

Plagiarism Handbook

– a guide for both teachers and students

urkund

Follow this guide for tips and tricks on how to avoid plagiarism. It will help you to understand the different styles, methods and ways to quote correctly.

Plus: Test your knowledge with our exercises to see if you mastered the craft.



What is Urkund?

Urkund is an automated text-matching software used to prevent and detect plagiarism. With customers ranging from PhD level graduates to elementary schools, from India to Sweden to Ecuador, we help thousands of institutions to learn about plagiarism and - more importantly - how to avoid it.



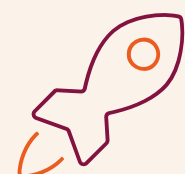
Urkund has a strong **preventative effect** when used at your institutions. Teachers become more aware of plagiarism and students know that shortcuts won't get them very far. It's a **win-win for everyone**.



Once uploaded, we check your document **against our sources** including previously submitted material and use **cutting edge algorithms** that get smarter and evolve with every upload.



You can upload your documents to Urkund via **email, web inbox or via your existing LMS** at your institution. We support **all standard file formats and even .zip files** when sent in via email. The analysis address will be provided to you by your teacher.



Our analysis will then be ready in no time and be sent to the teacher/educator in an **interactive report**. It is then up to the teacher to go through **the findings, evaluate** if plagiarism has occurred or not and share the results with the students if they wish.

To Keep in Mind

- We don't determine if plagiarism has occurred or not – we show text similarities
- This is a guide meant to help you to get more familiar with plagiarism. It is not intended as a replacement for your teacher, so make sure to follow your teacher's instructions.
- Getting inspired by previously done research in your field is often a requirement and a good practice to add credibility to your own research. Stealing ideas however, does not. So always give credit where credit is due.
- Plagiarism is a severe threat to original thinking and academic practice. It also can have serious consequences for you as a student such as being expelled from your programme.

What is Plagiarism?

To start this guide on the right foot directly, let's dig into the definition of what generally is considered plagiarism. Note that it goes further than just copy-pasting someone else's text and expands to copying someone's (published) idea as a whole. Even more broadly, plagiarism could also include copyright infringements.

According to Jude Carroll, Oxford Brookes University and Carl Mikael Zetterling, KTH Learning Lab, plagiarism occurs when someone describes another's thoughts or wording as though they were one's own. This means that plagiarism does not necessarily have to be about textual similarity. It could also be a question of structural or conceptual similarity. "In your own text, you are responsible for ensuring that both the thoughts and wording are your own. **If you describe someone** else's thoughts or wording as your own, you have plagiarised." (Carroll & Zetterling, year 2009)

What it means in effect is that if you have to read text A to be able to create text B, then text A must be cited as a source. Not mentioning the source constitutes plagiarising.

Rule of Thumb

“If you have to read text A to be able to create text B, then text A must be cited as a source”

Why Bother?

Apart from potentially getting expelled, which should be a concern, plagiarism is also a threat to original and freethinking.

Honouring academic standards and integrity is one of the critical pillars of what academia is all about. With that comes the ability to process what you've learned and draw your own conclusions and develop new theories. Plagiarising someone else's work doesn't show that capability and in the end, hurts your credibility and lowers your academic standard. Thanks to new technologies, plagiarism has become easier to detect - even if you've already completed your studies - and can have severe consequences on your career.

You Shall Pass!

- ☐ Always double check that you and your teacher are on the same page when it comes to referencing
- ☐ Inform yourself about the different referencing styles accepted at your university. Most universities have unique guides and help pages to assist you
- ☐ Ask yourself if your text can be considered general or specialist knowledge
- ☐ General knowledge consists of generally known facts such as that a day has 24 hours or that Brazil's official language is Portuguese
- ☐ The line between general knowledge and specialist knowledge can be slippery, so ask your teacher or an expert when in doubt
- ☐ General knowledge does not require a source
- ☐ Reworking the text and changing the words but keeping its original meaning usually requires a source!



**Make sure
to follow these
guidelines to avoid
any hick-ups in
your academic
career.**

Test Your Knowledge

Five of these examples are plagiarisms. Which ones?

- A.

Writing or copying a short piece from a source verbatim without stating who the original author is.

B.

In cooperation with your tutor/teacher, work further on a text that you have yourself written earlier.

C.

Translate another author’s text into a different language and use the result without citing the source.

D.

Make use of an existing text without stating who the original author is, but make small adjustments that alter the word sequence and sentence structure, replace words with synonyms, remove or add individual words, and so on.

E.

Reading several texts and reworking the contents of these into a new documents that isn’t like any of the original sources other than a few words or a sentence being the same, without citing any of the sources.

F.

Transcribe a maximum 3-4 sentence-long text verbatim and state who the original author is in relation to the text.

G.

