

Plagiarism

From Texas Tech Academic Integrity web page:

<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/studentjudicialprograms/AcademicIntegrity.htm>

Disciplinary Outcomes For Academic Dishonesty Violations

If a student is involved in any form of academic misconduct <including plagiarism> and it is proven that the action took place, the following disciplinary outcomes will occur:

FIRST VIOLATION:

The professor can issue a grade of "F" for the assignment. In addition to this, the professor has the option to issue a grade of "F" for the entire course. Students are allowed to file an appeal for the entire course grade at the end of the semester, but not the individual assignment. This first time instance should be documented by the course instructor with copies going to Student Judicial Programs and the appropriate chain of command structure within the individual College. All first time academic misconduct incidents are regarded as an "information file" and a academic dishonesty policy warning letter is issued to the student.

SECOND VIOLATION:

All actions listed above in the "First Violation" consequences can apply to a second violation, as well. In addition to those, the professor should again send written documentation of the academic misconduct to Student Judicial Programs. If a second referral is made to the Student Judicial Programs office regarding a violation of the academic dishonesty policy, it will then be viewed as habitual abuse of the academic standards held at Texas Tech and disciplinary proceedings will begin.

It just isn't worth it students! The stakes are too high. We are talking about things that will go on your transcript, ruin your credibility with the professor and maybe the individual College, and compromise your integrity. Take the high road that earned your admission into Texas Tech in the first place.

Extracted from the Georgetown University Honor Council web site:

<http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/hc/plagiarism.html>

What Is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is defined by the Honor Council document as "the act of passing off as one's own the ideas or writings of another." In the Appendix to the Honor Council pamphlet called "Acknowledging the Work of Others" (which is used by permission of Cornell University), three simple conventions are presented for when you must provide a reference:

1. If you use someone else's ideas, you should cite the source.
2. If the way in which you are using the source is unclear, make it clear.
3. If you received specific help from someone in writing the paper, acknowledge it.

They Said It So Much Better. Shouldn't I Use Their Words?

Yeah, and Michael Jordan can hit a fadeaway jump shot better than you can, and Miles Davis could play a better blues than you do on the trumpet. Learning to write is learning to think. Sure you won't have a lot of original thoughts, very few of us do. But you will have your original way of looking at things, which is a combination of everything you have done to this point in your life. As you read others' works and ponder, argue with, distill, reconcile yourself to, or reject them, you are growing intellectually, just as you would grow physically by lifting weights or playing the piano.

I thought I can use someone's words if I reference or [cite](#) the source.

You can, and this happens all the time in academia. It is necessary for building upon the works of others. The trouble comes when you start to use someone else's words all throughout your paper. Pretty soon your paper looks like nothing but a field of quotation marks with a few country roads in between (your few sentences) connecting them. This does not represent very much intellectual work on your part. You have assembled a paper rather than writing one.

Some people set out to deliberately plagiarize, but I am not talking about them. I am talking about how you will get yourself into trouble by adopting the vocabulary words and phrases of an author, using them throughout your paper, and not thinking that you have to put quotation marks around each phrase or key word.

Consider the following passage from Heilbroner, Robert L. *An Inquiry into The Human Prospect*. New York: W.W.Norton & Company, 1974, page 37:

The race between food and mouths is perhaps the most dramatic and most highly publicized aspect of the population problem, but is not necessarily the most immediately threatening. For the torrent of human growth imposes intolerable social strains on the economically backward regions, as well as hideous costs on their individual citizens. Among these social strains the most frightening is that of urban disorganization. Rapidly increasing populations in the rural areas of technologically static societies create unemployable surpluses of manpower that stream into the cities in search of work. In the underdeveloped world generally, cities are therefore growing at rates that cause them to double in ten years--in some cases in as little as six years. In many such cities unemployment has already reached levels of 25 percent, and it will inevitably rise as the city populace swells. The cesspool of Calcutta thus becomes more and more the image of urban degradation toward which the dynamics of population growth are pushing the poorest lands.

