Basic Citation Guidelines

Ideas, words, photography, artwork, music, videos, and other products you create are yours, and no one has the right to take your products and pass them off as their own, whether intentionally or unintentionally. To do so is stealing, and the people who do this are misrepresenting themselves. When it comes to writing in school or the workplace, this principle is adhered to strictly. In fact, several highly publicized instances have shown the severe consequences for people who have plagiarized: used others’ ideas or words without permission. They have lost millions of dollars, and they also have been publicly humiliated in addition to losing the credibility needed to ever publish their work again. The consequences for students who plagiarize are likewise severe, ranging from failing an assignment or a class to being expelled from school. This Basic Citation Guidelines tutorial is designed to help you avoid plagiarism; it provides the basics behind citation such as why and when we cite. Additionally, in school, you will be asked to apply this information by adhering to a particular style guide. At Kaplan, the most commonly used style guide is the American Psychological Association (APA), so the formatting conventions of APA will be used here to demonstrate how to reference the source information that you use in your papers.

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What is Plagiarism?

The Kaplan University Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as

the theft of words, ideas, concepts, images, or research. Plagiarism is using another's words, ideas, results, or images without giving appropriate credit to that person; therefore, giving the impression that it is your own work. Whether you copy verbatim or simply rephrase the ideas
of another without properly acknowledging the sources, it is still plagiarism. Whether the action is intentional or not, it still constitutes plagiarism. (Kaplan University, 2014, para. 9)

The point that plagiarism can be intentional or unintentional is important. Think of it this way: If you don’t mean to cheat on your taxes but you calculate your taxes wrong, the IRS still penalizes you. The same concept holds true for plagiarism. You might not intend to plagiarize; however, if you don’t know how or when to cite borrowed information, you are still guilty of stealing someone else’s work. Therefore, it is crucial to learn the rules and use citation properly to avoid plagiarism. Kaplan University has a firm Academic Integrity Policy that clarifies the expectations and penalties regarding plagiarism, and you should be aware of what that policy is. You will find this policy in the syllabus of most, if not all, of your courses at Kaplan. You can also access it in the Kaplan University Catalog here.

Self-Plagiarism
Some common examples of plagiarism are when a writer quilts a paper together from multiple webpages without citation, having a references page but no in-text citations, or changing two words in a passage and citing it as a paraphrase. Additionally, recycling a paper from a previous class without both permission and revision to make it a new paper is also plagiarism: “self-plagiarism,” and it violates the Kaplan University Academic Integrity Policy under the Misrepresentation clause:

> Submitting...any part of an assignment for more than one class without enhancing and refining the assignment, and without first receiving instructor permission. (In cases where previous assignments are allowed to be submitted..., it is your responsibility to enhance the assignment with the additional research and to submit the original assignment for comparison purposes.) (Kaplan University, 2014, para. 4)

This means you cannot use the same paper for credit for more than one assignment. If you would like to use and expand on an assignment from a previous class, you must first submit your original assignment to your instructor and ask for permission to continue your research on the topic; however, your new assignment should be significantly different from the previous one.

In a professional sense, self-plagiarism is a serious offense because journals that publish your work want the most current research, not previously published research. If you do not let publishers know that your work was previously published, and they run your piece only to find out later that it was published in another journal, you will likely not ever be considered for publication again by either journal unless a publisher specifically says that multiple submissions or previously published manuscripts are acceptable.
Citing sources means acknowledging the source of the information you included in your paper from books, articles, or other sources. The reasons you provide citations are (a) to give proper credit for words, ideas, graphics, or other information you borrow from others, and (b) to help readers find sources you used in case they want to read more from those pieces. Two main terms are associated with citation: in-text citation and full citation, both of which are explained in the following sections.

**In-Text Citation**
An in-text citation is a shortened version of a source’s bibliographic information that is inserted right into the text of a paper such as at the end of a sentence to indicate to readers that the information in that sentence was borrowed from someone else. The bibliographic information is shortened because a full entry with all of the specifics needed to look up a source would interfere with reading your paper. In-text citation format varies between quotations and paraphrases and depending on what information is available to you from the original document, but most in-text citations in APA format will include the author’s last name and the publication year.

The following is an example of an in-text citation for a paraphrase or summary:
(Martinez, 2008).

If the information being cited was a quote, in addition to quotation marks [“…”] being put around the quoted text, the parenthetical citation would also include the page number:
(Martinez, 2008, p. 4).

