

RESOURCES • REFERENCES • PLAGIARISM

Q: My reader raised questions about my use of sources. How do I give credit to other people when I quote or use their work?

A: Scientific research always takes place in conversation with the work others have done and are doing. As a responsible researcher and writer, you need to demonstrate in your writing that you have adequately researched reliable sources in order to understand your topic. Then you need to document the ways in which you are indebted to the work of others. Provide citations for both quotations and paraphrases as well as for specific details that you learned from the sources you read.

If you are scrupulous about giving credit to those who informed your writing, you won't be accused of plagiarism.

The University of Wisconsin—La Crosse has put together a web page of excellent resources on avoiding plagiarism (including examples of acceptable and unacceptable borrowing from texts): <http://www.uwlax.edu/murphylibrary/plagiarism.html>

Q: What, exactly, is a “direct quotation?” What’s the difference between paraphrasing and quoting? What do I need to do with quotes and paraphrasing to avoid plagiarizing or any charges that I am plagiarizing?

A: Direct Quotations: A direct quotation is a **passage (of any length) from a source** that appears exactly or almost exactly as it does in the source. When directly quoting material, **you must put that material within quotation marks**. The **necessary** in-text reference should appear at the end of the quotation, not at the end of a section. Are you **paraphrasing or quoting** when you quote several sentences from a source, but change a few words around? You are, essentially, quoting! A passage in your paper that is **almost exactly like a passage from a source treated as a direct quotation**. It is best, if you are only changing a few words in a quoted passage to simply quote the passage as it appears in your source. If you need to add or drop a few words in order to make a quoted phrase fit grammatically into your own sentence or paragraph, the convention is to **place the quoted material in quotation marks**, with the added words in brackets or with ellipses (. . .). in the place of the dropped words.

Paraphrasing: If you have read, for example, several paragraphs from a source and are condensing that information into one paragraph; or if you're condensing a paragraph into two sentences that introduce a section of your paper, then you are **paraphrasing**. The material does not need to appear in quotation marks, but **must be accompanied by an in-text reference** (and a full reference in your “References” section). That **in-text reference should appear at the end of the paraphrased material**, not at the end of a section, unless the entire section is a paraphrase of source material.

Complete, Correct References: The in-text reference number must match with the correct, numbered reference in your “References” section. References should be as complete as possible: show all information available, including dates, specific URLs,

titles of articles, etc. All information in your "References" section must be **correct** (especially tricky with lengthy web page URLs —be very careful!)

Q: I've read a book on my subject and studied several web sites and some of the ideas in my paper were inspired by my Engineering 0011 course, but no direct quotations or actual paraphrasing appears in my paper from these particular sources. Do I need to provide references for that material?

A: If (**and only if**) you are **not** using **any** of that material **directly**--if you **haven't quoted or paraphrased** material from the book, quoted or paraphrased from a handout from your course, or quoted, paraphrased or compiled passages taken from different pages of a web site, then in-text reference is not necessary, nor do you need to include these sources in your "References" section. You should, however, **"acknowledge" these sources** in an "Acknowledgment" section placed before your "References" section, as noted in your format guidelines. An "Acknowledgment" section might read something like this:

Acknowledgment

I appreciate the help with understanding the a Civil Engineer's career possibilities provided by Dr. Dan Budny lectures and handouts.

While I haven't used material directly from the EngineeringIsGreat.com website, the site was important in aiding my understanding of current private sector Engineering prospects.

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