There are a number of characteristic phrases here that say a lot in just a few words: "the race between food and mouths," "the population problem," "torrent of human growth," "urban disorganization," and "cesspool of Calcutta." If you use these phrases in your paper without indicating that Heilbroner wrote them, or just put one reference to Heilbroner at the end of the paper in the bibliography, you are committing plagiarism, even though you thought you were just trying to express your ideas better than you otherwise could.

For example, if you wrote something like this:

The cesspool of Calcutta is a good example of a city where urban disorganization is being threatened because of a rapidly increasing population. These cities are technologically static, economically backward, and impose intolerable social strains and hideous costs on their individual citizens.

and put no reference to Heilbroner, it would certainly be plagiarism. In the Honor Council pamphlet, this kind of plagiarism is depicted in Example IV and is called "The Mosaic." If you put one reference to Heilbroner in the bibliography, it would still be plagiarism, because your citation was too vague. You could write it this way:

The "cesspool of Calcutta" is a good example of a city where "urban disorganization" is being threatened because of a rapidly increasing population. These cities are "technologically static,"

"economically backward," and impose intolerable social strains and "hideous costs on their individual citizens." (Heilbroner, 37)

You have lived up to the letter of the law--you have given the proper citation. But have you fulfilled your job as a writer? One could argue that the reader would be better off reading Heilbroner's original paragraph. All the "meat" in your paragraph is his. It depends on how this paragraph fits into the larger whole of what you are writing, of course, but this may be a case of not doing enough intellectual work yourself.

By the way, did you know that even using one of these small, characteristic phrases without quotation marks is considered plagiarism? This is called "The Apt Phrase" and is presented in Example V in the Honor Council pamphlet.

What should you do? Really think about what you are reading, outline an argument that reflects the conclusions you are drawing, and when you flesh out the argument, write mainly in your own words, adding quotations where they are necessary to acknowledge others' thoughts and to present evidence that helps your argument. Obviously if you are working at the last minute, you won't have [time](#) to do this. It doesn't matter if you are using the Encyclopedia or looking at your roommate's paper for the same course: if it's not your work, cite it.

What Is a Paraphrase, Anyway?

Paraphrase is stating someone else's ideas in your own words. If you think about it a little, you will realize that it's something that we all do, all the time. You watch the NBA finals on TV, you tell me the story of how Malone fell short and Jordan was a hero again, and I retell the story to my friend in my own way. I probably don't stop to give you credit. If we were constantly stopping to give credit, then our discourse would bog down. However, since we are having a conversation, if you need to know more, you can ask me: What's the source of that stuff, man? And I can say: it was Jimmy, he watched the game so he should know. And you say: Jimmy is an idiot, and I say... well, so it goes.

So why do you have to cite the source of something when you are writing. Doesn't this also bog down the discourse? Yeah, in some of the papers you read it seems like there are more footnotes than the paper text itself. But yes, you do have to cite sources, even for paraphrase. You see when your friend reads your paper, you're not around. He can't call you and ask you for the source. You may not remember unless you put in the [citation](#) anyway (then you have really left yourself vulnerable if a professor does know the source, as he or she probably will).

So when you are writing the paper, think about the reader and what questions he or she would ask. If you can imagine the reader saying: "what was the source of that idea?" then you should cite it, even if you rewrote it in your own words.

Let's paraphrase that Heilbroner [passage](#).

The population problem manifests itself not only in hunger, but also in the specter of urban breakdown that arises from large population growth. Unemployed people pour into depressed cities such as Calcutta, stretching both the cities and the people to the breaking point as they fail to find work. As population growth continues at a rapid pace, such places will become the very image of third-world debasement (Heilbroner 1974).

This passage must end with a citation of Heilbroner. I have captured all of the main ideas in his paragraph. Although I have used "my own" words, for example, substituting the idea of "pouring" into a city rather than "streaming" into it, and substituting the word "debasement" for "degradation," my argument tracks along with his. I am making the same argument. The fact that I changed some words and eliminated others does not mean that this is my own work.