If individual authors are not named, you would use the name of the sponsoring organization as the author. For example, if you were paraphrasing from this guide, you would use the following format:
(Kaplan University Writing Center, 2014).

If neither an author nor sponsoring organization is unidentified, you would instead enclose the title of the article in quotation marks along with year of publication as shown here:

This shortened version of a source’s bibliographic information in text is meant to be unobtrusive to the reader, whereas a full citation is reserved for the reference list at the end of the paper.

**Full Citation**
A full citation is all of the information readers need if they want to retrieve an article, book, or other source cited in your paper. In APA format, these citations are listed on a separate page called the reference page or reference list. Readers use in-text citations to cross-reference the full citation at
the end of the document. For instance, if an in-text citation looks like this: (Smith, 2002), a reader can turn to the reference page, scan down the list of full citations and look for the book or article written by an author with the last name Smith and published in the year 2002.

The information provided in a full citation is based on the type of source it is because the way you find a book is different from the way you retrieve a website or an article from an online database.

A sample full citation in APA for a book looks like this:

A sample full citation for a webpage looks like this:

The examples show how books are retrieved by looking up an author’s name, the year the book was published, the title, and the publisher. This information is given to ensure the reader can find the same book that you used in your paper. A webpage, however, is an electronic source, so it is retrieved by knowing the URL (web address) and the name of the author or organization that sponsors the website along with the title of the specific webpage. (Please note that unlike the colored font used to emphasize the examples in this guide, in your paper, the font color for citations would be black and have the same typeface as the rest of your document.)

**Why Do We Cite?**

There are two main reasons to cite sources. The first is to give credit to those whose information we borrow. The United States is an individualistic society, which means individual contributions are highly valued. When we use an individual’s ideas, words, artwork, or anything else, we therefore give credit to that individual. The second reason is to provide interested readers with the specifics needed to retrieve your sources and do more research on their own. The in-text citation shows readers where certain ideas or words in your paper came from, and this shortened version of citation cross-references the full citation at the end of the paper. From the full citation, readers have all of the information they need to retrieve a source.

**When Do We Cite?**

To know when to cite, follow this simple rule: Whenever information does not come out of your own head, you must cite it. This includes when you use someone’s words (quotations), ideas (paraphrases and summaries), and illustrations of ideas (graphics). The following information discusses citation in relation to quotations and paraphrases in detail.
Quoting

You use quotations when you borrow someone else’s words and you want to use those exact words in your own paper. Quotations are used sparingly in most academic writing because they must include quotation marks in addition to a citation, which can slow down the reading. Too many quotations can also make a paper sound like a summary whereas your own original ideas become diluted in a sea of other authors’ words. Additionally, since quotations interject another author’s voice in your paper, the switch from your voice to another’s can also slow down the reading.

Use these three general guidelines for when to use quotations in a paper:

1. When you are critiquing someone’s exact words. For instance, if you wanted to argue that a reviewer’s comments on your performance in the community theater were not as bad as they seemed, you would want to critique, thus quote, the exact words of the reviewer.
2. When you want to include dialogue in your paper. For example, if you wanted to illustrate a point with an excerpt from an interview, you would want to quote the person’s exact words.
3. When the original author’s words are so eloquent or unique that you cannot find a way to paraphrase and still maintain the same meaning or impact of the original passage.

When you borrow words (quotations) to include in your own paper, you have to do three things:

1. Copy the words exactly as they are written in the original piece.
2. Enclose the words you borrowed in quotation marks, which look like this: “quotation.”
3. Include an in-text citation with the quotation and a full citation on the reference page.

Additionally, to help make your writing flow where one idea clearly leads to the next, it is a good practice to use signal words and phrases instead of just inserting quotations abruptly and separately. In the following sample paragraph, the quotes are merely dropped into the text:

“Most conventional healthcare providers prescribe medicine that only alleviates a patient’s symptoms” (Jones, 2004, p. 3). “Alternative medicine seeks to help patients prevent illness by understanding underlying causes” (Smith, 2007, p. 99). Some people think there is a good way to balance the two for optimal health.

In this example, the last sentence in the paragraph indicates the two quotations are on the same topic; however, the relationship between the quotations is unclear as is how they led to the concluding thought. This means more context or paragraph development is needed. Signal words help integrate quotations into a discussion so that the ideas are developed and cohesive—connected to the overall purpose of the paragraph, which in this example is to compare and contrast. Signal phrase verbs also indicate the position of the author on the subject you are writing about.
Note that in APA format, when reporting what an author said, you will want to use the past tense.

