How to Document Research Papers and Avoid the Plagiarism Trap

Fresno Pacific University
Academic Support Center
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What is documentation

- Merriam Webster definition:
  - “The provision of documents in substantiation"
  - Indicating the sources of material presented in an academic paper

- Documentation in research papers includes citing the following:
  - Direct quotations: using the author’s exact words
  - Paraphrased statements: restating the author's idea using your own words
  - Summaries: writing a condensed version on the information provided by the author
Why do we use documentation?

- To borrow expertise and reputation of sources who may know more.
- To make it clear that we are NOT STEALING.

Reasons*

- Strengthens your work/writing
- Documenting sources shows respect for intellectual property
- Citing is a service to the reader
- Serious consequences if you don’t document your sources

*York University

http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic_integrity/plagsources.html
Documentation Styles

- Each academic field uses its own documentation style to fit what each field considers to be most important and appropriate.
- Concept of what needs to be documented is universal:
  - Information about the author
  - Title of the work
  - Name and location of the company that published your copy of the source
  - Date your copy was published
  - Page numbers of the material you are borrowing
Documentation Styles—Modern Language Association (MLA)

- Used in literature, arts and humanities
- Typically taught at FPU in Written Com
  - Used to teach concepts of documentation
- Emphasis on authorship
- MLA resources
  - *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Paper*
  - [https://www.library.cornell.edu/research/citation/mla](https://www.library.cornell.edu/research/citation/mla)
Documentation Styles—MLA Example

“Works Cited”


In-text

- This phenomenon is best referred to as a “cumulative collaboration of evidence” (Pepper 49).
Documentation Styles—American Psychological Association (APA)

- Used in psychology, education, other social sciences and sometimes natural sciences
- FPU discipline-specific research-writing courses offer an overview
- Emphasis on the date the work was created
- APA resources
  - *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*
  - [http://www.vanguard.edu/psychology/faculty/douglas-degelman/apa-style/](http://www.vanguard.edu/psychology/faculty/douglas-degelman/apa-style/)
Documentation Styles—APA Example

- “References”

- In-text
  - This phenomenon is best referred to as a “cumulative collaboration of evidence” (Pepper, 1961, p. 49).
Documentation Styles—Chicago/Turabian

- Chicago: Used in history and sometimes biblical studies
- Turabian: An adaptation of Chicago style, made for college students to use with any subject
- Emphasis on source origins
- Chicago/Turabian resources
  - *The Chicago Manual of Style*
  - *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*
  - [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html)
Documentation Styles—Chicago/Turabian Example

“Bibliography”

Footnotes or Endnotes
- Philosopher Stephen C. Pepper refers to this phenomenon as a “cumulative collaboration of evidence.”[^12]
- Superscript number at end of the sentence refers to a note at the foot of the page or end of the document:

Improper Documentation

“Plagiarism is theft and can be committed intentionally or unintentionally. Plagiarism can occur by representing the writings, works or ideas of another as one’s own or by copying material from resources without proper citation” (FPU 2015-2016 Catalog 128).

- Omitting proper citation
  - Missing citation within the document
  - Missing source information from “References,” “Works Cited” or “Bibliography”
- Using pre-written work (your own or someone else’s)
- Reason plagiarism may happen:
  - Poor time management
  - Perceived pressure from teachers, parents, peers or oneself
  - Lack of knowledge
Improper Documentation
Consequences

- Failing grade/Poor academic record
- Expulsion from the institution
- Misdemeanor/felony resulting in a fine or jail time
- This is SERIOUS! Be careful to use proper documentation.
- Don’t be that guy!
Fresno Pacific University Consequences of Student Academic Dishonesty

- First offense—may be considered as willful cheating or unintentional mistake
  - Consequences vary depending on reason
  - Range of consequences includes
    - Re-do assignment for a lower grade
    - Withdrawal from or failure of course

- Second and/or multiple offenses—will be considered willful violations
  - Consequences will be more severe

- Third violation—usually results in disqualification from attendance at FPU

Consult FPU catalog for more details
Example of Improper Documentation

Original Text:

- If there is one thing we learned from this story, it’s this: the Amish commitment to forgive is not a small patch tacked onto their fabric of faithfulness. Rather, their commitment to forgive is intricately woven into their lives and their communities – so intricately that it’s hard to talk about Amish forgiveness without talking about dozens of other things.

- Taken from *Amish Grace* by Donald Kraybill, Steven Nolt, and David Weaver-Zercher

Plagiarized Text:

- The Amish are very committed to forgiveness. This is not a small piece in their practice of faith. Instead it is woven into their lives as well as in their communities. It is difficult to discuss Amish forgiveness without discussing other aspects of Amish life.
Analyze the Example of Improper Documentation

- Why can that be considered plagiarism?
  - The original authors’ ideas are being used
  - Credit is not given to the original authors

- Proper Citation:
  - The Amish are very committed to forgiveness . . . ¹
  - APA:
    (Kraybill, Nolt & Weaver-Zercher, 2007)
  - MLA:
    (Kraybill, Nolt, and Weaver-Zercher 174)
  - Chicago:
Tips for Documentation

- Visit the Academic Support Center (ASC) and speak to a Writing Tutor and/or Academic Coach
- Ask your professor which documentation style is preferred in class
  - If there is no preference, use the style particular to your major
- Consult a style book and follow the directions
  - Don’t rely on your memory
- Allow yourself enough time to prepare the research
  - Create a timeframe with each step of the process and assign each step its own due date (see next slide)
# Timeframe Example

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<td>Start taking notes on sources</td>
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More Tips for Documentation

- Use note cards when taking notes
  - There is a variety of techniques to use:
    - Assign a specific color to each source
    - Include documentation on the notecard
    - Always record bibliographic info before taking
- Create an outline of information
- Practice documentation styles
- Highlight areas in writing/work that come from a different source
- Proofread, Proofread, Proofread!
- Visit the ASC and speak to a Writing Tutor and/or Academic Coach
Resources for Documentation

- Hiebert Library
  - EBSCO provides citations for PDF articles
    - Warning: Always check to make sure the citation is in the proper format
  - Ask library staff if they have more resources

- Purdue OWL - Purdue Online Writing Lab
  - Offers information on different citation styles
  - Plagiarism
    - Further discusses plagiarism and how to properly document sources

- Writing Handbooks (basic information only)
  - MLA, APA Chicago handbooks

- Ask your professor for advice and to resolve tricky questions

- Go to the ASC and don’t be afraid to ask for help!
Go to the Academic Support Center (ASC)

- Marpeck 105
- Writing tutors and academic coaches
- Tutoring hours:
  - Monday – Thursday 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
- For appointments call 453-5585
- Walk-ins welcome