

Plagiarism: What Is It and How to Avoid It

Plagiarism:

- Using text, illustrations, other work, or ideas, developed by someone else, and claiming the materials as your own, original work

Self-plagiarism:

- Using your own, mostly unchanged text or figures, without citation, in more than one publication
- “Salami slicing”

You plagiarize when you use someone else's ideas or language without acknowledging:

- That you did not create the ideas or language
- Who did create the ideas or language
- Where you found the ideas or language

Under copyright **law**, a writer legally **owns**:

- Ideas (unless they are general, common knowledge)
- Words used to express those ideas
- Syntax and style: sentence formation, word choice and order

International conventions of academic writing and citation are supported by LAWS that support the belief that:

- Ideas and written expressions of ideas can be owned
- Writing is a visible, concrete demonstration of a writer's knowledge, insight, and intellectual skill
- Authors own the particular set of words and phrases they created to express a specific novel idea

Cloned text: Submitting another's work, word-for-word, as one's own

Copy/paste text: Including significant portions (+/- five consecutive words) from a single source without changes or citation

Hybrid text: Combining properly cited sources with passages copied without citation

Mashed text: Mixing copied material from multiple sources with no or incomplete citation

Find/Replace: Changing key words and phrases but retaining the essential content of the original without citation

Re-mixing: Paraphrasing and combining from multiple sources without citation

Avoiding Plagiarism

- Acknowledge that you have borrowed material (words, ideas, language structure/syntax)
- Provide accurate information about the original source
- Use direct quotes: Long or short
- Paraphrase: Rephrase in your own words
- Summarize

Sample text:

Many plant species cannot produce seeds in the absence of pollinators. For these species, the foraging activities of pollinators are necessary for the transfer of compatible pollen to receptive stigmas. Some pollination biologists might assume that times of peak foraging activity by pollinators are the times when most ovules are being fertilized, and when most successful seeds are created.

—Jones et al. 1999

Sample text:

- *Many plant species cannot produce seeds in the absence of pollinators. For these species, the foraging activities of pollinators are necessary for the transfer of compatible pollen to receptive stigmas. As an extension of this observation, pollination biologists might assume that times of peak foraging activity by pollinators are the times when most ovules are being fertilized, and when most successful seeds are created.*

This can be considered common knowledge

—Jones et al. 1999

Avoiding Plagiarism

- You don't have to cite *common knowledge*, information that:
 - Can be easily found in numerous places and is ubiquitous
 - Is likely to be known by a lot of people

Example

- Many plant species cannot produce seeds in the absence of pollinators.
- *Without pollinators, many plant species cannot produce seeds.*
- *Many plants cannot create seeds without pollinators.*

BUT direct quote needs a citation

- *"Many plant species cannot produce seeds in the absence of pollinators" (Jones et al. 1999).*

Paraphrasing

Paraphrased material is a restatement of someone else's ideas in your own words.

Properly paraphrased material has changes in both *words* and the *sentence structure* of original, without change in content/meaning.

Changing a few words of the original sentences is NOT proper paraphrase.

Paraphrased passages still require citation!

Many plant species cannot produce seeds in the absence of pollinators. For these species, the foraging activities of pollinators are necessary for the transfer of compatible pollen to receptive stigmas. Some pollination biologists might assume that times of peak foraging activity by pollinators are the times when most ovules are being fertilized, and when most successful seeds are initiated.

—Jones et al. 1999

Jones et al. (1999) have claimed that some pollination biologists “assume that times of peak foraging activity by pollinators are the times when most ovules are being fertilized, and when most successful seeds are initiated.”

Researchers such as Jones and her colleagues (1999) have been exploring the idea peak foraging times are when most ovules are being fertilized and most successful seeds are created.

Citing Sources

- Allows your readers to locate the origins of your information.
- Shows your willingness to have your interpretations of the work of others to be verified.
- Shows you understand the intellectual context of the problems you are researching.
- Enhances your credibility by proving you are well informed about your topic and that your work can be trusted to be accurate.
- Attributes credit.

Guidelines

1. When you use the exact language of your source, put it in quotation marks, and cite the source.
2. When you use ideas or information that are not common knowledge, you must cite the source.
3. When you paraphrase, make sure that you thoroughly understand the information that you are rewording.
4. If you didn't invent it, cite the source.
5. When in doubt, cite the source.

Science Advances & Plagiarism

- CrossCheck/iThenticate
- Assume good faith
- Most often self-plagiarism
- Contact authors
- Chain of command

Tech and Plagiarism

- Detection software
 - Efficacy versus perceived efficacy

- Language services and software
 - Unintentional plagiarism

Adapted from

“Using Citations
Powerfully and Correctly
(or How to Avoid Plagiarism)”

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