This example illustrates a dangerous trap for the naive or not so naive. If you were to take the Heilbroner passage into a word processor, carefully edit out some words, rearrange the order of some others, and then use the thesaurus function to look up some good synonyms for other words (as I did for degradation), you might arrive at a passage like the one I wrote. You may think you are writing, but you are actually assembling. Even a passage that has been "sanitized" in this way, where the resemblance to the original comes only in the similarity of the arguments, you still must cite the original work.

My Friends Get Stuff From the Internet

So do you, so do I, so does everybody. According to the April 3rd, 1998 issue of Science, there are now as many as 350,000,000 pages on Internet <<2006 update: 11.5 billion accessible and 550 billion in protected sites; Wikipedia under "world wide web">>, and with plans in existence for putting everything in libraries in digital form, the accessibility of virtually any text will become a reality in the not-too-distant future. This means that the temptation to start with someone else's words in a word processor and massage them into a paper will become greater and greater. It's the same kind of problem I was demonstrating in the section about They Said It So Much Better, only it's much easier now.

(By the way, what do you think about how I cited the Science article above? Was it adequate? Would I get a charge of plagiarism?)

The practical consequence of all this information in electronic form is that you will be tempted. You'll find out there are sites where you can download whole papers, and you'll be able to find articles about many topics within a moment's notice. Of course your professors have access to these same tools with the same lightening quick speeds (perhaps even faster with their on-campus Internet access). But that's not the point. You're not in college to play a cat and mouse game with your professor to see if you can fool him or her by using someone else's work. You are in college to hone your mind into a reliable thinking machine that will serve you well throughout the rest of your life. This is the number one skill you are here to obtain: thinking. Why do you think the system of education has changed so little over the past few thousand years? Just as great teachers such as Jesus, Confucius or Mohammed sat with their disciples, so you sit with your professors. You present your thoughts to one who has had greater experience thinking than you have, and this one coaches you little by little to become a better thinker yourself. Presenting someone else's work turns this relationship into a fraud, and cheats you out of the very thing you are in college to get. What you would be getting away with, if you are not caught, is wasting your money.

So how can you use stuff that's already in electronic form? Various professors have widely divergent opinions about this subject. Here's my own personal opinion: It may be more useful to print it out before you start writing and use it like you would a book. At least then cutting and pasting is not so convenient. Always write your papers from scratch, starting with a blank screen. Don't cut and paste from various documents. If you do cut and paste a little, make sure each passage is properly cited. Do the citation work at the time of writing instead of leaving it for the end. Be realistic about what you

are doing. If you are doing a lot of cutting and pasting, chances are you are not writing a very good paper.

I Don't Have Time to Do It Right

Who does? In the olden days a scholar might take 20 years to write his or her treatise. But that's when the total number of books in the world could fit inside the Titanic. Now you have three papers to write by Friday, a Hoya soccer game to attend on Wednesday, and ballroom dance lessons Thursday which you are not going to miss because Mr./Ms. Right will be there!

If you choose to spend your time so as to leave too little for writing, then I have little advice to give you. You should accept the possibility that you will get a lower grade rather than risking plagiarism and a life-changing sanction such as Notation of Academic Dishonesty on your permanent transcript. If you are unable to get the papers done, you can always try the age-old remedy of asking for an extension. Many professors will be sympathetic, and believe me, if it comes to a choice between plagiarizing, turning in really poor work, or humbling yourself a little to explain to your professor what is happening, the third course is the best. Perhaps he or she will tell you that no extension will be given, and perhaps you will get a lower grade on that assignment. But that's still not as bad as a sanction.

A lot of professors really want you to succeed and may be willing to give you a break. You see, they want the same thing that you do: to see you become an excellent thinker. When you don't turn in your own work or work that represents good effort on your part, you rob the professor of the chance to do what he or she does for a living. Is it any wonder that professors get angry when students don't turn their work in on time or present hastily constructed, sloppy work?

So if you don't have time to do it right, shouldn't you be asking yourself the question: what are you doing in college anyway?

A Citation is Not a Traffic Ticket

Before we even get to the idea of citation, let's make sure one thing is clear: if you are using a word-for-word, literal quotation, you have to put the passage you are quoting in quotation marks. If it is a long passage--more than three lines of text in your paper--you should start a new line and indent, putting the citation at the end of the paragraph. Only these two mechanisms are acceptable for indicating quoted material.