**Table 1. Sample Signal Phrase Verbs**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neutral Position</th>
<th>Shows Agreement</th>
<th>Shows Disagreement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>commented</td>
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<td>illustrated</td>
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<td>said</td>
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<td>explained</td>
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A revision of the previous paragraph that integrates the quotes might look something like this, whereas the highlighted areas use signal words that develop and create clear relationships between the ideas, helping make the writing flow:

Conventional medicine is often viewed as providing immediate relief for illness. *Jones* (2003), a 13-year DO in New York City, contended that “most conventional healthcare providers prescribe medicine that only alleviates a patient’s symptoms” (p. 3). This sentiment is echoed by another healthcare provider who explained that “alternative medicine seeks to help patients prevent illness by understanding underlying causes” (Smith, 2007, p. 99). It seems logical, therefore, that optimal health can be achieved by balancing conventional and alternative approaches to medicine because they both have benefits to patients.

**Long or Block Quotations**

In APA format, quotations that are 40 or more words are considered long or block quotations. They are called “block” quotations because you set them off from the rest of the paragraph in an indented “block.” The block format makes it easier for readers to differentiate the quote from the rest of the text.

To format a block quote, you do not use quotation marks. Instead, you indent the quotation ½ inch from the left margin. The period is inserted at the end of the quotation, and the in-text citation goes after the period. The opposite is done for a short quotation where the end punctuation follows the parenthetical citation to enclose it inside the sentence: “Quote” (citation).

The following paragraph includes a block quote (highlighted yellow):
Students do not necessarily have to be geographically placed all over the world in order to experience cross-cultural interactions because of the high rate of immigration worldwide. For instance, The United States is in the midst of the largest wave of immigration in its history, with over a million new immigrants per year for a total foreign-born population of over 35 million people, equaling 12 percent of its total population. In Canada, Switzerland, and Australia the rates of immigration are nearly double the US rate. (Suárez-Orozco, 2007, p. 9)

Thus the mobility of the world’s population is providing opportunity for global instruction even within a country’s own boundaries.

Paraphrasing
You are paraphrasing when you borrow someone else’s idea, but you put that idea in your own words. Paraphrasing is preferred when you want to incorporate research into your writing because paraphrasing shows you understood what you read and therefore know what you are talking about, for you have taken what someone else said and rephrased it so it sounds like you and so the idea fits seamlessly in your paper. When you paraphrase, you choose the vocabulary and writing style that would appeal to your intended readers (versus your source’s intended readers).

Paraphrasing is therefore expressing someone else’s idea or information in your own original wording and sentence structure. Although it’s okay to use technical terms and statistics from the original that couldn’t be paraphrased without changing the original author’s meaning or findings, the original wording must be changed significantly if not wholly to avoid plagiarism. Remember, to use someone’s words is quoting and would therefore require the formatting conventions for quotations.

Here are some guidelines to help you avoid plagiarism when paraphrasing:

1. When researching, always make note of the source you are working with by putting the full citation in APA format at the top of your notebook page.
2. Read the original passage several times before trying to paraphrase. Be sure to completely understand the idea being expressed and the context in which the material is being used.
3. Write down, in your own words, the idea of the passage without looking back at the original. Looking back can make you want to use the same words.
4. Determine if the wording in the paraphrase captures the exact meaning as the original.
5. Ask is the paraphrase used in the same context as the original? Is it used in the same manner that it was used in the original, or has it been altered so that it serves a completely different purpose? Taking an idea out of context is faulty research and damages your argument.
6. Ask someone else to read the original, and then read the paraphrase and compare the meaning and context between the two.
Preventing plagiarism begins with careful note taking while first reading a source, and it ends when the borrowed material is accurately cited in the format of the preferred style guide such as APA. The actual content of the paraphrase needs to be completely original, even when using a citation. The following examples show acceptable and unacceptable paraphrases:

**Original passage:** “Educational leaders posed with the task of integrating ethics into undergraduate general education curriculum are faced with finding faculty who are interested in the topic instead of forcing faculty who are not interested into teaching a subject they are not committed to” (Stevenson, 2007, p. 5).

**Acceptable paraphrase:** When it comes to teaching ethics in undergraduate programs, it is preferable to use faculty who have a profound interest in the subject to teach such courses (Stevenson, 2007).

**Unacceptable paraphrase:** Educational leaders have to find faculty who are interested in ethics instead of forcing teachers who are not interested in teaching a subject they are not committed to (Stevenson, 2007).

