

Part VI Research Skills

Guidelines for Getting Started on the Research Paper

After you have decided on your thesis and organized an informal outline for the project, begin your search for credible sources. When you find some articles of interest in journals and magazines, evaluate the articles. Consider using scholarly and substantive sources as opposed to inferior, sensational news items. Scholarly articles are published by academic publishers (Harvard University Press, Oxford University Press), are written by authors with listed credentials (a senior analyst in the Global Environment Program), and contain further references such as indices of subjects in the backs of books or journals, bibliographies of sources for further research at the ends of the documents, and Reference or Works Cited pages referring to specific sources used by the authors. These credible sources will lend authority to your research paper. (Credit for the above information is due to Lorrie Knight, librarian at University of the Pacific, Stockton, California, handout: "Evaluating Information" 2004.)

When you begin to take notes from your articles, be sure to include the following information:

1. the author
2. the title of magazine, journal, book or document from a website
3. the date of publication
4. page numbers of information you take notes from
5. If the document is a book, you need the publisher, the city in which it was published and the date of publication.
6. If you access the periodical or book from the internet, a database or library sources, you must remember to record the database or website, the date you access the document and the URL (Universal Resource Locator). Usually the URL is at the bottom left hand corner of the document, and the date accessed is at the bottom right hand corner.

The above information is essential, for you will need to cite specific details about the sources on your References or Works Cited pages and in your in-text parenthetical references. When you use information from your source, you must summarize it in your own words, paraphrase it in your own words, or quote it directly, using quotation marks and the exact wording of the author. In all cases, an in-text reference to the author (or title if no author is named) is mandatory. Without proper acknowledgment of sources cited, the research is plagiarized.

Writing Summaries

One of the most difficult tasks of summarizing is using your own words to recreate an original text. It is very easy to pick up too many of the words, phrases, and even sentences that the author wrote. Copying original work without using quotation marks is plagiarism. And essentially, a summary isn't a direct copy of the author's work; it is, well, a summary, a condensed version using different words. (Occasionally, it is nice to include a direct quote, complete with quotation marks, but using too many quotes is not advisable.) Also, it is easier to remember the concepts in a particular work if you have processed them internally and can remember them by using your own diction. It is almost impossible to memorize entire texts as written.

Here is an easy way to do a summary. Let's say we want to summarize the following paragraph. We can insert key words in the margins that will remind us of the content of the paragraph. We don't want to write too much, just enough words to help us write our summary.

Although violence seems to be just about everywhere, a handful of societies stand out as nonviolent exceptions. One nonviolent society is the Chewong, who live in the mountains of the Malay Peninsula. This group of people does not even have words in their language for quarreling, aggression, or warfare. Another nonviolent group is the Ifaluk, who live on a small atoll in the Federated States of Micronesia. In that society, for example, the most serious act of aggression noted in a year involved a man who touched another on the shoulder in anger, an offense which was punished with a stiff fine. The Amish, the Hutterites, and the Monnonites, too, are all societies that reside in the relatively violent United States but remain remarkably nonviolent.

violence all over
but some societies
not violent

Chewong in Malay
Peninsula – no
vocab for fighting
words
Ifaluk: fines for
lightly poking
someone

also Amish &
Monnonites in US
not violent

(Adapted from Brehm et al., *Social Psychology*, 5th ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002, 395. Rpt. in *College Reading Series 2*. 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2004.)

If we cover up the above paragraph, and rely solely on the notes (annotated section) we can write the following summary with relative ease:

Even though violence is all too common in the world, some societies are not violent. For instance, the Chewong in the Malay Peninsula are not violent and their vocabulary doesn't include any words related to fighting. The Ifaluk lay heavy fines on people just for poking at someone when angry. And the Amish, Hutterites, and Monnonites who live in the rather violent culture of America are not violent.

