

Anti-plagiarism policy and guidelines on integrating sources in academic writing

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ANITPLAGIARISM POLICY

Academic writing depends on borrowed material. In order to contribute to a field of knowledge (by answering a research question, solving a problem, or making a critical intervention), we first research the available sources and then refer to them as we present our own views or solutions. Every borrowed idea or fragment of text must be documented so that the reader knows exactly where our own ideas end and someone else's begin.

When preparing **high-school reports** (*referaty*) you mostly borrowed from sources classified as “**common knowledge**,” such as encyclopedias and basic textbooks. Documentation was not required because your teachers assumed these reports to be a compilation of borrowed material and did not expect you to advance knowledge in any significant way.

On entering the **academic community** you need to learn the rules according to which we borrow from—and build on—the work of others. Since generating new knowledge requires an investment of time, money, and hard work, by meticulously **documenting every borrowed idea** we acknowledge our debt to others who have made the investment. This code of conduct does not merely protect **intellectual property**; it also keeps us pushing academic knowledge forward in small increments. Compiling existing knowledge is the work of encyclopedia and textbook writers. By contrast, you are now expected to go beyond recycling and to contribute something new. This need not be a groundbreaking theory or discovery. You may simply test a hypothesis, propose a new way of classifying a text, or explore an old idea/text from a new angle.

Documenting all borrowings is mandatory even if in your written work you are not adding anything essentially new to the existing body of knowledge but are merely rearranging, juxtaposing, contrasting, or briefly commenting on other people's ideas, concepts, and insights. **This applies to every form of writing you do at the Institute of English Studies**, be it a response paper, a text of any length or complexity presented for a writing class, a proseminar research paper, any part of an MA thesis, etc.

Why is it smart to cite and document sources?

- When you use and document borrowed material professionally, you present yourself as a serious member of the academic community.
- A well-chosen list of sources at the end of a paper demonstrates your erudition and competence. You prove that you have mastered such skills as conducting research, selecting appropriate sources, “processing” (analyzing, interpreting, and critically assessing) materials, and integrating them with your own argument. All these skills are factors contributing to a better grade.
- You can use the authority of other scholars to back your own case.
- Detailed documentation allows your readers to quickly locate a cited source if they want to learn more about the sources you referred to.
- Knowing the field better than you do, your instructors can usually detect borrowed ideas and track them down on the web or in the library.

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism occurs when a writer **intentionally or unintentionally** passes off another writer's **words or ideas** as his or her own. Remember that you commit plagiarism even if you do not quote directly, but paraphrase or summarize (parts or all) another person's text, statements, or remarks without clearly indicating where the borrowing starts and ends. You also commit plagiarism if you provide a list of references (bibliography, works cited, etc.) at the end of your work, but fail to include parenthetical citations or footnotes/endnotes showing where in

the body of your text you refer (in any way) to the sources listed as references. **The same rule applies to anonymous texts** published on the Internet.

Remember, too, that it is not only a particular expression, idea, interpretation, etc. that can be plagiarized: if you are inspired by a particular structure of reasoning (e.g. dividing an analysis of a given issue into three consecutive stages), you must acknowledge such inspiration even if you fill this “mould” with your own content (in this case you demonstrate a valuable skill of using the secondary sources creatively).

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense equivalent to theft. Like theft, plagiarism is penalized by Polish law. Whether the stolen object is a candy bar or a car, a single paragraph or a whole essay, we are dealing with theft. **At the Institute of English Studies, any instance of plagiarism results in a failing grade—either for the assignment or for the whole course.**

Similarly, you fail if you present a work (a text, a paper, an essay, etc.) written by somebody else (e.g. produced by a fellow-student, bought on the Internet, or commissioned from “a professional essay-writer”) but signed with your own name. Though not classified as “theft,” these are cases of fraud that are also penalized by Polish law.