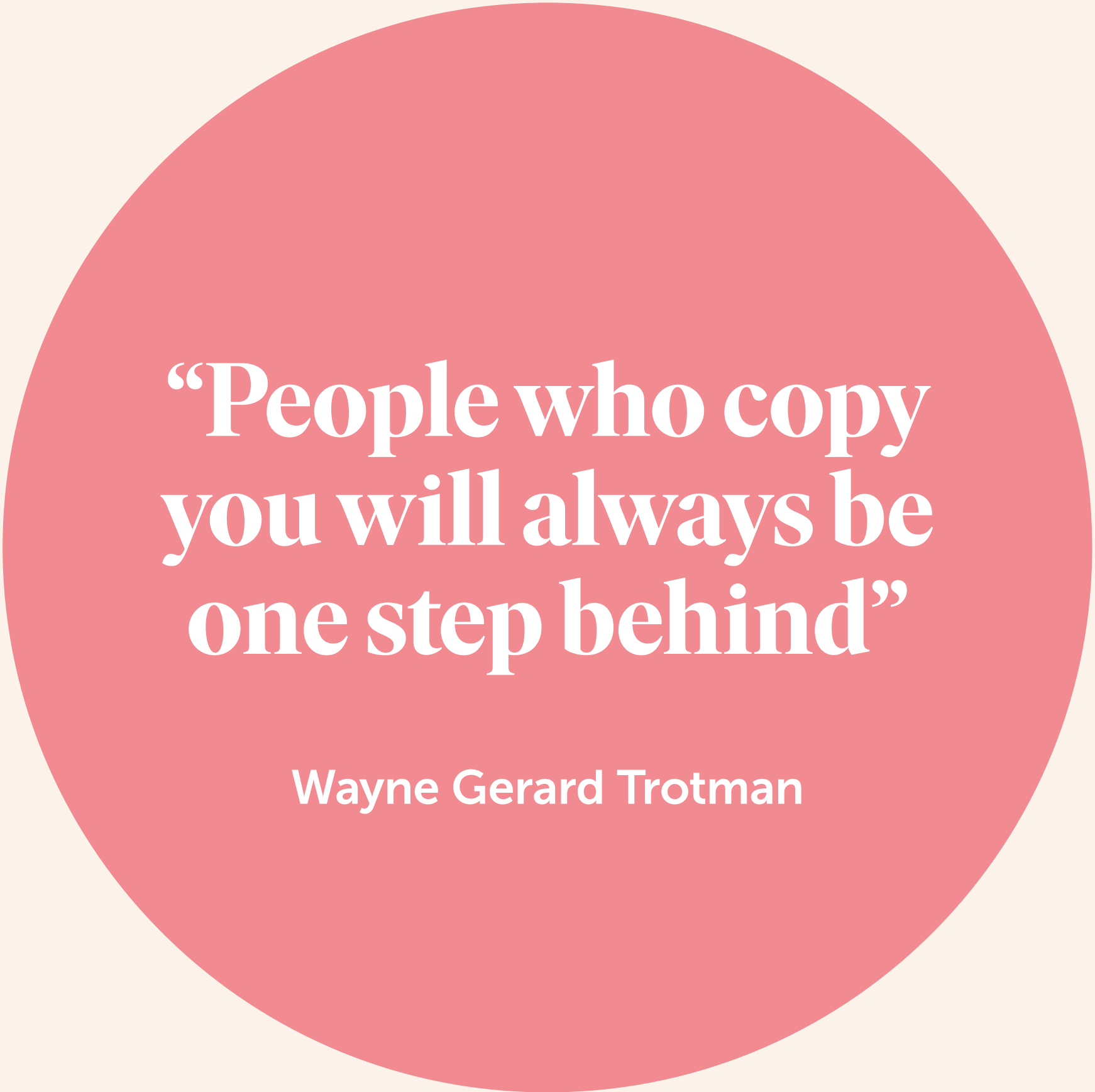
Translate a text you have originated yourself into another language and make use of the result.

H.

Build further on a text that has previously been graded without indicating which parts are old.

Five of these examples are plagiarisms. Which ones?