Believe it or not, if you leave out the quotation marks, you can be brought to an honor board. One of my students recently transferred a paper from Microsoft Works to WordPerfect. Somehow when he did this, all the quotation marks were stripped from the paper. I hesitate to think what might have happened had he turned in the paper without proofreading it. (Probably he could have shown the professor the earlier draft with the quotation marks and have explained what happened, but it still could have been a major hassle. Unfortunately the interpretation that he was deliberately trying to pass off someone else's work as his own would have had to have been considered.)

But I digress. There are several systems for citing, or giving reference to, the ideas of others. Some professors want you to use a specific system. Others don't care which you use, as long as you are consistent. All professors want you to present complete information. For example, if you are citing the Heilbroner [passage](#), you should give the author's name, the name of the book, the publisher, the

date and place of publication, and the page number of the quotation. The whole reference allows the reader to track it down and see what it says for him or herself. It's part of the scientific paradigm that is prevalent in Western societies, which says that convincing evidence about the truth of a hypothesis can be built up only by amassing several independent direct or indirect confirmations of the hypothesis. If I can track down the source, I can see for myself whether I think it is valid. Our reference librarians have put links to citation guides on the web for [many types of documents](#), and for government documents.

Citing books and magazines isn't too hard, but what about stuff like web pages? I try to reference the TITLE of the page, at the top of the document (or perhaps at the top of your browser window, the URL of the page (its location on the web), the AUTHOR of the page if you can find one (or an organization if it appears that an organization wrote the page), the TITLE and DATE of the broader work if you can discern it, and the date on which you visited the web page. For example, if today is Oct. 1, 1998, you might cite this page as:

Georgetown University Honor Council (1999). What Is Plagiarism? [Online] Georgetown University Honor Council Web Site. URL: <http://www.georgetown.edu/honor/plagiarism.html> [July. 1, 1999].

There are several problems associated with citing web pages.

* Finding out the proper address to record

If frames are being used, the actual web page address is hidden. In this case you can look at the page properties in Netscape or Internet Explorer to find out the true address. Merely citing the top-level frame address is like citing a whole shelf in the library. It doesn't give the reader enough information to find the page again. Try to think: what will I need to find the address again. I have seen cases where students have copied entire paragraphs from an Internet source and listed the generic top-level web domain (such as <http://www.cnbc.com>) as the reference. This is far from sufficient for tracking the paper down and could lead to a charge of plagiarism.

* Finding out the author of the page

This may be quite difficult, and you may have to look above or below the page itself in order to find out who it is.

* Finding the page again at all

The web page may disappear tomorrow. If you have not recorded the citation information immediately, waiting until the last minute, you may not be able to find it, ever again. This is a big problem because now you have written the paper, you know at some level you have committed plagiarism, yet you don't want to rewrite the paper. You have painted yourself into a corner. It may be a good idea to download important pages to your computer, keeping them in a folder associated with the paper, or doing printouts of certain pages and keeping them. I use a system for research where I use the URL as part of the file name, so I know exactly where the information came from.

There are several guidelines and style sheets that have been written for citing these new sources, and you should surely consult them. There are some listed on [our library's pages](#). I found a style sheet on the web at http://www.columbia.edu/cu/cup/cgos/idx_basic.html which follows the popular Modern Language Association format and has been endorsed by the Alliance for Computers & Writing. The

main idea is that you are giving the necessary information so the reader can track it down himself and read the entire original document. The reader therefore will not have to take your word for it, but can evaluate how you understood and used the evidence that you have presented. Be sure to consult your professor about what is the acceptable citation style.

What If My Roommate Helped Me?

Defining the limits of acceptable collaboration is always difficult. Sometimes professors give vague instructions, and sometimes it gets confusing when you have different standards from different professors in different classes. That's why you should never make **any** assumptions about whether you are allowed to collaborate. You should always assume that the answer is no, and then carefully read the assignment and syllabus, listen to what the professor says, and ask if you are unclear. Under this year's Honor Council document, it is your responsibility to know what is acceptable collaboration.