GUIDELINES ON DOCUMENTING SOURCES

Having done your background reading, you need to develop your own perspective on the material. Once you have formulated an argument, use relevant sources to support it by:

1. **Summarizing**, i.e. restating in shortened form the main ideas of a passage or a whole book in your own words. When summarizing, you must be sure not to distort the meaning of the original and:
 - a. use a lead-in phrase to mark the beginning of the summary (see the chart below),
 - b. significantly alter the syntax and the wording of the original,
 - c. use either a footnote or a parenthetical reference at the end of the summary (see examples 1 and 2 below).
2. **Paraphrasing**, i.e. restating a short passage in your own words. When paraphrasing you must be sure not to distort the meaning of the original and:
 - a. use a lead-in phrase to mark the beginning of the summary (see the chart below),
 - b. significantly alter the syntax and the wording of the original,
 - c. use either a footnote or a parenthetical reference at the end of the paraphrase (see examples 1 and 2 below).
3. **Direct quotation**, i.e. borrowing a passage verbatim when the wording is particularly effective, or when you want to lend weight to your argumentation by invoking a major authority on the subject. Direct quotations should be used sparingly as they tend to disrupt the syntax of your own writing. Do not expect your reader to guess why a quote is important; always discuss the quoted material, pointing out the key words and ideas. When quoting directly you must
 - a. put the quoted passage in inverted commas,
 - b. introduce or follow the quotation with a phrase in which you signal the source (the writer and, optionally, the title) of it,
 - c. use either a footnote or a parenthetical reference at the end of the quotation citing the page of the original source (see examples 1 and 2 below).

Standard ways of introducing and documenting borrowed material

Referring to another author's text, you should use a **lead-in phrase**, like: "X argues that..."; "In the words of X..."; or "..., as X suggests,..." The following verbs are commonly used:

accepts	declares	negates
affirms	denies	notes
agrees	discusses	observes
argues	disputes	points out
asserts	emphasizes	questions
believes	endorses	refutes
claims	examines	rejects
comments	grants	reports
confirms	implies	states
contends	insists	suggests
contradicts	interrogates	writes

Example 1

Here is the opening paragraph of an exemplary (though fictional) piece of academic writing that introduces three sources. Note how the passage opens with a brief but dynamic overview of an academic debate and ends with the author's original thesis formulated in opposition to the other voices in the debate.

Plagiarism in the 21st Century: "A Marginal Phenomenon" or the Catalyst of Crisis in Academia?

Since the 2540s, scholars have been exploring the 21st-century phenomenon of plagiarism. Aviv Levine's and Connie Pulaski's contributions to *Historical Quarterly* critically examine various aspects of Mei Yun's recent book-length study on the decline of western academia in the 21st century. Disputing Yun's proposition that lack of research funding and the resultant low motivation of researchers—not plagiarism—were responsible for the century of stagnation in academia, Levine argues that Yun has neglected to use cutting-edge antiplagiarism scans that enable us to determine the percentage of original and plagiarized work in publications. Based on the results of such scans, Levine explains that with the advent of the internet scholars began to appropriate each others' work on a mass scale (23-24). He also points out that Yun's claim about the "economic factor behind the collapse of research" needs to be qualified by studying a range of cases across the disciplines, since not all research is costly (37). Pulaski's essay, in turn, interrogates Yun's theory about the correlation between the general moral decline in western societies 500 years ago and what she perceives as the marginal phenomenon of plagiarism. Pulaski notes that Yun fails to adequately document the supposed moral decline (49). The present essay contends that even if plagiarism alone was not responsible for the advent of the Dark Ages in western research it was certainly a key factor. . . .

Works Cited

- Levine, Aviv. "Plagiarism and *The Dark Ages*." *Historical Quarterly* 629.4 (Winter 2552): 20-39. Print.
- Pulaski, Connie. "Reflections on Mei Yun's *The Dark Ages*." *Historical Quarterly* 629.4 (Winter 2552): 40-57. Print
- Yun, Mei. *The Dark Ages: Exploring the Century of Stagnation in Western Academia*. New York: New Scholar Press, 2551. *Questia - The Online Library*. 2551. Questia Media America, Inc. Web.13 May 2552.

Example 2

And here comes the opening paragraph from a real student essay (reproduced with the student's permission).

Metatheatres in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*

In the Renaissance two views on theatre were predominant: theatre as a vehicle of knowledge and theatre as a space of dream. William N. West claims that theatre aspired to encapsulate the one and only truth about the world. He shows that, as in the case of encyclopaedias, the effort proved futile, but for quite a long time people were tempted by the comfort of universality. However, as Sidney Homan contends, the opponents of theatre pointed out that the plays were "mere dreams ... deceptive, seeming realities," which could only deform one's perception of the status quo (39). Trying to establish the ontological status of theatre, Shakespeare plays on both approaches. He uses meta- techniques not only for the purpose of *captatio benevolentiae*, catching the audience's attention or providing comic relief, but also to voice his criticism of the social attitudes and customs, as well as to remind the spectators of the illusion in which they are participating (Pavis). This essay aims at presenting the meta-theatrical techniques used in *The Taming of the Shrew* and the perception of the world they imply.