The Rough Draft

After formulating a workable thesis and an outline, put together a rough draft. Organize your information and develop your topics with specific examples, facts, data, anecdotes, and/or evidence. As you write this draft, begin work on the Works Cited page (for MLA format) or the Reference page (for APA format). Also, make sure that references to outside sources, whether these references are summaries, paraphrases, or direct quotes (copied directly with quotation marks), acknowledge the sources in in-text parenthetical references.

An **in-text parenthetical reference** is a brief reference to the source:

Here is an example of a paraphrased entry with an in-text reference:

Fifty-percent of the inhabitants died from the plague (**Jones 13**). *MLA format*

Fifty-percent of the inhabitants died from the plague (**Jones, 2003**). *APA format*

Here is an example of a direct quote and an in-text reference:

"The invasion left the populace destitute" (**Smith 32**) *MLA format*

"The invasion left the populace destitute" (**Smith, 2007, p. 32**) *APA format*

Note the differences in the various styles of citing sources. The most common methods are Modern Language Association (MLA), American Psychological Association (APA), Council of Science Editors (CSE), Turabian (used for Natural and Social Sciences), and Chicago (commonly used for Arts and History).

ONCE AGAIN, NOTE THAT WHETHER YOU SUMMARIZE, PARAPHRASE OR USE DIRECT QUOTES, YOU ALWAYS MUST GIVE CREDIT TO THE AUTHOR IN AN IN-TEXT PARENTHETICAL REFERENCE AND ON THE WORKS CITED PAGE (ALSO KNOWN AS REFERENCES PAGE OR BIBLIOGRAPHY). NOTE THE FOLLOWING DEFINITIONS OF PLAGIARISM.



Plagiarism



Plagiarism occurs when a writer uses information from outside sources and doesn't acknowledge those sources:

- * downloading a paper from the internet, affixing a name to it and turning it in for credit.
- * using another student's paper
- * turning in a paper with no parenthetical references to works or sources that the writer has used throughout the paper
- * turning in a paper that uses sources and cites them in the text but has no Works Cited or References page
- * turning in a paper that cites only direct quotations – other sources that are referred to are not credited or acknowledged in the text
- * Using more than two or three copied words or phrases in a row from a source is considered plagiarism. Also the same word order, even if synonyms are used, is considered plagiarism:

"You are guilty of plagiarism if you half-copy the author's sentences – either by mixing the author's phrases with your own without using quotation marks or by plugging your synonyms into the author's sentence structure" (Hacker, 2003, p. 405).

Work Cited

Hacker, D. (2003) Rules for writers. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Penalties for plagiarism range from failure on a given assignment to failure for the course, removal from the class and even removal from the college.

Example of plagiarism

Here is a copy of an op-ed piece written by columnist Arianna Huffington entitled, "Bush energy policy running on empty." Huffington discusses the problems our nation faces if we don't stop guzzling gas and oil, and if we don't investigate other sources of energy:

“The president’s outdated energy policies are pushing us to the brink of an economic and ecological catastrophe brought about by global warming. Temperatures are climbing, sea levels are rising and Antarctica is thawing.

“The winter ice cap at the North Pole has shrunk 20 percent in two decades, and all that disappearing ice is going to reappear in the form of rising seas threatening coastal areas from New York to New Orleans.

“Our MBA president’s energy plan is designed to coddle corporations. The most surprising aspect of the scheme is how bad it’s been for non-oil business” (Huffington B5).

Work Cited

Huffington, Arianna. “Bush energy policy running on empty.” The Record 28 Mar. 2005: B5.

*Let’s take a look at a plagiarized summary of the above paragraphs. **The underlined sections are words and phrases directly copied from the original version.** The author of this summary should have summarized the entire paragraph using his/her own words, or used quotation marks around the copied phrases.*

The president has out of date energy policies that will create a dangerous situation. Global warming will mean climbing temperatures, rising sea levels and a thawing arctic. The North Pole’s ice cap has shrunk 20 percent in two decades, and all that melting ice will perhaps swamp the eastern coastline. The president’s plan coddles corporations and it is bad for non-oil business (Huffington B5).