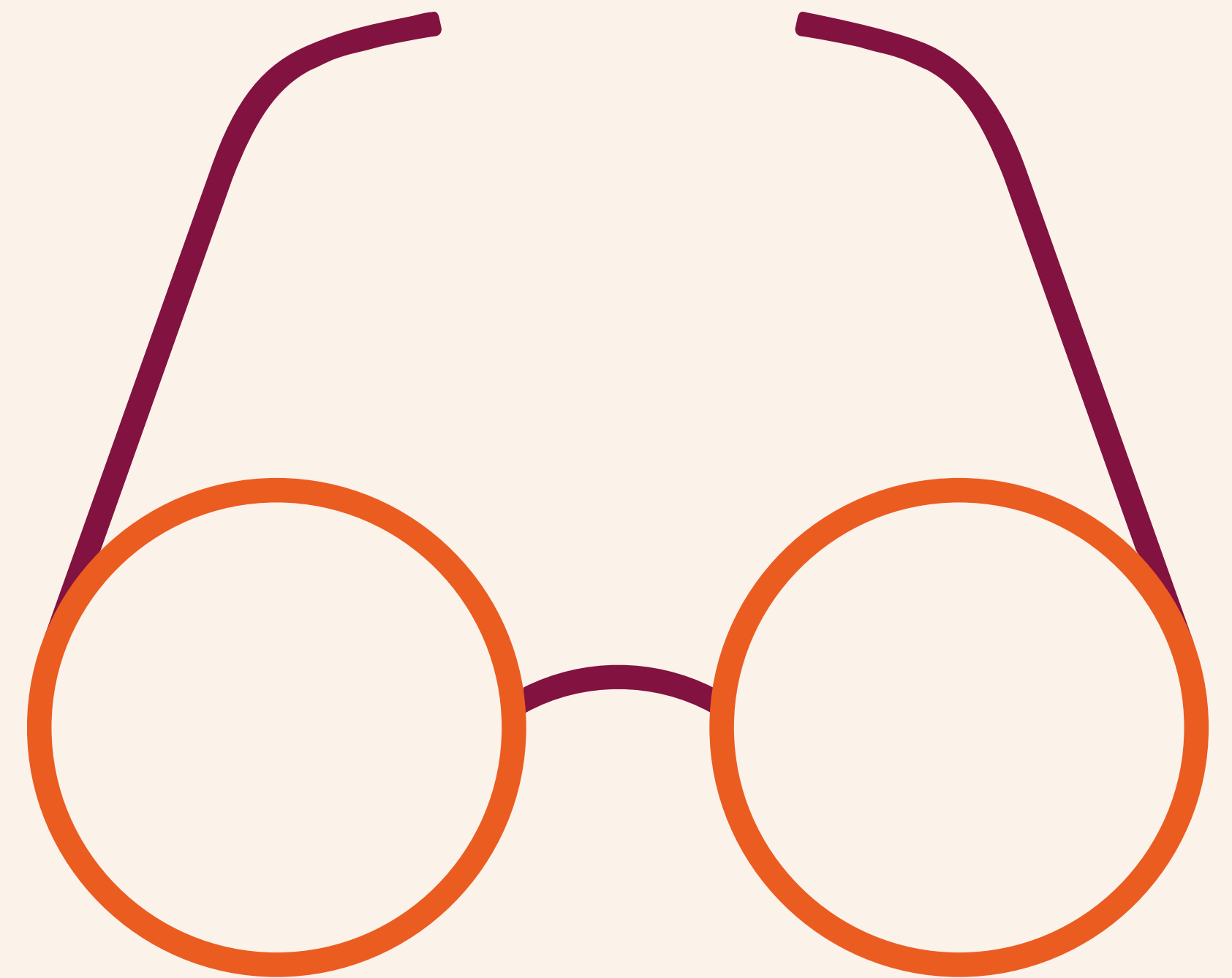
Answer: A, C, D, E and H would be handled as plagiarism. B and F are correctly referenced. G can be cheating under certain circumstances, but it is not considered plagiarism in the proper sense.



General /Specialist Knowledge

If, for example, you are writing about the impact of electrical lighting on human's social life, you cannot assume that this knowledge is public property and therefore it is considered specialist knowledge. If you take that text without attributing a source and incorporate it in your essay, it would always be plagiarism, even if you replace every single word in the text.

Usually, knowledge that isn't considered public property is, with high likelihood, based on research about the subject, and therefore must be referenced correctly. If you don't name the source, you are plagiarising the author's thoughts and conclusions - even if you used your own words to describe it.



Check Facts

For example, if, in an essay regarding Brazil's political development during the late 1900s, you need to mention that Brazil's official language is Portuguese, you usually don't need to cite your source if you feel your readers will be aware of that fact.

If, however, you're handing in a short memorandum with facts about Brazil and your essay relies heavily on a single source, the sources need to be stated.

If you found your sources on the internet, make sure directly note down the source and the date it was published, as well as accessed. It should be easy for anyone reading your essay to find that exact same source. A complete Internet address and reference to a book's page number is always required. Keep in mind that you shouldn't rely too heavily on one Internet source, as these can sometimes be unreliable.

In sum, don't forget to check your facts, and preferably verify these facts amongst several independent sources.



Plan Your Time

We all know that procrastination allows due dates to creep on us. If you find yourself in this situation, don't take shortcuts and copy the work of your fellow students as Urkund WILL catch that. Instead, buckle down and write that essay.

A better approach: Start your assignment early, and try to divide it into different sub-tasks that you can set individual deadlines to. Then, follow the schedule as best as possible keeping track on what you've done so that you can see where you are in terms of time. As an added benefit, not being stressed usually helps your creativity to flow, and allows you to have a buffer when something doesn't work out the way you intended.

Check out Brian Tracy's "Eat That Frog!" for tips on how to avoid procrastination.

