Avoiding Plagiarism: How to Properly Use and Cite Material

Anytime you use ideas, information, or words that didn’t come from your own brain, you need to cite where you got that material. Anything in your paper that is NOT cited must be completely your own words and ideas.

**There are two ways to use someone else’s idea in a paper:**

1. **Directly quote the material.** Use QUOTATION MARKS around the words that you take from your source. Include an in-text citation.

   Example (in APA style): According to Smith (2011), common core standards “rather than equalizing education, have taken the creativity and thus the excitement and relevancy from learning” (p. 61).

2. **Paraphrase the material.** Use someone else’s idea but put it in YOUR OWN WORDS. This does NOT mean just changing a word or two or rearranging the sentence. The wording should be completely different from the source (though it is fine to repeat a few key words). Include an in-text citation.


**Reference List/ Works Cited:** Each source cited in-text must also have a complete bibliographic entry in your reference list at the end of your paper.

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**TIP:**

Remember that for most papers, the majority of the paper should be your own words and ideas. Use sources as support/evidence for your points. For assignments in which you are asked to write an analytical paper based on readings, instructors are asking you to do three things:

- Show that you have a clear understanding of what you’ve read
- Create your own idea or interpretation of the material
- Refer to your reading to support the ideas that you have developed

Be careful to distinguish *your* analysis (or interpretation of the material) from other authors’ analyses.