Knowing the limits is one half of the equation. The other half is giving proper credit. If you spent long hours discussing the themes from your paper on Andy Warhol with your roommate, who happened to have lived in Greenwich Village and knew people who knew him, then just cite your roommate as a source in a footnote. Then there is no doubt that you are giving proper credit for help received.

And make sure you are clear with your roommates about the kind of help you are giving them. I have seen a number of cases where a student will allow another student to read his draft or final version of paper so that the second student can get some ideas about how to get started. Sometimes the second student copies the paper verbatim; sometimes he or she uses material from it that constitutes plagiarism. Some professors will tell you that reading each other's papers is an excellent learning device, while others will say you should not do this under any circumstances. So, the bottom line again is know the limits, act within them, and give proper credit.

In My Country/High School, Using Someone Else's Work is a Sign of Respect

I have heard this argument a number of times since starting to hear honor cases in the last few years. The simple and direct answer is the old adage "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." (Thankfully I don't have to dredge up a source for this saying, as stuff that is in common use does not have to be cited.) If you had teachers who told you to assemble papers without listing sources, they did you a grave disservice. Perhaps they thought that this was a good stepping stone to writing, that giving you a place to start with someone else's text would eventually lead to writing on your own (sort of like using training wheels on a bike). I have no problem with this technique as long as all the sources are being cited. I doubt that paper you write will have the polish or insights that come from figuring out how to say it yourself.

If you came from a country where the definitions of plagiarism are different, then you have some catching up to do here. Knowing how and when to cite is your responsibility. However, any professor will be happy to help you do it. Almost all of us wrote Ph.D. dissertations that were full of footnotes, references, and bibliographies. All the academic works we are now writing have them. So let's hope we know what we are doing, although I have to admit there have been egregious cases of plagiarism even among faculty members (not at Georgetown, of course!). If you are in doubt, ask. If you need more help, ask the professor if he or she has any objection to your getting help at [The Writing Center](#), and take advantage of it.

There are some professors on this campus who will tell you that plagiarism is a chimaera. There are no original ideas left anyway, and all we are doing is manipulating sets of symbols. (I have probably grossly misrepresented their positions.) Such philosophical positions notwithstanding, plagiarism is a reality if you don't cite the sources. It's that simple.

I Really Didn't Do It!

Did you know that you are responsible for not plagiarizing even if you don't know what it is? Under this Honor System, it is your responsibility to know. Even if you didn't mean to do it, if you did, and you get caught, it doesn't matter that you didn't know.

Having said that, what if you are sure you didn't plagiarize and the professor says you did. The professor says you must have bought the paper on the [Internet](#) because it was so much better than the other stuff you wrote. If you can show him or her your drafts, the notes you took, and any other materials you used in writing the paper, then you probably will be able to show that it was your own work. If you have nothing, it's going to be harder to prove. Still, if you can talk convincingly about the material in the paper, including things you decided to leave out, why you made the argument the way you did, how the writings you cited fit into the paper, where you found those writings, etc.--you should be able to convince either the professor or the investigating officer that it was your own work. So keep your notes and learn the material well. Visit the professor's office during the course of working on the assignment to discuss your argument. Engage in an email discussion with him or her. Keep the emails and you'll have more evidence that you did write it. Note that in order to do this, you need to get started earlier. You won't have much time to engage your professor in conversation if you are working on the paper at [3 am](#) the night before it is due.

What About Copyright?

You may be aware that US Copyright law protects works for a certain period of time (let's say 100 years for the sake of argument). After this, the works are in the public domain. This means that anyone can publish them without paying royalties. But they still have to acknowledge the source. And whether you are using Plato, Josephus, Machiavelli, Michelangelo, Emerson, Chesterton, T.S. Eliot or e.e. cummings, you must cite your sources. If you cite a long passage in your paper, and the work is still under copyright, you will need to get the permission of the copyright holder to do it. The law is complicated here, because if you can show that your use is "fair," you may not need permission.

