

## AVOIDING PLAGIARISM: THE BASICS

**Plagiarism**, as defined by the **UNLV Student Academic Misconduct Policy**, consists of: “Using the words or ideas of another, from the Internet or any source, without proper citation of the source(s),” “Turning in the same work in more than one class (or when repeating a class), unless permission is received in advance from the instructor,” “Falsifying information for inclusion in an assigned paper,” or “Creating fictional citations for a paper.”

### WHY WE CITE SOURCES

There are many reasons to cite a source, but the most common are to:

- give appropriate credit to the authors of the sources you cite
- demonstrate which ideas are yours or from another author
- enhance your credibility and strength as a writer
- demonstrate authorial knowledge of context

### RESPONSIBLE VS IRRESPONSIBLE USE OF SOURCES

The most important thing to do to avoid plagiarism is to pay attention to how you use material that is not your own. Here are three major questions you should address while writing your paper to avoid plagiarism:

#### Are you using source material properly?

**Source material** is anything you take from an already existing source. Source material can even be something you created and wrote in another paper. Source material is usually used as evidence that supports your ideas.

Make sure you are, first, properly using a quote, paraphrase, or summary by knowing whether and how to adjust the original language of the source material. You also want to always integrate and cite your source material in the correct format and according to the specifications of your professor, institution, or discipline by referring to the proper style guides.

#### Are you putting in-text citations into your paper correctly?

**In-text Citations** are an acknowledgement of the source material’s author(s) placed in the sentence(s) where you directly quote, summarize, or paraphrase the work. They identify the source and the location within the source that the language or information comes from. They usually appear in texts as information in parentheses, a superscript number, or a number in brackets, all of which point to a reference entry on the bibliography, references page, or works cited page.



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## Are you writing your references page citations correctly?

**References** are the citations of your sources, usually found on the last page of your paper formatted in the style required by your professor, discipline, or institution. You will want to check the proper citation style guides to make sure your reference citations are formatted correctly by the type of source material.

For more information using sources responsibly, check out our workshop on [quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing](#) and our handout on [5 steps for effective quotations](#).

## COMMON TYPES OF PLAGIARISM AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

There are many kinds of plagiarism that a writer can knowingly and unknowingly take part in. To understand how to avoid plagiarism, we have to look at how plagiarism happens. Below are the most common types of plagiarism and how to avoid them.

**Direct Plagiarism:** Using source material and claiming it as your own, without having any attribution.

The best way to avoid direct plagiarism is to identify if you are quoting, summarizing, and paraphrasing, check that you have integrated the source material correctly, and then add in an in-text citation and proper reference page citation at the end of the document.

**Common Knowledge:** Using information that is known by most people regardless of cultural or historic backgrounds.

Think about what your audience knows and consider the conventions of the genre you are working in. A citation may not be needed if most members of your audience or in the discipline know that information. If the majority of your audience would not know the information or if you are unsure, a citation is needed.

**Self-Plagiarism:** Recycling an old paper or part of one without instructor permission.

Be sure to check with your current instructor about using previous work and if they agree, remember to ask if they would like you to cite your previous work.

**Patchwriting (or Piecemealing):** Using synonyms to make a paraphrase of a source's material look different even though the information and format remains the same.

When done incorrectly, paraphrasing is considered patchwriting and is a form of plagiarism. To avoid patchwriting, you must be sure that you are changing the sentence structure, format, and words of source material, in other words you need to properly know how to paraphrase source material in your own style.

For examples and more information on these types of plagiarism, check the [Writing Center's website](#) and [YouTube channel](#) for our workshop on Avoiding Plagiarism.

## CONSEQUENCES OF PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is taken seriously in many fields inside and outside of academia. While plagiarism can be accidental, the consequences it may hold are serious and include things such as:

- expulsion from the academic institution you are attending
- a case being filed against you for academic misconduct at the academic institution you are attending

- loss of reputation and authorial credibility
- your argument may be seen as underdeveloped

For more information on how plagiarism cases are handled at UNLV, please see the [Student Academic Misconduct Policy](#).

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

As long as you pay attention to the few things below and apply them properly according to the citation style guide when you are using sources, plagiarism will be one less thing to stress out about.

<b>Responsible Use of Sources</b>	<b>Irresponsible Use of Sources</b>
Always provide an in-text citation and corresponding reference page entry for sources used or consulted in your writing	Not including an in-text citation and reference for sources used or consulted in your writing
Properly use and integrate direct quotes, paraphrases, and summaries of sources	Piecemealing or Patchwriting by using synonyms to make a paraphrase of a source's material look different
Present the source material's and author's intentions accurately.	Presenting another writer's work as your own