Works Cited

- Homan, Sidney. *When the Theatre Turns to Itself: The Aesthetic Metaphor in Shakespeare*. London and Toronto: Associated U P, 1981. *Questia - The Online Library*. 2002. Questia Media America, Inc. 13 Jan. 2012. Web.
- Pavis, Patrice. *Słownik terminów teatralnych*. Wrocław: Ossolineum, 2002. Print.
- West, William N. *Theatres and Encyclopedias in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002. Print.

The above paragraph, though not perfect as an academic text, demonstrates **aptness in using secondary sources**. The first reference (to West's book) is a concise summary of the general thesis and overall argument presented by West; that is why no exact page or parenthetical citation is provided, and the student was careful to mention the scholar in both sentences which refer to his insights. The second reference (to Homan's book) is a mixture of direct quotation and paraphrase. Note that a lead-in phrase marks the beginning of the borrowing and a parenthetical citation (including the page from which the quoted/paraphrased passage comes)—the end of it. The student did not try to create the impression (e.g. by placing the parenthetical citation directly after the quotation) that only the quoted words were borrowed whereas the rest of the sentence was her own idea. The third reference (to Pavis's dictionary) introduces one of the essay's key terms—showing that it was not coined or theorized by the student, but has a critical history behind it—linking it to the essay's general (concepts of theatre in Renaissance) and particular (meta-theatricality) interest.

Usually the sources are listed alphabetically in a bibliography (though some instructors and publishers prefer bibliographic information to be given in footnotes or endnotes instead). The parenthetical references within the text are linked to the bibliographic entries. The MLA style sheet was used in the above examples.

Recognizing types of plagiarism

Adapted from: Clines, Raymond H., and Elizabeth B. Cobb. *Research Writing Simplified: A Documentation Guide*. New York: HarperCollins, 1993 (20-23).

Original: World problems such as poverty, pollution, war, and hunger are inherent in the current system of world order based on nation-states and economic competition. They can be solved if people know and understand one another on a global, grass-roots basis. By developing people-to-people linkages irrespective of national borders, we can start to ameliorate global tensions and inequalities.

(from page 23 of an article by William Ellis titled “Culture in Transition”)

Plagiarized: William Ellis asserts that world problems such as poverty, pollution, war, and hunger are inherent in the current system of world order based on nation-states and economic competition (23). **Why?** *This is an example of the most blatant form of plagiarism. The first sentence of the original has been copied verbatim. Even though the source has been acknowledged, the writer must also include quotation marks around passages copied word for word. The writer gives the impression that the passage is a paraphrase when in fact it is a direct quotation.*

Plagiarized: William Ellis asserts that world problems such as poverty, pollution, war, and hunger are inherent in the “current system of world order based on nation-states and economic competition” (23). **Why?** *The writer has partially corrected the problem of the first plagiarized example by placing quotation marks around some of the borrowed passage. The first part of the sentence is still copied word for word from the original. All material copied verbatim must be put in quotation marks and documented.*

Plagiarized: Global tensions and inequities can be solved if people begin to help one another on a grass-roots basis, moving beyond the current world order of economic competition (Ellis 23). **Why?** *The author has completely reordered the information but continues to use much of the exact wording. “Global tensions and inequities,” “grass-roots basis,” “current world order,” and economic competition” are all taken verbatim from the original. Even when reordering the source citation, this writer is committing plagiarism by giving the impression that the passage is paraphrased when it is a form of direct quotation. Words taken verbatim must be in quotation marks.*

Plagiarized: Economic competition is at the basis of many of the world’s problems. Only by seeing ourselves as a single human family without the separation of national boundaries can we begin to erase the world’s tensions. **Why?** *Here the writer has reworded the ideas of the original into an acceptable paraphrase, but because there is no documentation (either in the text or in parentheses), the reader is led to believe that these ideas are original.*