The acceptable paraphrase is fine because it rewords the main idea of Stevenson’s original passage about the effectiveness of using willing and interested faculty to teach ethics in undergraduate courses. The unacceptable paraphrase is plagiarized because too many words from the original passage are used without quotation marks around those words.

**Summarizing**

Summarizing is similar to paraphrasing in that you take information from a source and put it into your own words, but the purpose and format for a summary differs from a paraphrase in the following ways:

- A summary is a condensed version of a long passage of writing.
- A summary captures only the main points of a passage.
- A summary helps you learn material through close reading in order to
  - comprehend what the main points of a reading are and
  - understand the material so well that you can express the main ideas in your own words instead of using someone else’s words.

The following is an example of how to summarize information.

**Original passage:**
Collaboration with others is part of living and working in the professional world. A high portion of our daily communication occurs in groups, such as family, coworkers, and friends. Regardless of career choice, it is likely that individuals will spend a considerable part of their personal and professional lives working in collaboration with others. The changing environment of the workplace has caused an increase in the use of virtual teams for collaborative projects. The major difference between a virtual team and a team that meets face-to-face is the distance that lies between members. It is distance that affects the interaction between group members. Technologies, such as teleconferencing, email, web enabled chat, groupware, and shared file programs, have made communication at a distance and virtual collaboration possible. Through technology, virtual teams are able to interact, complete projects, and resolve conflicts. (Martinez et al., 2008, p. 167)

To summarize the preceding paragraph, first highlight the main ideas of the paragraph as shown here:

Collaboration with others is part of living and working in the professional world. A high portion of our daily communication occurs in groups, such as family, coworkers, and friends. Regardless of career choice, it is likely that individuals will spend a considerable part of their personal and professional lives working in collaboration with others. The changing environment of the workplace has caused an increase in the use of virtual teams for collaborative projects. The major difference between a virtual team and a team that meets face-to-face is the distance that lies between members. It is distance that affects the interaction between group members. Technologies, such as teleconferencing, email, Web-enabled chat, groupware, and shared file programs, have made communication at a distance and virtual collaboration possible. Through technology, virtual teams are able to interact, complete projects, and resolve conflicts. (Martinez et al., 2008, p. 167)

Now, put those main ideas into your own words.

**Summarized passage:**
Martinez et al. (2008) made the point that today’s workplace is quite different than it was 20 years ago; more people are working remotely or companies are so large that they have different sites throughout the world. Martinez et al. explained that this change in the workplace has increased the need for virtual teams; however, the need for collaboration has not changed. Distance can affect how well a group works together, but modern technologies have made communication with virtual team members possible and an effective means for getting the job done (Martinez et al).
Summaries are most helpful for learning new material. Summaries should be written in your own words because this shows you have truly learned the material. If you have to keep looking back at the original passage and use someone else’s words, you have not quite grasped what the main ideas are, so you will want to go back and study the meaning behind the passage until you can state the main points in your own words. Summarized material in your paper needs to be cited, just as paraphrased material is cited, so readers know where the ideas in the text came from and where to retrieve the same source.

**How Do We Cite?**

Most style guides are written for particular disciplines; therefore, citation rules and formats are designed for the kind of information used within that profession. For instance, *Bluebook* is a style guide used in the legal field. *Bluebook*’s style and format cater to displaying pertinent information for retrieving court cases, legislation, and briefs. On the other hand, *American Psychological Association* (APA) style is used in the social sciences and sometimes in business. This means that readers are expecting writers to use the most current information from credible and verifiable sources.

**Cross-Referencing**

The key to properly citing your sources is to learn how to cross-reference. This means that you take your source, a journal article, for instance, and you look up in your style guide how to cite a journal article—what elements to include in the citation and in what order to put them. It will also indicate the capitalization, font, and punctuation rules to follow. Here’s an example:

**Information available to you in a printed journal article:**

Diane Martinez, “Writing in an Online Environment” in the *Journal of Online Writing* published in May of 2009. The journal volume is 3 and the issue number is 2. The article is 17 pages long beginning on page 17 and ending on page 34.

According to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed) (APA, 2010), you would put this information in the following format:

Author, Middle initial. First initial. (Year of publication). Title of article. *Title of the Journal*, volume(issue), page-page.

The APA citation would then look like this:

You do not need to memorize citation formats. The key is to use your style guide or a resource such as the Common Citations in APA Format in the Writing Center and match your sources with the rules in the guide.

