

Tips for Avoiding Plagiarism

Long Library, Wells College

1. Plan ahead

You are most likely to plagiarize when you are struggling to write a paper at the last minute. If you haven't done any research and haven't had time to construct a true argument, you might be tempted to save time by relying heavily on one or two resources. In your rush you might closely paraphrase large sections of text or unintentionally use direct quotations without giving credit. Start thinking about researching your topic well before your paper is due.

2. Take notes

Research includes taking lots of notes. Everyone has their own note taking process, but it is essential that you clearly indicate and provide location information for any duplication or paraphrase of original text in your note. This will help you avoid unintentional plagiarism and allow you to quickly locate the original text. In addition, maintain a working bibliography while you research. This will assure that you don't forget or lost a work that needs to be cited.

3. Limit quotations and paraphrases to instances when they are really necessary.

The more you rely directly on the work of others, the more likely you are to unintentionally plagiarize. Research papers rely on, but do not duplicate, the work of others. An over-reliance on quotes or paraphrases could suggest that you do not understand the information well enough to synthesize it yourself.

4. When in doubt, cite.

You will not always be clear about what needs to be cited. When in doubt, err on the side of caution. If a paraphrase seems similar to the original source, cite it. If it includes complex ideas that you wouldn't have thought of on your own, cite it.

5. Get help!

The Writing Center, located in the Learning Commons (2nd Floor of Long Library) offers services that can help you improve your writing skills. Stop by and make an appointment, or contact Samira Grayson, Director of the Writing Center at sgrayson@wells.edu .

You can also reach out to Tiffany Raymond, Reference and Instruction Librarian, at traymond@wells.edu. Research assistance can save you valuable writing time and assure that you have enough scholarly sources for your papers.

Use our citation style guides, located at www.wells.edu/library or at the circulation desk on the 2nd Floor of Long Library.

Also check out these additional resources on avoiding plagiarism from Purdue OWL: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/>.