

Plagiarism & Citing Sources
APSU Writing Center Handout

Citing Sources

Citing is giving credit to the original source of information, ideas, or words that you use in your own work.

Why Citing is Important

Citing your sources:

- Gives credit to the original authors.
- Shows which ideas are yours and which belong to others.
- Enhances your credibility as a writer or researcher.
- Demonstrates your knowledge of the context and existing scholarship.

What Sources Must Be Cited?

- Ideas that are not your own.
- Researched information from books, articles, websites, or other sources.
- Statistics, graphics, images, or other media you didn't create.
- Direct quotes (someone's exact words).
- Paraphrased or summarized information from another source.
- Diagrams, charts, pictures, or illustrations you didn't make yourself.

What Sources Do Not Need to Be Cited?

Your own original material, such as:

- Observations
- Thoughts or insights
- Experimental results
- Data you personally gathered

Common knowledge, such as:

- Widely known historical facts, dates, or events.
- Basic scientific or cultural information that is generally accepted as true.

Citation Example

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2023), “Regular physical activity can help improve brain health and reduce the risk of chronic disease.”

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the adoption or reproduction of another person’s ideas, words, statements, images, or works without giving proper credit.

Deliberate Plagiarism

- Copying or downloading words or sentences and not citing the source.
- Paraphrasing or summarizing someone’s ideas without saying where they came from.
- Turning in a paper that you didn’t write yourself.

Accidental Plagiarism

- Mixing up what you read with your own thoughts because you didn't take notes carefully.
- Forgetting to use quotation marks for someone else's exact words.
- Leaving out a citation when you paraphrase or summarize.
- Not citing an idea because you didn't realize it needed credit.

Self-Plagiarism

Reusing your own work (like a paper from another class) and submitting it again without permission from your professor to reuse it.

How to Avoid Plagiarism

- Take clear notes while researching.
- Use quotation marks for exact words.
- Cite your sources whenever you use someone else's ideas or information.

Incorrect Citation

Example: Climate change is causing sea levels to rise and weather patterns to become more extreme.

- Copied directly from a source with no credit to the author.

Correct Citation

Example: According to NASA (2023), "Climate change is causing sea levels to rise and weather patterns to become more extreme."

References

University of Nevada, Las Vegas. (2023, May). *Avoiding plagiarism: The basics*.

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