At any given time, several of you are in the process of writing a thesis, report, or a paper draft. In addition to devising an outline that raises the interest of the reader, rather than putting him or her to sleep, making sure that all the experimental data are presented and corrected (yes, proofread yourself several times and have somebody else proofread for you!), and applying logical reasoning, make sure that you give proper credit for any "borrowed" material!

Scholarship builds on the knowledge, understanding, and creative extrapolation of the work of others, but there are strict rules for ethical scholarship and for avoding plegiarism.

Below, I have copied a few important guidelines from the ethics websites of the University of Pittsburgh and the University of California. Please adhere strictly to these rules; otherwise you will face at least a significant delay in the correction of your work and at worst a failure in an exam (or annulation of your degree). Let me know if there are any questions!

"WHAT IS PLAGIARISM?

Plagiarism means using another's work without giving credit. You must put others' words in quotation marks and cite your source(s) and must give citations when using others' ideas, even if those ideas are paraphrased in your own words.

"Work" includes "original ideas, strategies, and research, art, graphics, computer programs, music, and other creative expression. The work may consist of writing, charts, pictures, graphs, diagrams, data, websites, or other communication or recording media, and may include "sentences, phrases, and innovative terminology, formatting, or other representations.

The term "source" includes published works (books, magazines, newspapers, websites, plays, movies, photos, paintings, and textbooks) and unpublished sources (class lectures or notes, handouts, speeches, other students' papers, or material from a research service).

Using words, ideas, computer code, or *any* work by someone else without giving proper credit is plagiarism. Any time you use information from a source, you must cite it.

GUIDELINES FOR AVOIDING PLAGIARISM & HOW TO CITE SOURCES

USE YOUR OWN WORDS AND IDEAS.

Practice is essential to learning. Each time you choose your words, order your thoughts, and convey your ideas, you can improve your writing.

GIVE CREDIT FOR COPIED, ADAPTED, or PARAPHRASED MATERIAL.

The most common citation method is to identify the source in the text, with a footnote or an endnote.

If you repeat another's exact words, you MUST use quotation marks and cite the source. If you adapt a chart or paraphrase a sentence, you must still cite. Paraphrase means that you restate the author's ideas, meaning, and information in your own words. If you use a scheme or a picture from another source, get the publisher's permission (usually easily obtained from a web or email application, and usually free), and state: "Reproduced with permission from ...."

AVOID USING OTHERS' WORK WITH MINOR "COSMETIC" CHANGES.

BEWARE OF "COMMON KNOWLEDGE."

You don't have to cite "common knowledge," BUT the fact must really be commonly known. That Abraham Lincoln was the U.S. President during the Civil War is common knowledge; that over 51,000 Union and Confederate soldiers died in the Battle of Gettysburg is not.

WHEN IN DOUBT, CITE.

Better to be safe than not give credit when you should!

EXAMPLES - How to Cite Correctly

The Original Source:
" In research writing, sources are cited for two reasons: to alert readers to the sources of your information and to give credit to the writers from whom you have borrowed words and ideas."

Plagiarism (same words, no quotation marks):
In research writing, sources are cited to alert readers to the sources of your information and to give credit to the writers from whom you have borrowed words and ideas.

The student has used the author's exact words, leaving out only a phrase, without quotation marks or a citation.

Also Plagiarism (incorrect paraphrase):
In research writing, we cite sources for a couple reasons: to notify readers of our information sources and give credit to those from whom we have borrowed. (Hacker).

The student has made only slight changes, substituting words such as "a couple" for "two", "notify" for "alert", and "our"/"we" for "your"/"you," leaving out a few words, and giving an incomplete citation.

A Solution (appropriate paraphrase):
A researcher cites her sources to ensure her audience knows where she got her information, and to recognize and credit the original work. (Hacker, 1995, p. 260).

This student has paraphrased in her own words, while accurately reflecting and citing the author's ideas.

A Different Solution (quotation with cite):
In her book A Writer's Reference, Diana Hacker notes, "In research writing, sources are cited for two reasons: to alert readers to the sources of your information and to give credit to the writers from whom you have borrowed words and ideas." (1995, p. 260).

By introducing his source, the student signals that the following material is from that source. All verbatim words are in quotation marks, and the source of the quote is cited with a page number.

SUMMARY

Authors who present the words, data, or ideas of others with the implication that they are their own, without attribution in a form appropriate for the medium of presentation, are committing theft of intellectual property and may be guilty of plagiarism and thus of research misconduct. This stricture applies to reviews and to methodological and background/historical sections of research papers as well as to original research results or interpretations. If there is a word-for-word copying beyond a short phrase or several words of someone else's text, that section should be enclosed in quotation marks or indented and referenced to the original source. The same rules apply to grant proposals, to clinical research protocols, and to student papers submitted for academic credit.

 An author should cite the work of others even if he or she had been a co-author or editor of the work to be cited or had been an adviser or student of the author of such work. Plagiarism not only violates the standard code of conduct governing all researchers, but in many cases could constitute an infraction of the law by infringing on a copyright held by the original author or publisher.

 The work of others should be cited or credited, whether published or unpublished and whether it had been written work or an oral presentation. Each journal or publisher may specify the particular form of appropriate citation. One need not provide citations, however, in the case of well-established concepts that may be found in common textbooks or in the case of phrases which describe a commonly-used methodology. "