



Graduate Online Writing Studio

Student Plagiarism Prevention Guide

This guide aims to teach you how to avoid plagiarism by reviewing the most common mistakes students encounter when they write. You can find additional information on this topic on pp. 254-256 in the Seventh Edition of the APA Manual. Please contact our team at writingstudio@keiseruniversity.edu if you have any questions.

Lesson #1: How to Paraphrase Content

This lesson will teach you how to paraphrase content. Writers paraphrase by extracting relevant information from a text and writing it in their words. The result should provide greater clarity.

Original Text

Economic arguments seem to be the most promising avenue for driving reform of America's bloated penal state in the aftermath of mass incarceration. Raising human rights concerns has limited appeal beyond cultural elites and, on occasion, courts, but today reform is coming from elected branches. Talk of human rights for criminals, or human dignity for prisoners, can risk backlash as happened around the death penalty in the 1970s.

Writers should not copy and paste this blurb into their paper, add quotation marks and a citation, and use it as constructed because it contains language that may be difficult for readers to understand. The writer will also not demonstrate that they comprehend the material. Thus, the writer should paraphrase it using original words and a citation.

Ineffectively Paraphrased

Davis (2019) stated that economic arguments are the best way to create reform of America's bloated penal state in the aftermath of mass incarceration. Raising human rights concerns has limited appeal beyond cultural elites and courts, but now reform is coming from the government. When people ask for human rights for criminals or human dignity for prisoners, it can cause a backlash, which is what happened around the death penalty in the 1970s.

In the above revision, the writer only changed a few words from the original content, which does not meet the paraphrasing threshold. It provides an example of copying, pasting, and replacing. The writer also did not demonstrate that they understand the content. Plagiarism detection software would flag it.

Correctly Paraphrased

Davis (2019) stated that moving people from prison to gainful employment, which boosts the economy, ranks among the most effective arguments for criminal justice reform. Human rights abuse that inmates endure in prisons appears to be less persuasive. Moreover, in some instances, discussions about protecting inmates fail to generate sympathy and may decrease people's appetite for reform.

In the correctly paraphrased version, the writer extracted information that they thought would be most important to share. They read the original content, made sense of it, and paraphrased it in their words based on their understanding. As a final step, the writer should revisit the original content to ensure they accurately captured the author's meaning.

Lesson #2: How to Cite Paraphrased Content

This lesson will teach you how to cite paraphrased content. If you find information from a source, you need to cite it, even if you write it in your words.

Paraphrased Text

People who reflect on their decisions more frequently apologize when they make mistakes.

In the above example, the writer paraphrased the passage but did not attribute it to a source.

Correctly Cited Paraphrased Text

Jones (2020) found that people who reflect on their decisions more frequently apologize when they make mistakes.

Lesson #3: How to Use Quotation Marks

This lesson will teach you how to use quotation marks. Whenever you use verbatim information from a source, you need to include quotation marks.

Students should summarize content in their words to show the reader (in this case, your professor) that they understand the material. Ideally, writers reserve direct quotations for famous quotes, mathematical equations, and those rare occasions when summarizing content in their words might interfere with the meaning of the information.

When you use information verbatim from a source, use quotation marks and an in-text citation to avoid plagiarism. Writers commonly make the mistake of copying and pasting information into their work and decide to revisit it later to add the citations, which they may wind up forgetting to do. Thus, you may benefit from developing a citation process (e.g., citing as you add information to your draft to avoid this process error).

Original Text

I have a dream today that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

Correctly Cited

Dr. King declared, "I have a dream today that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character" (Davis, 2009, p. 124).

You can learn more about citing speeches on the APA Style Blog at

<https://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2009/10/how-to-cite-a-speech-in-apa-style.html>

Lesson #4: How to Cite a Personal Communication

This lesson will teach you how to cite a direct communication between you and a live source.

If you interview someone over the phone, watch someone deliver a speech in person, or exchange emails with someone and want to use the information they have shared with you, you must cite it as a personal communication. Let us assume you interviewed Barbara Jordan on November 5, 2020. Here are two examples of how to cite the personal communication:

Narrative Citation (at the start of a sentence)

B. Jordan (personal communication, November 5, 2020) stated that...

Parenthetical Citation (at the end of a sentence)

...will solve the world's problems (B. Jordan, personal communication, November 5, 2020).

Since you did not record the phone interview and house it in a library database, your reader cannot access it. Therefore, you do not include a personal communication in your references section. You only cite it in the body of your work. The references section includes only sources your reader can access to review (e.g., a journal article in ProQuest).

For additional information and video resources, please visit the Keiser University Graduate Online Writing Studio website at <https://www.keiseruniversity.edu/writing-studio/>