Teaching Students How to Avoid Plagiarism: Success Strategies

Gina Garber, Librarian and Assistant Professor
Nancy Snyder, Librarian and Assistant Professor
Christina Chester-Fangman, Librarian and Assistant Professor
Background

• APSU’s First-Year Experience Program
  – Quality Enhancement Plan for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)
  – First-Year Course
    • Liberal Arts in University Life (LART 1000)
    • Liberal Arts in University Life (APSU 1000)
Library

• Library Component of APSU 1000
  – Library Day
    • Library Information Literacy Tutorial (LILT)
    • Career Assignment

• Academic Honesty Component
  – Academic Honesty Day
    • Librarian/Instructor Involvement
    • Academic Integrity
    • Academic Dishonesty
Inform Students on a Regular Basis

– FYE Student Orientation
  • Students’ skits (peer mentors)
  • Video clip
  • Student Expectations Workshop

– Revisit Plagiarism Again During the Class
  • Career paper
  • Common reading
  • Journal entry
  • Group presentation
  • Tutorials
Sample: 23 Public Universities and Private Colleges Nationwide: 
18,000 Students, 2,600 Faculty, and 650 Teaching Assistants

Key Findings (2003)

- Highest levels of plagiarism and cheating: Business Majors (63%), followed by Education (60%), Journalism & Communication (59%), and Science (51%).

- Freshmen report the same rate of cheating as upperclassmen, diverging from previous research that indicates lower levels among first-year students.

- 4% admit turning in another student for plagiarism.

- 20% faculty use computer software such as Turnitin.com to help detect student plagiarism.

McCabe, Donald. (2003). New Study Confirms Internet Plagiarism Is Prevalent 
http://ur.rutgers.edu/medrel/viewArticle.html?ArticleID=3408
"You use a software program to check for plagiarized papers? Oh, man, that is so sneaky! Isn't that unethical or something?"
Academic Honesty

• Types of Academic Dishonesty
  – Cheating
  – Giving or receiving unauthorized aid in tests, examinations, or other assigned work
  – Changing or falsifying any academic materials
  – Plagiarism
Plagiarism

• Using “Real World” Examples (2006)
  – Kaavya Viswanathan
  – Dan Brown
  – William Swanson
  – James Frey
“All I can say is that I’ve read both of Megan McCafferty’s books, “Sloppy Firsts” and “Second Helpings” when I was about 14 and I read both of these books three or four times each. I completely see the similarities. I’m not denying that those are there but I can honestly say that any of those similarities were completely unconscious and unintentional that while I was reading Megan McCafferty’s books, I must have just internalized her words. I never intended to take any of her words.”

April 26, 2006 transcript from Today interview With Katie Couric
Samples of the Text in Question

*Sloppy Firsts* and *Second Helpings*, both written by Megan McCafferty

- McCafferty’s novel, page 237: “Finally, four major department stores and 170 specialty shops later, we were done.”

- Viswanathan’s novel, page 51: “Five department stores, and 170 specialty shops later, I was sick of listening to her hum along to Alicia Keys…”

Salman Rushdie’s 1990 novel *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*

• On page 35 of Rushdie’s novel one of the warnings reads: “If from speed you get your thrill, take precaution make your will.”

• On page 118 of Viswanathan’s novel one of the posters reads: “If from drink you get your thrill, take precaution – write your will.”

Why do Students Plagiarize?

• Provide Students Examples
  – The pressure of “I need to graduate” or “I need credit to advance”
  – Poor research
  – Poor time management skills
  – The pressure of “I need to maintain high GPA”
  – Poor assignment by faculty/instructors
  – Not wanting to do the work
Two Types of Plagiarism

Intentional and Unintentional

Example:

Omitting Documentation (most common)

- Make Style Guides available to students
  - Modern Language Association (MLA)
  - American Psychological Association (APA)
  - The Chicago Manual of Style
  - Other according to discipline

- Ask a Librarian
- Online Tutorials
  - Many are free and can be obtained and customized using open publication licensing agreements
Two Types of Plagiarism

Example:

Using Pre-Written Work *(Intentional)*

- Faculty/Instructors taking a proactive approach
  - Cover plagiarism in class and on the Syllabus
  - Report or act on the plagiarism
- Using Turnitin.com or something similar
  - Google
You are plagiarizing if you…

• are copying from published sources without adequate documentation
• are purchasing and submitting pre-written papers
• are letting someone else write your paper
• are paying someone to write your paper
• are submitting someone’s unpublished work as your own
• are cutting and pasting from websites and don’t give credit
• are changing every 5\textsuperscript{th} word and don’t give credit
• are changing pronouns (he/she/they) and don’t give credit
Consequences of Plagiarism

• What are the possible consequences of plagiarism at your institution?
  – Consequences at APSU
    • Grade of “f” on work submitted
    • Grade of “f” for class
    • Reprimand
    • Probation
    • Suspension
    • Expelled from the University
Active Learning Exercises

Audience Participation

- APSU 1000 Paraphrase Assignment
- Citation Anatomy
- Plagiarism 101
How to Avoid Plagiarism

All of us (students and faculty) are responsible for fully understanding what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. We all need to learn and practice this skill both at the university and in the workplace.