Where Do We Get the Rules for Citation?
At Kaplan, the most used citation style is APA, so you will find many helpful resources on APA citation in the Research, Citation, and Plagiarism area of the Writing Reference Library in the KU Writing Center. Additionally, APA and many other style guides have official manuals as well as websites where you will find accurate information about how to cite. Table 2 lists online resources for various style guides.

Table 2: Online Resources for Various Style Guides

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style Guide</th>
<th>Website</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AP (Associated Press)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.apstylebook.com">http://www.apstylebook.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APA (American Psychological Association)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.apastyle.org">http://www.apastyle.org</a></td>
</tr>
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<td>AMA (American Medical Association)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.amamanualofstyle.com">http://www.amamanualofstyle.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bluebook</td>
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<tr>
<td>IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ieee.org/portal/site">http://www.ieee.org/portal/site</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford</td>
<td><a href="http://www.oup.com">http://www.oup.com</a></td>
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</table>

Writers commonly conduct research online using library databases, websites, and blogs. Writers also reference multimedia sources such as videos and podcasts. To cite electronic sources, you use the same information as for print sources. In-text citations should provide the author and year. Articles published online do not always have page numbers, however, so when quoting, you would provide the paragraph number instead: (Author, year, para. #). The full citation on the reference page then provides the author, publication year, title, and the retrieval information such as a doi (digital object identifier) or the url (uniform resource locator, i.e., website address).

The basic APA format for an article published on a webpage would like this this:

If your source does not provide some of the information needed for the citation, APA offers this guide: “What to Do When Information is Missing.”
Citing Graphics

Graphics, such as tables, graphs, images, and artwork that you borrow from a source and want to insert in your paper must be cited, so you don’t pass off another’s work as your own. Graphics should also be inserted as close as possible to where they are mentioned. They are not to be used solely for aesthetic reasons but to illustrate a point or support the overall purpose of your writing. In addition to providing the copyright notice to indicate the copyright owner of the graphic, citation is recommended in-text, adjacent to the graphic and following a Figure number: Figure 1, for example. The in-text citation should provide the title of the graphic, the type of graphic it is [in brackets]: [Photograph], for example, and then “From” the author’s name. The following is an example of a graphic integrated into a paragraph with an in-text citation:

APA Style Blog contributor, Lee (2010), used the image of a fried egg (Figure 1) to distinguish between common sources, easily cited, and less common sources that writers struggle to cite.

![Figure 1. How to cite something you found on a website in APA style: The egg [Artwork]. From C. Lee (2010). Copyright 2010 by C. Lee.](image)

The reference citation for a graphic requires the same four elements required in other full citations with the addition of the type or format of the product (artwork, video, blog post…) in brackets:


For the above artwork, the full citation for the reference list would be the following:

According to the U.S. Copyright Office (2009), it is advised that whenever information is borrowed for any reason, an author should seek permission to use it. However, the fair use doctrine, which is part of the U.S copyright law states that there are particular instances when reproducing some else’s work, within certain limitations, may be fair. These instances may include “criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, and research” (U.S. Copyright Office, 2009, para. 2). Borrowing words and ideas or graphics and artwork for educational purposes therefore falls into the realm of fair use. This is what enables students, for example, to borrow excerpts of another author’s work for use in academic writing and research without obtaining permission as long as the work is properly cited.

The public domain is information or works that have not been published or that were published prior to certain dates set forth by the U.S. Copyright Office, or information that is open to the public, such as most government information. Information that falls in the public domain should be cited, but you do not need permission to use it.

There are specific times when content that is not originally yours does not need to be cited; use of common knowledge constitutes a time when, unless taken word for word from a source, a citation is not needed. Certain characteristics must be met for content to be considered common knowledge:

- The same information can be located in a minimum of five different research sources.
- Your reader should already know this information.
- The information is easily accessible in general information sources.
- The information comes from folklore, mythology, or well-known stories.
- The facts are well known in your field of study—and will be well known to your audience.

The key concept to remember about common knowledge is that you do not have to cite it as long as it is written in your own words. If you take a well-known fact word for word from a source, a citation is required to attribute the wording to the source and to avoid plagiarism. Furthermore, if an interpretation of common knowledge is drawn from a source, the source needs to be cited, as the interpretation is not common knowledge or original to your writing. Additionally, statistics require citation because statistical information is not typically equally represented in general information sources; the source of the statistic, either as a primary or secondary source, needs to be cited. You might not know if something is common knowledge until you find it explained the same way in several sources, so it’s best to cite it like you normally would until you adequately prove to yourself that it is common knowledge.
References


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