But let me ask you this question: what are you doing citing a long passage in the first place? It will take up so much space in your paper that there will be very little room left for your own thoughts. I have seen more than one case where students have turned in papers that were largely (and I mean almost word-for-word largely) other people's work. If the student had put quotation marks around each passage, it would have been painfully obvious that the amount of material added by the student was practically nil. So with the quotation marks and the citations, technically it's not plagiarism. But if the substance of the paper is completely missing, it should get an F from the Professor. That's still preferable to an Honor Council sanction, but is it what you came to college for?

Examples of Plagiarism

(The format of the following examples was drawn from Acknowledging The Work of Others illustrating several types of common plagiarism. The passages in boldface reflect plagiarism of the original passage followed in italics by an explanation why they constitute plagiarism.)

THE ORIGINAL PASSAGE

This book has been written against a background of both reckless optimism and reckless despair. It holds that Progress and Doom are two sides of the same medal; that both are articles of superstition, not of faith. It was written out of the conviction that it should be possible to discover the hidden mechanics by which all traditional elements of our political and spiritual world were dissolved into a conglomeration where everything seems to have lost specific value, and has become unrecognizable for human comprehension, unusable for human purpose. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1973 ed.), p.vii, Preface to the First Edition.

EXAMPLE I

word-for-word plagiarism

This book has been written against a background of both reckless optimism and reckless despair. It holds that Progress and Doom are two sides of the same medal; that both are articles of superstition, not of faith. Interestingly enough, Arendt avoids much of the debates found in some of the less philosophical literature about totalitarianism.

When material is taken directly from a book, article, speech, statement, remarks, the Internet, or some other source, the writer must provide proper attribution. In this example, no credit is given to the author.

EXAMPLE II

the footnote without quotation marks

This book has been written against a background of both reckless optimism and reckless despair. It holds that Progress and Doom are two sides of the same medal; that both are articles of superstition, not of faith.¹ Interestingly enough, Arendt avoids much of the debates found in some of the less philosophical literature about totalitarianism. ¹ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1973 ed.), p.vii, Preface to the First Edition.

When material is quoted word-for-word, a footnote alone is insufficient. The material that represents a direct quotation must either be put within quotation marks or indented. For example:

A. As Hannah Arendt explains, her book was “written against a backdrop of both reckless optimism and reckless despair.”¹ The book “holds that Progress and Doom are two sides of the same medal”²

B. As Dr. Arendt has explained:

This book has been written against a background of both reckless optimism and reckless despair. It holds that Progress and Doom are two sides of the same medal; that both are articles of superstition, not of faith.¹

Interestingly enough, Arendt avoids much of the debate found in some of the less philosophical literature about totalitarianism.

EXAMPLE III

the paraphrase

Hannah Arendt's book, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, was written in the light of both excessive hope and excessive pessimism. Her thesis is that both Advancement and Ruin are merely different sides of the same coin. Her book was produced out of a belief that one can understand the method in which the more conventional aspects of politics and philosophy were mixed together so that they lose their distinctiveness and become worthless for human uses.

Even if the author's exact language is not used, a footnote is required for material that is paraphrased.

EXAMPLE IV

the mosaic

The first edition of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* was written in 1950. Soon after the Second World War, this was a time of both reckless optimism and reckless despair. During this time, Dr. Arendt argues, the traditional elements of the political and spiritual world were dissolved into a conglomeration where everything seems to have lost specific value. In particular, the separation between the State and Society seems to have been destroyed. In this book, she seeks to disclose the hidden mechanics by which this transformation occurred.

Even though this example includes some original material, selected phrases of the original are woven throughout the passage - a. reckless optimism and reckless despair, b. traditional elements of the {our in original} political and spiritual world were dissolved into a conglomeration where everything seems to have lost specific value, and c. hidden mechanics.

EXAMPLE V

the "apt phrase"

Following the Second World War, scholars from a variety of disciplines began to explore the nature of "totalitarianism." One of the most pressing issues for these writers was understanding the "essence" of totalitarianism. How, for example, is a totalitarian regime different from an authoritarian regime? Although authors disagree on the precise answer to this question, a common thread running throughout most of the classic works on totalitarianism deals with the relationship between State and Society. In a totalitarian state, the traditional boundaries between State and society are dissolved into a conglomeration so that the two become indistinguishable.