Plagiarized: Economic competition is at the basis of many of the world’s problems (Ellis 23). Only by seeing ourselves as a single family without the separation of national boundaries can we begin to erase the world’s tensions. **Why?** *This paraphrase is identical to the previous one except for the addition of parenthetical documentation after the first sentence. The passage would still be considered plagiarized because the second sentence, too, is paraphrased from the original. Paraphrases of more than one sentence need to be framed with documentation information that clearly marks the beginning and end of borrowed material.*

Acceptable: William Ellis argues that global problems are often the result of exploitation inherent in economic competition. He contends that ‘grass-roots. . . people-to people linkages irrespective of national borders’ can do much to ease global tensions (23). **Why?** *This version represents one acceptable way of using the sources material. The original author of the ideas is clearly identified, and words that are used verbatim are placed in quotation marks. An ellipsis is used to indicate that some of the original wording has been omitted. The lead-in at the beginning and the parenthetical citation at the end clearly frame the borrowed material.*

Sample bibliographic entries

The MLA style sheet is most commonly used in literary studies, while the APA style sheet is favored by linguists, but there are many others. Having picked a style sheet, follow its conventions down to the last comma and colon. Just like following spelling conventions, using a style sheet correctly enhances your credibility as an author.

MLA (Modern Language Association)

Basic format for a book

Heinemann, Margot. *Puritanism and Theatre: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama under the Early Stuarts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980. Print.

Reprint or subsequent edition of a book

Anderson, Sherwood. *Winesburg, Ohio*. 1919. New York: Viking, 1960. Print.

Book by two or more authors

Jewkes, Wilfred T. and Jerome B. Landfield. *Joan of Arc: Fact, Legend, and Literature*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1974. Print.

Edited book: collection/anthology

Dowling, Maria, and Peter Lake, eds. *Protestantism and the National Church in Sixteenth-Century England*. London: Croom Helm, 1987. Print.

Article/story/poem in a collection/anthology

Grant, Patrick. “Imagination in the Renaissance.” *Religious Imagination*. Ed. James Mackey. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1986. 86-101. Print.

Article in a journal

Clark, Charlene Kerne. “Pathos With a Chuckle: The Tragicomic Vision in the Novels of Carson McCullers.” *Studies in American Humor* 1.3 (1975): 160-65. Print

On-line book

Bok, Sissela. *Mayhem: Violence as Public Entertainment*. Reading, MA,1999. *Questia – The Online Library*. 2002. Questia Media America, Inc. Web. 13 Jan. 2012.

Article in an on-line journal

Rapping, Elayne. “The Politics of Representation: Genre, Gender Violence and Justice.” *Genders* 32 (2000): 50-63. Web. 20 May 2012.

Film

Fight Club. Dir. David Fincher. Perf. Brad Pitt, Edward Norton, and Helen Bonham Carter. Fox, 1999. Film.

APA (American Psychological Association)

Basic format for a book

Chomsky, N. 1957. *Syntactic structures*. The Hague: Mouton.

Book by two or more authors

Katz, J.J. and Postal, P. 1964. *An integrated theory of linguistic description*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Edited book

Hale, K. and Keyser, S.J. (eds.). 1993. *The view from Building 20: Essays in linguistics in honour of Sylvian Bromberg*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Edited volume and article in an edited volume

Abraham, W., Epstein, S.D., Thrainsson, H. and Zwart, C.J.-W. (eds.). 1996. *Minimal ideas: Syntactic studies in the minimalist framework*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Haegeman, L. 1996. "The typology of syntactic positions: L-relatedness and A/A'-distinction". In Abraham, W., et al. (eds.). 141-165.

Article in a journal

Eide, K. and Afarli, T. 1997. "A predication operator: Evidence and effects". *Working Papers in Scandinavian Syntax* 59. 33-63.

On-line book

Steed, R. P., Moreland, L. W., & Baker, T. A. (eds.). (1997). *Southern parties and elections: Studies in regional political change*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press. Retrieved June 10, 2004, from NetLibrary database.

Article from an On-line periodical

Abram, S., & Jones, R. (2001). Intelligent conferences: Reality or oxymoron? *Searcher*, 9 (1), 111-121, Retrieved June 10, 2004, from <http://www.infoday.com/searcher/jan01/abram&jones.htm>.

(Examples of documenting the electronic sources taken from <http://library.stmarytx.edu/acadlib/subject/misc/apastyle.pdf>)

For more examples of bibliographic entries consult academic writing handbooks available in the library or google the Online Writing Lab OWL at Purdue University.