Note that the writer has not put much effort into rephrasing the section in his/her own words. Here is perhaps a better version which summarizes the original and also uses one direct quote:

According to Huffington (2003), global warming and harm to businesses not connected to oil are some of the results of President Bush’s old fashioned energy policies. Warm temperatures are causing the ice in the Antarctic to melt; 20

percent of the North Pole's ice has turned into water which in turn is in danger of flooding the eastern coastlines. Huffington says that Bush's "energy plan is designed to coddle corporations" (p. B5).

So how do we avoid copying words and phrases from the original? It is admittedly hard not to use some of the author's words, but again, too many copied words and phrases in a row are unacceptable. Try the following:

- 1) As you read the document, take BRIEF notes. Try to understand the concept (translate it for yourself in the most simple of terms using your own words).
- 2) Turn the document over, and, using only your notes, summarize the section. Then review it for correctness. (Admittedly, some words must be used to get the point across: if the subject is about trains and buses, you will have to use the words "trains" and "buses." The point is to avoid copying strings of words and complete phrases from the original document.)

Other problems that may occur when summarizing:

Extraneous information is added into the summary; i.e. the writer of the paper adds ideas and assumptions that aren't a part of the author's discussion.

The author of the source is misquoted: words may be missing, a different word may be used, and some of the writer's own words may be mixed in with the author's words).

A direct quote should be an identical copy of the author's exact words, and quotation marks " " must surround the quoted section.



The Signal Phrase (Using MLA style documentation)

When citing a source within the research paper, you can introduce the source immediately so the reader knows exactly whose ideas are cited. Otherwise, it may be difficult to know where a particular source begins. Also, you will often want to inject your own ideas and transitions. The following paragraph contains information accessed from an article entitled "How to Counter WMD" by author Ashton B. Carter. Note the use of the **"signal phrase"** (introductory phrase) which comes after the writer's introduction to the issue.

Here is the writer's introduction

The definition of the so-called weapons of mass destruction (WMD) that the United States is trying to contain seems to be under question. Ashton Carter states that WMD's are usually categorized in general terms and consist of "nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons; ballistic missiles; and more recently, 'dirty bombs,' ordinary explosives containing some radioactive material" (2). However Carter states that most of those weapons are not as destructive as they are made out to be. The only ones capable of "mass destruction," he says, are the nuclear and biological ones, and they should be "The primary focus of counterproliferation policy" (2). Other views on the situation refute Carter's.

Work Cited

Carter, Ashton. "How to Counter WMD." Foreign Affairs 83.5 (Sep/Oct 2004): 72-86. Academic Search Premier. Univ. of the Pacific Lib. Stockton, CA 22 Dec. 2004.
http://web7.epnet.com/citation.asp?tb=1&_ug=sid=FABA90CC%DA06A%D4

The above paragraph uses a signal phrase

"Ashton Carter states that . . ."

One could also use other types of signal phrases:

"According to Ashton Carter . . ."

"A professor at the National Defense University in Washington, D. C., Ashton Carter, states that . . ."

"Authorities such as Ashton Carter criticize Bush's weapon policy in Iraq. . ."

The Works Cited page (MLA) and the References page (APA)

The sources used in the text are listed on a Works Cited or References page. Here are examples of a Works Cited page in Modern Language Association (MLA) format and a References page in American Psychological Association (APA) format.

Works Cited

Ji-Huan. "Shrinkage of Body Size of Small Insects: A Possible Link to Global Warming?" Chaos, Solitons & Fractals 34.3 (Nov. 2007): 727-729 Academic Search Premier. EBSCO. University of the Pacific Lib. Stockton CA 8 Aug. 2007
<<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?>

Zhang, Liang, Zhen Huang. "Life Cycle Study of Coal-Based Dimethyl Ether as Vehicle fuel for Urban Bus in China." Energy 32.10 (Oct. 2007): 1896-1904 Academic Search Premier EBSCO. University of the Pacific Lib. Stockton CA 8 Aug. 20 <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=26036381&site=ehost-live>.

