



WRITING CENTER

Plagiarism

CONTENTS *Click on any heading below to jump directly to that topic.*

PLAGIARISM.....	1
QUOTATION.....	1
PARAPHRASE.....	1
COMMON KNOWLEDGE.....	2

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is the use of someone else’s words or ideas without giving credit to the original writer or speaker. To properly give credit, use either quotations or paraphrases, correctly cited, to develop and support your own original ideas.

QUOTATION

When using source material that you want to quote exactly, place all the words from the original source inside a set of quotation marks (“ ”). Follow the quotation with parentheses containing the author’s last name and the page number. Put the author’s name and all necessary publication information on the Works Cited page at the end of the paper.

In-text: “Intentional plagiarizers cheat themselves” (Harris 17).

Works Cited:	Harris, Robert N. <i>Using Sources Effectively: Strengthening Your Writing and Avoiding Plagiarism</i> . 2 nd ed., Pyrczak, 2002.
---------------------	--

PARAPHRASE

When you use someone else’s ideas, it is extremely important to paraphrase those ideas by putting them completely into your own words and by creating new sentence structures.

Below is an example of a proper paraphrase, with new language and sentence structure.

Original text: “Grief, when it comes, is nothing we expect it to be” (Didion 26).

Proper paraphrase: Most, if not all, individuals are surprised by the emotions of grief; they have trouble anticipating what grief will feel like (Didion 26).

Improper paraphrase: When grief comes, it’s not what we expect it to be (Didion 26).



WRITING CENTER

Plagiarism

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

Students may sometimes be confused by the term “common knowledge”, because they have been told that facts common to the average reader do not have to be documented. For example:

- I may know that John Wilkes Booth shot Abraham Lincoln, but I may not know the actual date or the place, so I look up those details in an encyclopedia. Do I have to document where I found the information?
- If in an essay about the growth of Johnson County I say that the population has more than tripled in the past twenty years, do I need to document that information?
- If I say the total headcount of the enrollment at Johnson County Community College in the fall of 2001 was 17,776, do I need to document this statistic?

The answer to all of these questions is yes. You must document any facts and statistics that you look up in a reference. Guessing does not count, because if, for example, the statement about the growth of Johnson County is not authenticated, the reader may not believe your statement.

If you are not sure about your information and whether or not it is common knowledge or needs to be documented, ask yourself one question: Did I have to look up this information? If the answer is yes, you need to document it.