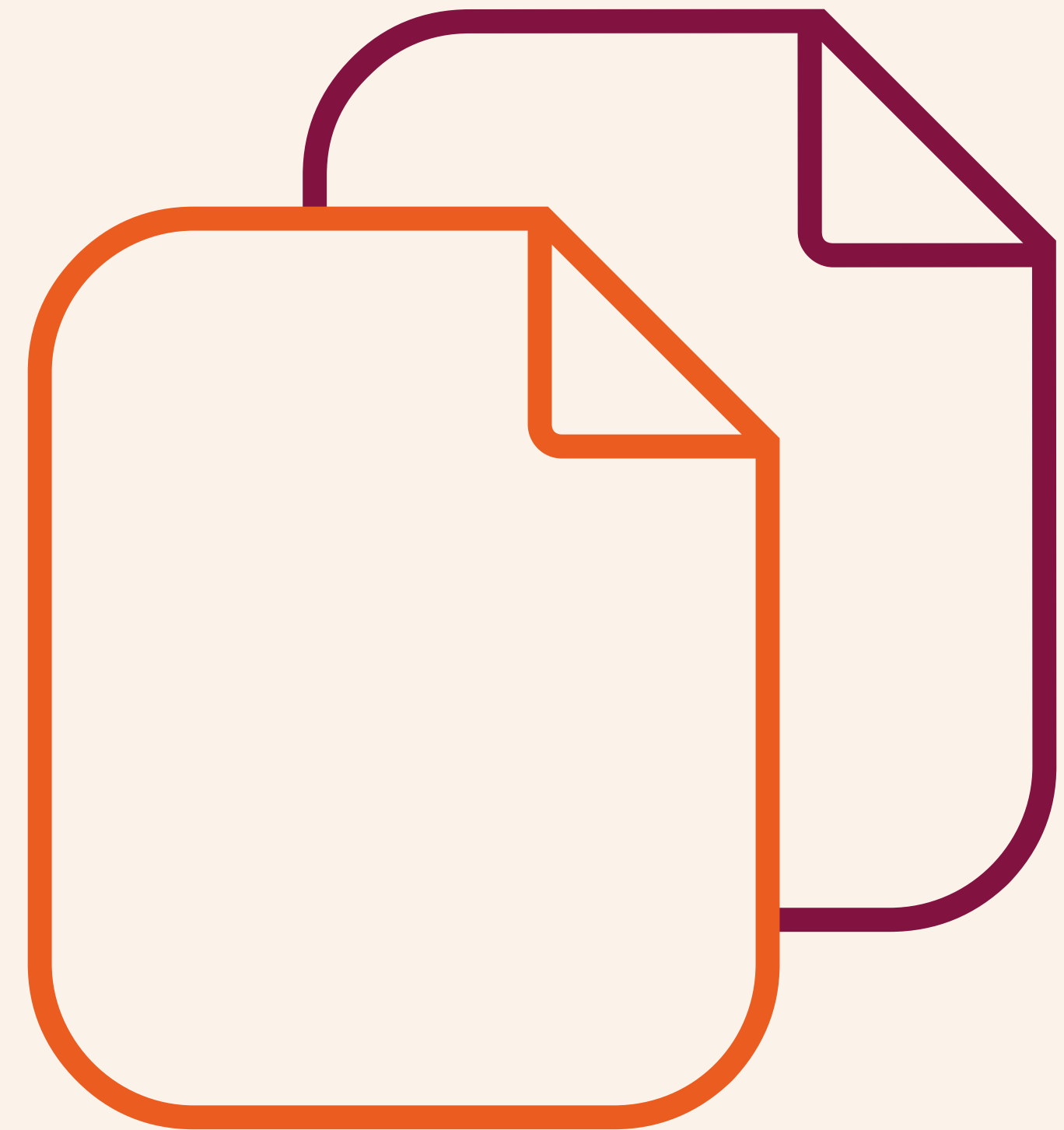


Always Note the Source

It might seem clear but make sure that you always note down the source you've found. If it's an Internet article, make sure you also note down the date you accessed it (in case it disappears), as well as the date it was published. If you use a source from a book, make sure to write down which edition you are using.

A good tip is to have a dedicated source notebook or document on your computer, where you write down your sources to refer back to and recheck later.

The risk if you don't is that you'll forget the source and spend valuable time searching for it instead of focusing on your assignment.



Source References

Depending on your discipline, the standards of referencing can vary. Some of the most commonly used include Harvard, Oxford, IEEE, APA, MLA, Chicago/Turabian. Keep in mind that no matter the style you choose, NEVER combine them in one essay. With the exception of IEEE, the two main style differences are based on whether you use footnotes or in-text references.

Fun Fact:

Despite its name, the Harvard referencing style is the most commonly used one in the UK and Australia, whereas the APA and MLA styles are widely used in the US.

The Harvard Style

The Harvard style is often referred to as the author-year-system and involves literature references in direct relation to the text. It is almost identical to the APA citation style.

