist which can be a support for your writing (Ask 2006, s. 46).

Ask, S. (2006). *Hållbara texter: Att skriva för studier och arbetsliv*. Stockholm: Liber.

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Conclusion

Congratulations! You have gone through the anti-plagiarism tutorial and now you know how to handle references using other people's texts.

Good luck with your academic writing!

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Frequently Asked Questions – FAQ

Isn't it always best to let the source speak for itself by making an exact quote?

Answer: It is mainly in literary history you need to make long quotes of texts, which you then analyze. In other subjects you should only make exact quotes of very special wordings (which are ground-breaking or striking), and also statements which you question and want to discuss, or if you risk altering the meaning by rephrasing it. When you rephrase a text in your own words you are forced to understand the original text. Your own text will also become more fluent, and it becomes more natural for you to include your own reflections. In addition, exact quotes often require more space than a summary.

How can I avoid plagiarizing a source by mistake? It is impossible to remember where you got all ideas from?

Answer: The only way is to make careful notes while you read. As soon as you make a note about something you want to include in your work, make sure to also note the source. Also see: *When do you not need to add references?* about common knowledge.

Everything comes from a source – parents, teachers, books, TV, the Internet. You can't write a single word without adding a reference!

Answer: Start by considering if the information you want to use can be seen as 'Common knowledge', see page: *When do you not need to add references?* If this is the case you do not need to include a reference. Also check with your teacher/instructor what is considered common knowledge in your course. If the information is specific for a certain source, e.g. research results, new ideas, personal opinions, you must always include a reference. The same rule applies if you have used specific wordings/exact quotes, when, apart from stating the source, you must also mark the quote (quotation marks or block quotation).

If I thought of an idea myself and then read about it in a book or an article, must I cite the source then – the idea was my own?

Answer: By citing the source you show that you are familiar with what has been done within your subject field. To show that you did not get the idea from someone else, but thought of it yourself, you can shortly describe what led you to the idea and then add something like:

..., the same thought has been presented by XX (2006).

You can also include a section where you describe how you differ from XX in the treatment of the subject.

Is it not enough to just include all the sources in the reference list?

Answer: You must also refer to the source in the text in direct connection to the place in the text where you used it. This is needed for it to be possible to distinguish what is your own text and what you have got from others, and also in which way the different sources have influenced you. In addition, it should be easy for your readers to know which of your sources they should go to if they want to read more about a certain part of the text.

If I don't cite correctly, will I be suspended from my studies?

Answer: You are in a learning process where you should acquire an academic way of writing. If you are at the beginning of your studies, the demand that you should master this completely is not as high, but the higher level you are at, the more the demands increase.

If you are not certain what you need to refer to, ask your teacher or instructor. It is always wise to refer to the source once too often, rather than too seldom, by way of precaution. If you think that your text becomes unreadable with too many references, you can ask your instructor what you should do. At a lower educational level, instead of making text references in each sentence, it may sometimes be OK to write something like:

The information in the following paragraph was collected from XX (2008).

You may not cut and paste though, you must still write the text in your own words.

How much must I change a sentence so that it won't be considered as plagiarism?

Answer: There is no percentage you can use to know how much you need to rephrase a sentence, but if you feel that you need to ask, you are probably close to plagiarizing. Avoiding plagiarism is not about learning to rephrase sentences in a new way. It is simply about understanding the original source, and then using the information in a way that fits with your own work.

Sometimes you can't rephrase the text. There is only one way to write it, and everyone writes it the same way. Should you really fill the text with quotation marks in such cases?

Answer: Within several sciences, e.g. science and medicine, the scientific language is highly standardized and compressed and does not leave much room for varying ways to express yourself. Similar to the way each subject field has common knowledge, there are also common phrases which do not require quotation marks, as they are so frequently used and nobody can claim being the first to have used the phrase. This is especially common in the parts of the text that concern method and results. Once you have read a few scientific works you will get a sense of what can be considered as common phrases and what are specific wordings that require quotation marks. Always remember to refer to the original source!

Refero – an Anti-plagiarism tutorial

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Refero is a web based tutorial developed to help students in higher education understand what plagiarism is and give advice on how to avoid it. The name *Refero* is Latin and means 'I refer'. *Refero* is based on a tutorial which was originally developed at [San José State University Library](#).

The texts were translated and adapted to suit the requirements of our universities.

You are welcome to contact us and tell us what you think of the guide:

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