

How Not to Plagiarize

No matter what style guide you're using, these four simple steps can help you make sure you haven't plagiarized. For more in-depth advice about how to cite in each style, check out the [MLA](#), [APA](#), and [Chicago](#) citation guides on the Purdue OWL, or make an appointment at the Writing Center.

Put quotation marks around all sentences, words, and phrases taken directly from a source.

Even if you only take a tiny little part of a source, you need to put quotation marks around it.

If your source's text looks like this:

John Ericsson, leader of the Free Illinois movement, believes that Illinois' forests are the lifeblood of the state's tourism industry and need to be protected by the full force of the law.

Your paper should look like this:

The Midwest protest organization argues that protection of "Illinois' forests" is necessary because those areas are "the lifeblood of the state's tourism industry."

Include in-text citations after every direct quote.

Every time you have quotation marks, you need an in-text citation. Read through your paper. Any quotes without citations? Fix 'em.

Example of MLA Style (author-page #):

The Midwest protest organization argues that protection of "Illinois forests" is necessary because those areas are "the lifeblood of the state's tourism industry" (Smith 53).

Example, APA Style (author-date):

The Midwest protest organization argues that protection of "Illinois forests" is necessary because those areas are "the lifeblood of the state's tourism industry" (Smith 2009).

Include in-text citations after every idea, thought, or statistic that isn't completely your own.

If there's any chance you might have gotten a thought or idea from somewhere else, be on the safe side and add a citation. The example below doesn't quote anything directly, but it still comes from the source. It needs a citation.

Example (MLA-Style):

Ericsson's protest organization is moving to protect Illinois woodlands because of their importance to the state's economy (Smith 53).

Example (APA Style)

According to Smith (2009), Ericsson's protest organization is moving to protect Illinois woodlands because of their importance to the state's economy (p. 53).

Include a bibliographic entry for every source you cite in text.

Your reader should be able to find full bibliographic information for every single source you cite. Go through your paper. Each time you have an in-text citation, check your works' cited page. Do you have a listing for that source? If not, add it.