In-text citations

Author name and year of publication are the minimum, but if it's a direct quote or a specific detail, then you also need to include the page number. This way, the reader doesn't have to read the entire source to find what's being referred to. The reference is placed in parentheses (Lazar, 2006, p. 34). If you have used pages 34 and 35 then you write pp.34-35. with pp. standing for "pages". If you're referring to more than one page, write p.34 et seq, with "et seq" standing for "more following". It is also possible to replace "p." with a ":" (Lazar 2006:34). If you're referring to the same quote several times, you can skip the page. (Lazar 2006). If you're referring to more than one author and less than four, use this format: (Smith & Jones 2010). For more than four authors write: (Smith et al. 2010) OR Smith et al. (2010) when part of a sentence.

(Source: <http://owll.massey.ac.nz/referencing/harvard-style.php>)

Reference list

Book

Order: author, year, book title, publisher, place of publication.

Journal article

Order: author, year, article title, journal title, volume and/or issue number, page range.

Journal article with doi

Order: author, year, article title, journal title, volume and/or issue number, page range, website.

The APA Style

Though very similar to the Harvard referencing style, one of the main differences of the APA style is that the author and year of publication are separated by comma: (Lazer, 2006).

Source: <https://libguides.murdoch.edu.au/APA>

In-text citations

Author name and year of publication are the minimum, but if it's a direct quote or a specific detail, then you also need to include the page number. This way, the reader doesn't have to read the entire source to find what's being referred to. The reference is placed in parentheses (Lazar, 2006, p. 34). If you have used pages 34 and 35 then you write pp.34-35. with pp. standing for "pages". If you're referring to more than one page, write p.34 et seq, with "et seq" standing for "more following". It is also possible to replace "p." with a ":" (Lazar 2006:34). If you're referring to the same quote several times, you can skip the page. (Lazar 2006). If you're referring to more than one author and less than four, use this format: (Smith & Jones 2010). For more than four authors write: (Smith et al. 2010) OR Smith et al. (2010) when part of a sentence.

(Source: <http://owll.massey.ac.nz/referencing/harvard-style.php>).

Reference list

Book

Order: author, year, book title, publisher, place of publication.

Journal article

Order: author, year, article title, journal title, volume and/or issue number, page range.

Journal article with doi

Order: author, year, article title, journal title, volume and/or issue number, page range, website.

The Oxford Style

The Oxford style is a footnote-based system where you place a superscript number in the body of the text in order to cite a reference.

In-text citations

The numbers relate to notes that are either placed in the footer of the same page or gathered together at the very end of the text. The latter is less common, as many prefer to read the footnote at the same time they read the sentence or paragraph it belongs to. Place the superscript after your citation and use the same number in your footnote or at the end of your text.

Note that the format can vary depending on the type of source involved (book, scientific article, webpage, etc.), which scientific discipline you belong to, how many authors are present, and so on. So check previously published work for reference.

Source: <https://www.ub.umu.se/en/write/references/writing-references-oxford>

Reference list

Book

² Order: author, title, edition, publisher location, publisher, publication year.

E-book

² Order: author, title, edition, publisher location, publisher, publication year, website, access date.

Journal article

² Order: author (first and last name), title of article, journal name, volume, issue, year of publication: page numbers of article

Journal article with DOI

² Order: same as the journal, often the publishers include how to write the reference

Website

² Order: (if available): author, organization, authority or company; (year); title of document or page; the name of a web site or owner of the web site; last update of web page; complete URL (<http://.....>), date of access

The IEEE Style

The IEEE referencing style is often used in technical reports as apposed to more text-heavy essays and publications.

In-text citations

In the IEEE referencing style, a number [X] is inserted when citing another author's work. At the end of your assignment, the full reference [X] of the work is provided. Citations and their corresponding references are provided in the order they appear throughout your writing. Quotes should be in square brackets such as:

Albert Einstein's theory has been photographed for the first time. [13].

When mentioning authors, do as followed: Einstein [13] stated that... or used et al. for more than four authors. Do not mention publication years in your citation, as it usually is required in other referencing styles.

Source: <http://libraryguides.vu.edu.au/ieeereferencing/gettingstarted>

Reference list

As in all other referencing styles, you need to include the entire source at the end of your work. The reference list should contain the full details of all sources cited previously in-text.

Reference list entries should appear in the order the sources are cited in the text of the paper, beginning with [1], and continuing in the ascending numerical order, from the lowest number to the highest.

Reference list entries do not follow an alphabetical order by author or title of sources.

The MLA Style

The MLA referencing style allows for more freedom than some of the other referencing styles, which is reflected in the Reference List. It is often used within arts and is the style of the Modern Language Association (hence MLA).

If you're primarily acknowledging the source, you need to make sure to attribute the source and enable the reader to find it.

Source: <http://owll.massey.ac.nz/referencing/mla-style.php>

In-text citations

If you are using a source within your text, note down the author as well as the page number. (Lazor 36). If you are quoting the author within the sentence, you can write as followed: Lazor is convinced his theory is bulletproof (36). Multiple authors are, as per usual, listed as et al. after the first author.

