



Illinois Valley Community College
Writing Center

PARAPHRASING AND AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

When you use the ideas or words of another in your paper, you must document the source; failure to do so is plagiarism. Plagiarism also occurs when students do not vary their words or sentence structure from the original source when paraphrasing. **To paraphrase, make sure to 1) restate the passage in your own words (if you use phrases from the source, put them in quotes), 2) use a different sentence structure from the sentence in the original source, and 3) conclude with a parenthetical citation or footnote.** Create your citation or footnote according to the documentation style your assignment requires: MLA, APA, or Chicago.

In each of these examples, the citation is in MLA format.

Original Source in Quotes

Casey Jones writes, “In addition to findings that support the hypothesized connection between writing center activities and improvements in students writing, both for tutors and tutees, the relevant literature indicates that both faculty and writing center staff may experience improvements in their capacity to teach composition as a result of their involvement in writing centers” (20).

Correct Paraphrase

Studies report that not only do students who attend writing centers become better writers but also instructors who work with students in writing centers may develop their ability to teach writing (Jones 20).

Notice that the author rephrased the words from the original source and created a new sentence structure for the paraphrase. Also, note that the paraphrase is much clearer than the quote. Your reader will thank you for clarifying the idea. Usually, you should place quotes around a phrase directly taken out of a quote; however, in this example, since “writing center” is the topic of the paper, the author would not have to place this phrase in quotes in the paraphrase.

Plagiarized

Casey Jones writes that in addition to reports that show the suspected link between writing center visits and progression in students writing, both for tutors and those being tutored, important articles in the field indicate that both instructors and others who work in writing centers may also improve in their ability to instruct students in composition as an effect *of their involvement in writing centers* (20).

Do not merely plug synonyms into a passage. Even though this writer included the parenthetical citation and varied the words, this passage is plagiarized. Notice that this writer did not vary the sentence structure of the paraphrase from the structure of the original source. Also, note that the author of this passage used identical phrasing (of their involvement in writing centers) from the original source without placing quotes around it.

Hint:

To stop yourself from following the language of your source too closely, do not allow yourself to look at the source when paraphrasing. Close the book or cover the passage. After you have put the passage in your own words, check that you have not copied any of the source’s words or used the same sentence structure.