This passage is almost entirely original, but the phrase “dissolved into a conglomeration” is taken directly from Arendt. Even though this is a short phrase, it must be footnoted. Only phrases that have truly become part of general usage can be used without citation.

Acknowledging the Work of Others

(The pamphlet *Acknowledging the Work of Others* was prepared by the Office of the Dean of Faculty, Cornell University, August 1993. Passages have been quoted with permission granted to Georgetown University.)

Education at its best, whether conducted in seminar, laboratory, or lecture hall, is a dialogue between teacher and pupil in which questions and answers can be sought and evaluated. If this dialogue is to flourish, students who enter the University must assume certain responsibilities. Among them is the responsibility to make clear what knowledge is theirs and what is someone else’s. Teachers must know whose words they are reading or listening to, for no useful dialogue can occur between a teacher and an echo or ghost.

Students who submit written work in the University must, therefore, be the authors of their own papers. Students who use facts or ideas originating with others must plainly distinguish what is theirs from what is not. To misrepresent one’s work ignorantly is to show oneself unprepared to assume the responsibility presupposed by work on the college level. It should be obvious that none of this prohibits making use of the discoveries or ideas of others. What is prohibited is simply improper, unacknowledged use (commonly known as “plagiarism”). . . .

To acknowledge the work of others, observe the following conventions:

1. If you adopt someone else’s language, provide quotation marks and a reference to the source, either in the text or in a footnote, as prescribed by such publications as *Format*, *The MLA Style Sheet*, or the manual of style recommended by the course instructor.

Footnote form varies from discipline to discipline. In some fields, writers group references to a number of sources under a single footnote number, which appears at the end of a sentence or even of a paragraph. In other fields, writers use a separate footnote for each reference, even if this means creating two or three footnotes for a single sentence. It seems pointless, even counterproductive, to make the mechanics of footnoting unnecessarily complicated. If in a short, informal paper you cite a passage from a work all the members of your class are reading in the same edition, it may be entirely sufficient simply to cite page numbers (and if necessary the title of the text) parenthetically within your own sentences: “Hobbes suggests that life outside civil society is likely to be ‘solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short’ (*Leviathan*, p.53).” To ascertain what form to follow in these matters, ask your instructor.

2. If you adopt someone else’s ideas but you cannot place them between quotation marks because they are not reproduced verbatim, then not only provide a footnoted reference to the source but also insert in the text a phrase like one of the following: “I agree with Blank,” “as Blank has argued,” “according to some critics”; or embody in the footnote a statement of indebtedness, like one of these: “This explanation is a close paraphrase of Blank (pp.),” “I have used the examples discussed by Blank,” “The main steps in my discussion were suggested by Blank’s treatment of the problem,” “Although the examples are my own, my categories are derived from Blank.” A simple footnote does no more than identify the source from which the writer has derived material. A footnote alone does

not indicate whether the language, the arrangement of fact, the sequence of the argument, or the choice of examples is taken from the source. To indicate indebtedness to a source for such features as these, the writer must use quotation marks or provide an explanation in his or her text or in the footnote.

3. If some section of the paper is the product of a discussion, or if the line of argument adopted is such a product, and if acknowledgment within the text or footnote seems inappropriate, then furnish in a prefatory note or footnote an appropriate acknowledgment of the exact nature of the assistance you have received. Scholarship is, after all, cumulative, and prefatory acknowledgments of assistance are common. For example: "I, . . . , wish to express my appreciation to Dr. Harlow Shapley of the Harvard Observatory, who read the original manuscript and made valuable suggestions and criticisms, with particular reference to the sections dealing with astronomy" (Lincoln Barnett, *The Universe and Dr. Einstein* [New York: the New American Library, 1958]).

A similar form of acknowledgment is appropriate when students confer about papers they are writing. It is often fruitful for students to assist each other with drafts of papers, and many instructors encourage such collaboration in class and out. All students need to do to avoid misunderstandings is to acknowledge such help explicitly, in a footnote.