

ON PLAGIARISM, CITING SOURCES & USING QUOTATIONS IN STUDENT RESEARCH PAPERS: Selected Advice from the American Psychological Association (APA) and the Modern Languages Association (MLA)



APA

MLA

ON PLAGIARISM:

APA "Researchers do not claim the words and ideas of another as their own; they give credit where credit is due (APA Ethics Code Standard 8.11, Plagiarism)". (Publication Manual of the APA, Sec 1.10, p. 15).

MLA "The purpose of a research paper is to synthesize previous research and scholarship with your ideas on the subject. Therefore, you should feel free to use other persons' words, facts, and thoughts in your research paper, but the material you borrow must not be presented as if it were your own creation. When you write your research paper, remember that you must document everything that you borrow – not only direct quotations and paraphrases but also information and ideas.

Often plagiarism in student writing is unintentional, as when an elementary school pupil, assigned to do a report on a certain topic, copies down, word for word, everything on the subject in an encyclopedia. Unfortunately, some students continue to take this approach in high school and even in college, not realizing that it constitutes plagiarism. To guard against the possibility of unintentional plagiarism. . . keep careful notes and always distinguish among three types of material: your ideas, your summaries and paraphrases of others' ideas and facts, and the exact wording you copy from sources" (MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 7th Ed., p.55).

ON CITING SOURCES:

APA "A critical part of the writing process is helping readers place your contribution in context by citing the researchers who influenced you. . . [Work of others] may provide key background information, support or dispute your thesis, or offer critical definitions and data. Citation of an article implies that you have personally read the cited work. . . The number of sources you cite in your work will vary by the intent of the article. For most articles, aim to cite one or two of the most representative sources for each key point " (Publication Manual of the APA, Sec 6, p. 169).

MLA "Combining research and original ideas. . . Always remember that the main purpose of doing research is not to summarize the work of others but to assimilate and to build on it and to arrive at your own understanding of the subject (MLA handbook for writers of research papers, 7th Ed., Sec 1.1, p. 3-4).

ON USING QUOTATIONS:

APA "If a quotation comprises fewer than 40 words, incorporate it into the text and enclose the quotation with double quotation marks. . . If the quotation comprises 40 or more words, display it in a freestanding block of text and omit the quotation marks. Start such a block quotation on a new line and indent about half inch from the left margin. Double-space" (Publication Manual of the APA, Sec 6.0.3, and pp.170-171).

MLA "Quotations are effective in research papers when used selectively. Quote only words, phrases, lines, and passages that are particularly interesting, vivid, unusual, or apt, and keep all quotations as brief as possible. Over quotation can bore your readers and might lead them to conclude that you are neither an original thinker nor a skillful writer" (MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 7th Ed., Sec 3.7.1, p. 92).

"If a prose quotation runs no more than four lines and requires no special emphasis, put it in quotation marks and incorporate it into the text...If a quotation extends to more than four lines when run into the text, set it off from your text by beginning a new line, indenting one inch from the margin, and typing it double-spaced, without adding quotation marks" (MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 7th Ed., Sec 3.7.2, pp. 93-94).