

# Instant Workshops

## Introduction to Avoiding Plagiarism

This workshop explains in general terms what plagiarism is and how to avoid it.

### Transcript

Introduction to avoiding plagiarism. In this workshop, I'll explain in general terms what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. This is the first in a series of videos on plagiarism.

So, plagiarism means presenting someone else's words or ideas as though they are your own, whether it is intentional or not. And in countries, cultures, and contexts where plagiarism is considered a serious problem, such as in Canadian higher education institutions, the consequences of plagiarism can be serious. These can include failing an assignment, failing a course, or being expelled. Avoiding plagiarism is important to avoid these consequences, but it's also important to acknowledge the work of others. Avoiding plagiarism is part of academic integrity, which means demonstrating honesty and respect in your academic work.

To avoid plagiarism, you need to make it clear any time you use someone else's words or ideas in your work. You do this by citing, which means indicating the authors and works whose words and ideas you are using. There are different citation styles, such as APA and Vancouver. These give specific details on how to present citations, and these details are outside of the scope of this video. What is common among citation styles is that a complete citation has two parts. First, in the text of your work, you include an in-text citation. This is a short indicator that the information you have just presented is from someone else. Depending on the citation style, an in-text citation can include an author's last name and year of publication in parentheses or it can be a number, for example.

Second, you include a full bibliographic reference according to the citation style you are using. This contains more information than the in-text citation, such as author names, year of publication, title, and publisher or URL. Depending on the citation style, these bibliographic references can be found in footnotes at the bottom of each page or at the end of the whole work, for example.

The in-text citation helps people find the full bibliographic reference, and the full bibliographic reference helps people find the original work you have cited.

I'll give you an example. Say that I have an assignment on the connection between happiness and social action. Do happy people take action, or do you have to be unhappy to want change in the world? In my research, I have found a relevant article from the *Journal of Positive Psychology* entitled *Do happy people care about society's problems?* I want to include these two sentences from the article in my assignment, because they summarize the article's findings very well: "Are happy people less likely to be involved in

social, political, and environmental action? Contrary to this Pollyanna hypothesis, we found evidence across three studies and various social issues that happiness predicts more, not less, social action.”

When I include these sentences in my assignment, I include an in-text citation immediately after. In this example, I am using APA Style, so I have included the last name of the first author, et al., which means there are other authors; the year of publication, 2020; and the page the sentences come from, page 474, all inside parentheses. Since I have used the original words from the article word-for-word, I have placed the two sentences within quotation marks. Other videos in this series will discuss direct quotes and paraphrasing in more detail.

So, I have my in-text citation. Now, I need the bibliographic reference. Since I am using APA Style, the bibliographic reference is placed at the end of my assignment, in a section titled References. My reference includes the information required by my citation style, in this case, it includes authors, year of publication, article title, journal title, journal volume and issue, page numbers, and an address called a digital object identifier or DOI which points to the article’s online location. I would repeat this each time I include words and ideas from others in my work.

When reviewing your own work, a question you can ask yourself is, “Is it always clear which words and ideas are mine and which words and ideas are from others?” If it’s ever unclear, you may be missing some in-text citations.

If you are not used to citing and avoiding plagiarism, it can sometimes be difficult and confusing. It is a skill that develops with practice, and you won’t become an expert after watching a few videos. There may be people available to help. If you need more help, contact your institution’s writing centre, tutoring service, or library.

## Instructions

**Plagiarism** means presenting someone else’s words or ideas as though they are your own. To avoid plagiarism:

1. Include a **citation** each time you use the words or ideas of others in your work.
2. For a complete citation, include an **in-text citation** immediately after you include someone else’s words or ideas and a full **bibliographic reference** in the correct location, according to the **citation style** you are using.
3. Use a **citation style** to be consistent in how you cite.
4. Contact your institution’s writing centre, tutoring service, or library if you need more help.

## Review

### Task for Learning

Locate two academic journal articles. Take note of how each article includes in-text citations and bibliographic references.

### Review Question

Why is it important to avoid plagiarism?

- a) To acknowledge the words and ideas of others
- b) To demonstrate academic integrity
- c) To avoid negative consequences, such as failure or expulsion
- d) All of the above

The correct answer is on the next page.

### Review Question Answer

The correct answer is d) All of the above.