



## Strategies for Avoiding Plagiarism: Paraphrasing and Summarizing

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### Definitions of Plagiarism

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#### **University of Saskatchewan's Definition of Plagiarism**

"The presentation of the work or idea of another in such a way as to give others the impression that it is the work or idea of the presenter. Adequate attribution is required. What is essential is that another person have no doubt which words or research results are the student's and which are drawn from other sources."

<http://libguides.usask.ca/content.php?pid=387330&sid=4114890>

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## Definitions of Plagiarism

### University of Regina's Definition of Plagiarism

"Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty in which one person submits or presents the work of another person as his or her own, whether from intent to deceive, lack of understanding, or carelessness."

<http://www.uregina.ca/gradstudies/grad-calendar/policy-univ.html>

## What Exactly is Plagiarism?

- You must cite the source if you refer to another person's ideas, theories or procedures or if you use the person's specific words.
- Specific words should be placed inside quotation marks or in a block quotation.
- Quotations should be accompanied by a page number as well as a specific citation to the source. This could be in parentheses or in numerical form, depending on the citation style you are using.
- Remember that it is better to over cite than it is to under cite.
- Use judgment and discretion.

## Plagiarism Specifics

**You don't need an in-text citation or a page number from the source:**

- If you use a piece of information that is considered to be common knowledge.
- If you use a specialized word or phrase that is standard in your field, even if the source uses it.

## Plagiarism Specifics (*continued*)

**How many words can you use in a row from a source without putting them in quotation marks?**

- The number of words differs from professor to professor.
- Most would say you can use up to three consecutive words without using quotation marks, but check with your professor.

## Paraphrasing

- Paraphrasing is the expression in your own words of the meaning of another person's written or spoken words.
- The source must be acknowledged in an in-text citation. Some professors require you to include the page number from the original source.
- Some paraphrases contain three or more consecutive words from the original source.
- These words should be enclosed in quotation marks and accompanied by an in-text citation that includes a page number.

## Problems with Paraphrases

- **Problem 1:** The paraphrase uses the same order and sentence structure of the original piece, simply replacing the author's words with synonyms. This is known as **patchwork plagiarism**.
- **Problem 2:** The paraphrase uses the same order and sentence structure but inserts extra words. It is thus longer than the original.
- **Problem 3:** The paraphrase includes ideas not expressed by the original author.

## Patchwork Plagiarism

The next slide contains an example of patchwork plagiarism.

- The words that are the same as in the original are in blue.
- The words that have been simply replaced with synonyms are in dark red.
- The words that are technical terms that can't be changed are in black.

## Patchwork Plagiarism

**Original:** “The widespread deterioration and some recent collapses of highway bridges (Inaudi et al., 2009) have highlighted the importance of developing effective bridge inspection and maintenance strategies, including structural health monitoring and durability monitoring, which can help identify structural and durability problems before they become critical” (Cusson, Lounis, & Daigle, 2011, p. 524).<sup>3</sup>

**Paraphrase:** The extensive weakening and several collapses of highway bridges have illustrated the necessity of effective inspection and maintenance practices such as structural health monitoring and durability monitoring, both of which can help find problems before they become serious (Cusson, Lounis, & Daigle, 2011).

## An Acceptable Paraphrase

**Original:** “The widespread deterioration and some recent collapses of highway bridges (Inaudi et al., 2009) have highlighted the importance of developing effective bridge inspection and maintenance strategies, including structural health monitoring and durability monitoring, which can help identify structural and durability problems before they become critical.” (Cusson, Lounis, & Daigle, 2011, p. 524).<sup>1</sup>

**Paraphrase:** Because highway bridges are subject to weakening and sometimes to collapse, it is critical to identify methods for inspection and maintenance (Cusson, Lounis, & Daigle, 2011; Inaudi et al., 2009). Two such methods are structural health monitoring and durability maintenance, both of which can detect problems in the early stages (Cusson, Lounis, & Daigle, 2011).

## Tips for Paraphrasing

1. Use a note-taking method to distinguish paraphrases you have written from original quotations.
2. Always record the page number.
3. Study the original carefully.
4. Write a draft of the paraphrase **without looking at the original**.
5. Now look at the original. Is it sufficiently different?

## ■ Tips for Paraphrasing (*continued*)

6. If not, figure out how to change the order of ideas, structure and parts of speech.
7. Decide if any specialized terms should be retained.
8. Think of synonyms for non-specialized terms that remain from the original.
9. Make adjustments to your paraphrase without looking at the original quotation.
10. Insert quotation marks around any remaining phrases of three or more words from the source.

## ■ Summarizing

A summary captures the **essentials** of an author's ideas or argument. A successful summary does the following:

- Captures the main point or points of the original briefly and concisely.
- Omits details.
- Faithfully represents the main ideas from the original.
- Uses a different order of ideas and sentence structure.
- Includes the source near the beginning of the summary.

## Example of a Summary

**Quotation:** “[A] large proportion of the Nepalese population is devoid of access to safe ... drinking water. ... One of the reasons for this is ... that the surface and ground water in the Kathmandu Valley is deteriorating. ... The surface water is polluted by industrial and domestic waste along with discharge of untreated sewage from tightly packed residential neighborhoods. ... [T]he domestic sewage system is ... one of the top sources of water pollution that seeps into rivers and lakes, which are the primary sources of drinking water. The capital city of Kathmandu is estimated to produce 150 tons of waste daily and almost half of this is dumped into the river...” (Sewal, 2016, para. 2).<sup>2</sup>

**Summary:**

Many of Nepal’s residents lack safe drinking water because it is contaminated with untreated sewage and industrial and household waste (Sewal, 2016).

## Problems with Summaries

- **Problem 1:** The summary fails to capture the main idea or argument.
- **Problem 2:** The summary includes too many details.
- **Problem 3:** The summary includes ideas not contained in the original.



## Reading to Summarize

- First, skim the document, jotting notes in your own words.
- If you make notes using the author's words, put quotation marks around them and record the page number.
- Focus on the parts of the document that are likely to reveal the author's position and main argument – the introduction, conclusion and topic sentences of paragraphs.
- Don't look at the original document when you write the summary.

## Asking Questions

Read with these questions in mind:

- What is the author's purpose, main idea and argument?
- What key question or problem is the author addressing?
- Why is this important?
- Is the author presenting a solution to this problem? If so, how does this solution work?

## Summary

- Plagiarism is the deliberate or careless misrepresentation of the words or ideas of others as one's own.
- To avoid plagiarizing, learn to paraphrase and summarize.
- Use a method to distinguish your notes, paraphrases, summaries and quotations; record the page number.
- Read carefully: consider relationships, ways to reorder the original, synonyms and specialized terms.
- Write your paraphrase or summary without looking at the original.

## References

- <sup>1</sup> Cusson, D., Lounis, Z., & Daigle, L. (2011). Durability monitoring for improved service life predictions of concrete bridge decks in corrosive environments. *Computer-aided Civil and Infrastructure Engineering*, 26, 524-541.
- <sup>2</sup> Sewal, S. (2016). Water in crisis: Nepal. Retrieved from <https://thewaterproject.Org/water-in-crisis-nepal>.