Due to its broader nature, this style leaves it up to you to know what information should be provided. They should, however, always come in the same order:

Author, "Title of Source." (e.g. chapter title, article title, web page, song, TV episode), title of container, (e.g. book title, journal title, website, album name, TV show) other contributors, (e.g. translated by, edited by, directed by, performance by), version, (e.g. edition), number, (e.g. volume number, issue number) publisher, publication date, location. (e.g. page number, section number, URL)

Reference list

Order: Author. Title of source. Title of container (self-contained if a book), Other contributors (translators or editors), Version (edition), Number (vol. and/or no.), Publisher, Publication date, Location (pages, paragraphs, URL or DOI).

Examples

Wallis, Mick, and Simon Shepherd. Studying Plays. 2nd ed., Hodder Arnold, 2002.

Watson, Lois. "Body Parts in Limbo When Amputees Can't Let Go." Sunday Star Times, 19 Oct. 2008: A8.

Fomison, Tony. Hill Top Watcher. 1976, oil on canvas, Te Papa, <https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/vis-it/exhibitions/toi-art/tony-fomison-lost-dark>. Accessed September 2, 2018.

More Sources, More Knowledge

The Harvard Style:

www.owll.massey.ac.nz/referencing/harvard-style.php

www.wikihow.com/Cite-Using-the-Harvard-Style

The Oxford Style:

www.ub.umu.se/en/write/references/writing-references-oxford

www.wikihow.com/Reference-in-Oxford-Style

www.ox.ac.uk/public-affairs/style-guide?wssl=1

The IEEE Style:

libraryguides.vu.edu.au/ieeereferencing/gettingstarted

The APA Style:

www.wikihow.com/Cite-a-Textbook-in-APA

owll.massey.ac.nz/referencing/apa-style.php

The MLA Style:

www.wikihow.com/Quote-and-Cite-a-Play-in-an-Essay-Using-MLA-Format

owll.massey.ac.nz/referencing/mla-style.php



Better Safe than Sorry

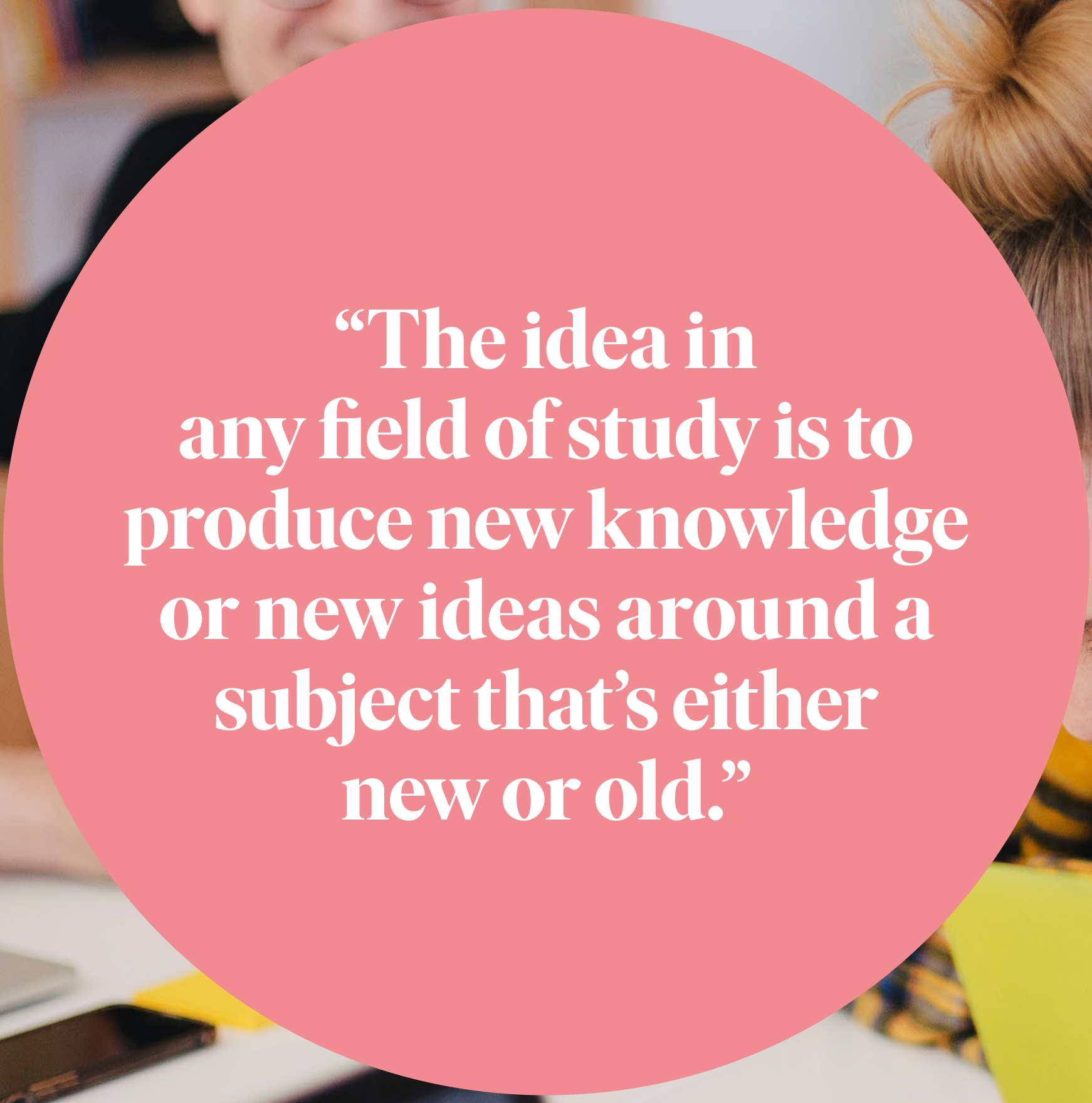
As your essay or paper will be checked for plagiarism once uploaded to Urkund, make sure to check your sources BEFORE. Proofread, check your bibliography and note your sources directly when you find them to avoid any unfortunate mishaps.

