

College of the Canyons

How to Avoid Plagiarism

Writing at the college level is complex and challenging. Students are learning (or improving) their ability to use outside sources to support a point. In addition to those challenges, they're also asked to cite their work properly. This can feel like a lot to manage!

Luckily, help is available! Please use this handout to help you integrate and cite sources properly. You can also meet with TLC tutors for feedback and assistance.

Pro Tip #1: Ask questions before an assignment is due.
Your instructor and TLC tutors want to see you do well!

To avoid plagiarism, follow the below steps:

One: Know what plagiarism is.

According to COC's Statement on Academic Integrity, plagiarism is "submitting someone else's work as one's own, or without adequate or proper attribution, including unauthorized use of AI-generated material."

Notice that:

- You can plagiarize yourself! Resubmitting work from one class to a new class without the current instructor's approval counts as plagiarism.
- Unless your instructor specifically approves the use of generative AI (like Chat GPT), using AI does count as plagiarism.



You can read the entire Statement on Academic Integrity by scanning this QR code:

Set yourself up for success by:

- Taking good notes during the research process. Note what information comes from which sources, and use "quotation marks" to indicate direct quotes.
- Managing your time well. Give yourself plenty of time to write and revise your essay, including time to review your citations.
- Knowing your citation style. Are you required to use MLA? APA? Chicago? Something else? What are the specific requirements of this style? (The library and TLC can help you here!)
- Knowing when to cite. You should provide citations for authors' ideas, research, or specific words. You don't have to cite facts that are common knowledge (like "pandas are black and white.")

Pro Tip #2: It's better to cite too much than not cite enough. If you're not sure, provide a citation!

Two: Know how to quote properly.

When we quote, we use writers' exact words while still giving credit. When incorporating a quote into a paper, include:

- "Quotation marks" around the text copied from another source
- A signal phrase to introduce the quote
- A parenthetical citation
- A Works Cited or Reference page entry.

Note: The format required for direct quotes will look different for each citation style. Be sure to refer to citation style guidelines when incorporating direct quotes.

MLA Example of a Direct Quote:	APA Example of a Direct Quote:
Andrew Scull argues that madness, while not a term used in modern psychiatry, is a word that "resonates powerfully in our collective consciousness" (3).	Scull (2011) defines madness as "massive and lasting disturbances of behavior, emotion, and intellect" (p. 3).

Three: Know how to paraphrase properly.

When we paraphrase, we express writers' ideas in our own way while still giving credit.

When writing a paraphrase, it may help to think of yourself as a teacher. How would you explain the author's ideas to your students?

In order to paraphrase well, we must:

- Change the original word choices
- Change the original sentence structure
- Provide a citation that includes a signal phrase to introduce the quote, a parenthetical citation, and a Works Cited or Reference page entry

MLA Example of a Paraphrase:	APA Example of a Paraphrase:
In <i>The Latin Beat</i> , Ed Morales credits Chet Baker and Gerry Mulligan's rhythmic innovations for the slower bossa nova beat (205).	Kessler (2003) found that early onset results in a more persistent course.

Four: Document sources on a Works Cited or References page.

Works Cited or Reference pages are lists of all the sources you use in an assignment.

Different citation styles cite differently, but, in general, you should plan to provide publication information about the sources you use. That way, your readers can learn more about those sources.

MLA Example:

Newkirk, Vann. "America's Health Segregation Problem." *The Atlantic*, The Atlantic

Monthly Group, 18 May 2016, 9:00 a.m.,

<http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/05/americas-health-segregation-problem/483219/>.

APA Example:

Coddles, B. (2019, June 19). Gremlins and psychology. *Supernatural Journal of Science*, 34(3), 10-43.

Note: Both the library and TLC have resources to help you craft your Works Cited or Reference pages.

Five: Keep track of your writing process.

You can avoid an accusation of plagiarism by showing *how* you completed your work. Keep a record of your notes and your drafts. This way, you can show your instructor how your work progressed over time.

Six: Be aware of the consequences of plagiarism.

Plagiarizing isn't worth it! Students who plagiarize may receive a zero on the assignment, have a mark on their academic record, be suspended from class, or be expelled from the school. It's much better to ask for help or to request an extension on an assignment!

Resources:

You can ask for help with citation at The Learning Center or the Library. Tutors and librarians are looking forward to assisting you!