

RESOURCES • REFERENCES • PLAGIARISM

Q: How do I give credit to other people (and avoid any charges of plagiarism) 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 must be treated as a direct quotation**. If you are only changing a few words in a quoted passage, it might be best 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 passage fit grammatically into your own sentence or paragraph, you should **place the quoted material in quotation marks**, with the added words in brackets, or use 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 paraphrased material does not need to appear in quotation marks, but **must be accompanied by an in-text reference**. 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. A full reference for the source used must appear in your “References” section.

Q: What do I need to do to have a complete, correct "References" section at the end of my paper?

A: Each bracketed, in-text reference number from your paper must match with a correctly corresponding, numbered reference in your "References" section. References should be as complete as possible: **show all information available, including dates, complete URLs, titles of articles, etc.** All information in your "References" section must be **correct** (especially tricky with lengthy 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 0012 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 "Acknowledgments" section placed before your "References" section, as noted in your format guidelines. An "Acknowledgments" section might read something like this:

Acknowledgments

Dr. Eileen Landis, President, Pittsburgh Environmental Research Associates, provided us with possible references and resources during our Conference Paper meetings. We appreciate her help with these references, and with our overall understanding of the issues.

While we haven't used material directly from the Enviro_Engineering Web Site (www.Enviro_Engineering.com), the site was important in aiding our understanding of how electrical engineers address environmental issues.

Throughout Engineering 0012, Dr. Dan Budny has provided handouts and given presentations that have contributed to our insights into the importance of sustainability in various fields of engineering. Our thanks to Dr. Budny.