

# A Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism



## Start Research Early

- ☑ Nothing will hinder your ability to do accurate and well documented research like procrastination.
- ☑ If you rush through the research steps you are more likely to make mistakes in distinguishing your ideas and the source's ideas. You will also be more susceptible to typographical errors, misplaced quotation marks, and inadequate paraphrases.



## Create a List

- ☑ One of the most effective ways to avoid plagiarism is to be proactive from the moment you begin researching.
- ☑ "You can avoid plagiarism by making a list of the writers and viewpoints you discovered in your research and using this list to double-check the presentation of material in your paper" (MLA 61).



## Maintain a Working Bibliography

- ☑ According to Turabian, "... nothing labels you a beginner faster than citations that are inappropriate, or worse, incomplete or inaccurate" (29). You can avoid this beginner mistake by always having a working bibliography, which forces you to "[record] bibliographical data for a source fully, accurately, and appropriately the moment you handle it" (Turabian 29).
- ☑ A Working Bibliography is a list of potential sources that you compile as you conduct your research. This list will change as you both eliminate and add sources. At the end of the research process, the Working Bibliography becomes the Bibliography, also called the Works Cited or References page (MLA 31).
- ☑ The Working Bibliography should contain accurate citations according to your chosen style manual, meaning you should record all the essential information about the source including the author, title, publisher, and publication date (Turabian 28). If you fail to include this information when you first find the source, it may be difficult to locate the source at a later date



## Take Detailed Notes

☑ Detailed note-taking is one of the best practical steps for avoiding plagiarism, but the methods researchers use for note-taking vary between individual researchers.

- Some researchers prefer to take notes by hand while others prefer the computer. Whatever method you choose, keep your notes organized. Have an assigned notebook for each assignment if you choose to take notes by hand. Have an assigned folder on your computer if you take the notes on the computer. Never scribble notes on scrap pieces of paper or in random computer documents.
- “However you take notes, set down first the author’s full name and the complete title of the source—enough information to enable you to locate the source easily in your working bibliography. If the source is not yet in the working bibliography, record all the publication information... and add the source to the working bibliography” (MLA 38).
- In your notes, clearly label your unique ideas, your paraphrases of sources’ ideas, and exact quotations of sources (MLA 61). Always place quotation marks around direct quotes with a citation at the end of the quotation, and always place a citation at the end of paraphrases. If you fail to include quotation marks around a direct quotation in your notes, you will likely plagiarize that information when you write your paper. If you fail to place a citation after a paraphrase in your notes, you could think that information is your own idea and the results from you reading that material. **Do not rely on your own memory!**

For information on how to paraphrase correctly, see additional handouts on our resources page ([www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/writingcenter/resources.cfm](http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/writingcenter/resources.cfm)).



## Argue from Behind Your Sources with Ghost Writing

- The idea behind ghost writing is to remove your voice when using material from sources so that the source’s voice remains distinguishable and at the forefront. This prevents you from presenting a source’s idea as your own, strengthens your credibility, protects you if a source becomes discredited, and forces the audience to argue with your source’s logic, not yours.
- How to Ghost Write:
  1. Write an appropriate paraphrase or summary of the source material.
  2. Select an appropriate signal phrase (According to, as stated by, Smith argues, etc...).
  3. Insert the signal phrase somewhere in the sentence
  4. Place the appropriate citation at the end of the sentence.
- Ghost Writing example: According to Hacker, when quoting a source, writers should always place quotation marks around the material as they take notes so they can later distinguish their words from the source’s words (346).