The idea in any field of study is to produce new knowledge or new ideas around a subject that's either old or new.

The core of academic studies lies in the ability to combine old and new findings, as well as in using previous research as an engine for developing new ones. That's where it becomes crucial: using previous research and findings correctly. To make your own results relevant, you should always include previously done research and QUOTE it accordingly.

Always be clear about where you've obtained text, ideas, or, for that matter, pictures, and you'll avoid plagiarism like a pro.

The following pages provide several examples for you to look at and learn what tends to be regarded as plagiarism. Remember to contact your teacher/tutor in all cases you are uncertain about. The basic rule is to always state sources if you've been inspired by. That goes for thoughts, as well as entire paragraphs, from a specific source.



“The idea in any field of study is to produce new knowledge or new ideas around a subject that's either new or old.”

1. Original text:

The first metals must have been found existing in the form of nuggets. They must have been pieces of copper or gold, for these are among the few metals occasionally found free in nature. The reddish color of copper or the yellowish color of gold must have caught the eye; and the metallic luster, which is so much more startling and beautiful than the flat, nondescript coloring of most stones, must then have held it. Undoubtedly the first use of metals was as ornaments, in whatever form the pieces had been found, much as colored pebbles or pearly sea shells might have so been used.

(Asimov, Isaac, Greenwood Press, 1979)

Example 1

The first metals to be discovered were probably lumps of pure metal. These metals belong, that is, among the few that can be found as lumps in nature. One probably first started to use the metals as decoration after which one subsequently saw a more practical use for them.

The writer has not used the entire text, has reworked it and, for the most part, has made use of his own words.

Answer: This is a rewriting (or paraphrase) and can be seen as plagiarism since the writer has not made any reference to the author. The text is very similar to its original source. The actual theories and ideas, as well as conclusion, is still Isaac Asimov's.



Example 2

The first metals must have been found existing in the form of nuggets. They must have been pieces of copper or gold, for these are among the few metals occasionally found free in nature. The reddish color of copper or the yellowish color of gold must have caught the eye; and the metallic luster, which is so much more startling and beautiful than the flat, nondescript coloring of most stones, must then have held it. Undoubtedly the first use of metals was as ornaments, in whatever form the pieces had been found, much as colored pebbles or pearly sea shells might have so been used.

(Asimov, Isaac, Greenwood Press, 1979)

Here, the writer has referred to the source.

Answer: This can, however, be regarded as plagiarism. The writer has copied a couple of sentences straight out of Asimov's book without inserting quotation marks. These sentences are surrounded by the writer's own text, which also makes it difficult to differentiate between writer's own text and Asimov's. Moreover, there's no page reference in the source reference.



Example 3



One can be fascinated by the technique of extracting different metals from ore. What was it that, from the start, drove Mankind to start experimenting in order to extract these metals? According to Isaac Asimov, it could have been so that the first metals discovered were gold and copper, which occur lying freely around in nature in the form of lumps. When one had found these, the conclusion could be drawn that there was more to be obtained from different types of ore. The experimentation in attempting to extract metals was then underway.

(Asimov, Isaac, Greenwood Press, 1979)

The writer has no quotation marks but refers to the source.

Answer: This is not plagiarism. This is an abstract. The writer has reproduced Asimov's thoughts with his own words and has made a correct source reference. Moreover, there are reference markers ("according to Isaac Asimov...") in connection with the text so that you can easily differentiate between the writer's and Asimov's thoughts.

Example 4



Mankind's fascination with gold and shining metals stretches right back to the dawn of history. We do not know today how Mankind arrived at the fantastic idea of trying to extract metal from different types of ore. There are a large number of theories about this. A reasonable explanation is that the first metals found were the kind of metals that can be seen as free lying lumps out on the ground. One example of such a metal that can be found without processing ore is gold. After having thus become acquainted with metal, Mankind has started to look for it and has found small volumes in gold ore. From this point, Mankind has started to experiment with extracting even small quantities of metal and, in the process, has discovered other practicable metals and ways of extracting them in the best manner.