References

Ji-Huan (2007, November). Shrinkage of body size of small insects: A possible link to global warming? Chaos, Solitons & Fractals 34(3), 727-729. Retrieved August 8, 2007, from Academic Search Premier EBSCO. University of the Pacific Lib. Stockton CA <<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?>

Zhang, L., & Huang, Z. (2007, October). Life cycle study of coal-based dimethyl ether as vehicle fuel for urban bus in China. Energy 32(10), 1896-1904. Retrieved August 8, 2007, from Academic Search Premier EBSCO. University of the Pacific, Stockton, CA. <<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx>

Here is a major point to consider **when formatting the in-text references and the Works Cited or References page: Make sure that the in-text citation refers to the first word(s) of the entry on the Works Cited/References page.** Entries are listed by last name of author (or the title of the article if the name of the author is not given). An illustration of what can go wrong in an in-text reference follows. This sample is done in APA format.

Here is an entry on a References page (using APA format):

Dakers, J. R. (2005). The hegemonic behaviorist cycle. *International Journal of Technology and Design Education*, 15, 111-126.

The last name of the author is listed on the left side of the page for easy access for the reader.

Here is what the writer mistakenly cites in the in-text reference:

Dogmatic adherence to preconceived outcomes is detrimental to the development of the students' learning processes (*International Journal of Technology and Design Education*).

The title of the journal is given instead of the author's name. The reader will be confused as to where the source is listed. There may be several entries for the journal entitled *International Journal of Technology and Design Education*.

The correct citation is given here:

Dogmatic adherence to preconceived outcomes is detrimental to the development of the students' learning processes (Dakers, 2005).

The reader can go straight to the References page, scroll down the list of the authors' names which are listed in alphabetical order, and easily locate the name: "Dakers."

The same problem can occur **when citing a work with no author**. When no author is given, the title of the article is listed on the Works Cited page instead of the name of the author. (The following sample is done in MLA format.)

Here is an entry with no author as it should be listed on the Works Cited page:

"The Future of Energy." Environment and the Economy 21 June 2008:17.

The title of the article is listed under the letter "f." (Words such as "a," "an," and "the" are not considered when listing the works in alphabetical order.)

When citing a work with no author within your text, **use the title of the article exactly as it is listed on the Works Cited page**. Here is an incorrect in-text citation:

The idea of alternative energy as a replacement for oil is not as far-fetched as people may think, and it is a viable option for the near future (June, 2008).

Here the writer has cited the work using the date. The readers will have trouble finding the source because they won't be able to scroll down the alphabetized list on the Works Cited page and find the entry under "f" for "The future of."

Here is a correct in-text reference for the entry:

The idea of alternative energy as a replacement for oil is not as far-fetched as people may think, and it is a viable option for the near future ("The future of" 17).

Here the in-text reference exactly matches the entry on the Works Cited page including the quotation marks. (Note that the titles of long works can be shortened if other titles do not start in a similar manner.)

A Final Checklist for the Works Cited or References page:

1. Alphabetize the Works Cited or References entries.
2. Double-space the entire paper, including the title.
3. Make sure the citations that are in your essay match the first words of the entries on the Works Cited or References page.
4. Indent the second and third lines of each entry five letter spaces.
5. Spell the title "Works Cited" correctly, and don't use any fancy font or size.
6. The entire Works Cited page uses the same size (12) and style font (Times, New York, Times New Roman etc.).

For a comprehensive coverage of MLA and APA styles of setting up the Works Cited and References pages and formatting in-text parenthetical references, go to the Owl at Purdue: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/> and the abundant style manuals available in the bookstores.

