

## Avoiding Plagiarism

Academic writing is a complex artform in which the writer (you) brings other voices into a conversation about your topic. How do you avoid plagiarism or the perception of plagiarism? Or, better put: How do you integrate sources into your writing in a meaningful, legible way?

**Understand the value of integrating sources skillfully and citing them properly.** Citation is not a rote exercise. Effectively integrating sources puts your opinions in conversation with others, demonstrates your comprehension of the research subject, and distinguishes your analysis from the viewpoints of the authors you have referenced. Citing sources serves as proof of your research and allows others to locate your sources. If your paper has a point, main idea, or thesis that is your own and you organize the source material around that point, you are already on the right path!

**Keep track of your sources.** Take careful notes as you read and keep a record of all bibliographic information. You can do this the old-school way, on note cards, or by using free citation tracking software such as Zotero or knowledge management platforms like Notion.

**Always cite your sources.** This holds true, even if:

- you put all direct quotes in quotation marks.
- you changed the words used by the author into synonyms.
- you completely paraphrased the ideas to which you referred.
- your sentence is mostly made up of your own thoughts, but references the author's ideas.
- you mention the author's name in the sentence.

See A&L's [Research Writing Video Tutorial](#) and [Research Practices Canvas workshop](#) to learn more.