There is no source reference, and the text actually looks as though it is based on the original text.

Answer: Now we've entered a grey zone. There is no exact textual similarity but if the writer had actually made use of Asimov's book when the text was produced, a source reference should have been made. However, if the writer has produced this themselves and doesn't know about Asimov's conclusions, then he/she probably cannot be accused of plagiarism.

Example 5



A reasonable explanation of how Mankind has arrived at the amazing idea of trying to extract metal from different types of ore is that the first metals found were such metals as are to be found as free-lying lumps out on the ground. One example of such a metal that can be found without processing ore is gold. Isaac Asimov has worded this explanation in the following way:

The first metals must have been found existing in the form of nuggets. They must have been pieces of copper or gold, for these are among the few metals occasionally found free in nature. The reddish color of copper or the yellowish color of gold must have caught the eye; and the metallic luster, which is so much more startling and beautiful than the flat, nondescript coloring of most stones, must then have held it. Undoubtedly the first use of metals was as ornaments, in whatever form the pieces had been found, much as colored pebbles or pearly sea shells might have so been used.

(Asimov, Isaac, Greenwood Press, 1979, p. 3)

After having thus become acquainted with metal, Mankind has started to look for it and has found small volumes in gold ore. From this point, Mankind has started to experiment with extracting even small quantities of metal and, in the process, has discovered other practicable metals and ways of extracting them in the best manner.

There are no quotation marks around the piece taken from Asimov's book and the writer's thoughts in the rest of the text are clearly influenced by Asimov.

Answer: This is the correct way of dealing with a quotation of this length. This is called a block quotation and requires no quotation marks, since the text is still clearly separated from the writer's own words. Block quotations are the correct way to present a quotation when it exceeds a certain length. Quotation marks should, however, be used when the text you want to refer to is shorter, roughly one or two sentences long. Since the writer quotes the part of Asimov's book where he influenced his/her own thoughts, no further reference is needed.

2. Original text

EARTH, OUR HOME planet, is a world unlike any other. The third planet from the sun, Earth, is the only place in the known universe confirmed to host life. Earth orbits the sun once every 365.25 days. Since our calendar years have only 365 days, we add an extra leap day every four years to account for the difference.

Michael Greshko, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/space/solar-system/earth/>,
National Geographic, 23/08/19, visited last 30/08/19

Example 1



As you all know, Earth is our home planet, and a world, unlike any other. The third planet from the sun, Earth, is the only place in the known universe confirmed to host life. Our Earth orbits the sun once every 365.25 days if you want to be exact. Since our calendar years have only 365 days, we add an extra leap day every four years to account for the difference.

This is mostly considered, “general knowledge” but the writer has almost straight up copied Greshko’s text.

Answer: It certainly is general knowledge, but it may still be seen as plagiarism. The reason why is because the writer has used Greshko’s text as a model. In this case, it is not Greshko’s conclusions that are plagiarised as these are often considered general knowledge. Greshko’s wording, however, was plagiarised, which means that both quotation marks and a source reference should be present.

Internet Resources

If you want to learn more about what can be regarded as plagiarism, there's a whole lot of resources on the Internet. Here are a couple:

A quiz from Indiana University to get their view of what constitutes plagiarism:
www.education.indiana.edu/~frick/plagiarism

A tutorial on plagiarism created by several Danish Universities, in English:
www.en.stopplagiat.nu

The Interactive Anti-Plagiarism Guide - Jönköping University, in English:
www.pingpong.hj.se/public/courseld/10565/publicPage.do

How to cite in various styles, including in-text and bibliography styles and guides:
www.citethisforme.com



Essay Mills and Ghostwriters

With the internet entering classrooms and being omnipresent, knowledge is now readily available at our fingertips. But this also means that it's much easier to gain access to "ready-to-hand-in" content, often in exchange for money. These services are called essay mills, and the writers that create them are referred to as ghostwriters. Usually, that content is taken from previously created student papers and plagiarised itself, making it detectable to our system. Additionally, even if it might not be detected this time, future technology most probably will catch it (for example, if the writing style is drastically different than previous assignments). As a student, do your future self a favour and avoid these services in the present - you'll thank yourself later!



Famous Last Words

We hope this guide gives you clarity about what constitutes as plagiarism and what does not, whether you're a teacher or a student. Remember, this is meant to serve as a guide, not as a final judgement. We would be grateful for any feedback which you can send to us via marketing@urkund.com.

Be mindful of your sources, check that they're available when you include them in your bibliography and always note down when you last accessed them. Don't mix and match your referencing styles, keep it coherent and enjoy the learning experience, whether as a high school or university student, a teacher or a professor!

A woman with long, wavy blonde hair is looking down at an open book. The image is partially obscured by a large pink circle containing text.

**“You cannot
innovate by
copying”**

Larry Ellison

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