Below you will find excerpts from the *APSU Student Code of Conduct* and the *Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary*. In addition, you will find links to websites which will help you understand how to detect and avoid plagiarism.

For information beyond this page and its links, check out *The Plagiarism Handbook: Strategies for Preventing, Detecting, and Dealing with Plagiarism* by Robert A. Harris which has been placed on Library Reserve for the one credit hour course required of all freshmen - *APSU 1000: Liberal Arts in University Life*.

Plagiarism is one form of academic dishonesty. The *APSU Student Code of Conduct* states that,

"Academic dishonesty may be defined as any act of dishonesty in
How to Cite Your Sources

Style Guides

MLA Style
Suggested for: Art, Languages & Literature, Philosophy, Religion, Theater

Sample paper | In-text citations | Works Cited (bibliography)

Other MLA resources:
- How to Cite Film, Video, and Online Media from UC-Berkeley
- MLA handbook for writers of research papers [Infodesk]

APA Style
Suggested for: Business, Communications, Education, Geography, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, Women's Studies

Sample paper | In-text citations | References (bibliography)
1. According to Mark Twain in *Roughing It*, the rider for the pony express was usually a little bit of a man, brimful of spirit and endurance. Guilty

**Corrected Version:** According to Mark Twain in *Roughing It*, “the rider for the pony express was usually a little bit of a man, brimful of spirit and endurance” (52).
2. The pony express rider had to be, as Mark Twain wrote, "always ready to leap into the saddle and be off like the wind" (52). Not Guilty.
3. The pony express rider's horse wore a little wafer of a racing-saddle, and no visible blanket (Twain 53). **Guilty**

**Corrected Version:** The pony express rider's horse, “wore a little wafer of a racing-saddle, and no visible blanket” (Twain 53).
4. The rider traveled two-hundred, fifty miles a day, ten miles per horse. Guilty

**Corrected Version:** The rider traveled two-hundred and fifty miles a day, ten miles per horse (Twain 53).
5. The pony express rider generally traveled twice as fast as a stage coach (Twain 53).
Plagiarism Survey Results

Sample: 118 Librarians, 10 States

• Overview
  – First Introduction & Teaching Prevention
  – Motivating Students
  – Challenges
  – Consequences
  – Successes

Which of the following describes your library?

- Public: 26%
- K-12: 25%
- Academic: 46%
- Special: 2%
- Other: 1%

“...basic instruction at 4th grade, although even 1st graders must cite sources. Detailed instruction at 7th and beyond...”

Teaching Prevention

“…not threatening, just placing the issue in context of research. Why it's a problem--how to avoid it…”

Common Themes:

• Why plagiarism is a problem
• How would you feel if…?
• Copyright issues
• Ethical issues
• Paraphrasing
• Consequences

Motivating Students

“Honestly? Fear. It means a lot more to students to know the fairly severe consequences awaiting those that are caught.”

Common Themes:
- Consequences
- Grades
- Cases of plagiarism, local and national

“The students are so blinded and jaded by the concept of stealing. They burn CD's off the Internet, each other's CD's, etc. They see nothing wrong with this and they do not see anything wrong with taking other people's words.”

“A centralized file is kept of dishonesty reports, two incidents made a student eligible for dismissal from the university.”

“Principal handles all episodes. Presently we have students serving Saturday school in the library doing in-depth research and producing quality research papers. These will not be replacements for the zeroes they took for their plagiarized papers.”
Are the consequences enforced on a systematic basis?

- Definitely Yes: 14%
- Definitely No: 28%
- Yes: 24%
- No: 34%

Plagiarism Detection

K-12 or Academic?

Successes

“…face-to-face, with examples…”

“…use of CSA’S Refbib software…”

“We have moved to a school-wide MLA research packet that we use in all departments unless the teacher chooses to use APA instead.”

Assessment

- Librarians look for discrepancies in the LILT quiz results
- Librarians look at the sources used in the Career Assignment
- Librarians look at the required in-text citations and bibliography
- Librarians compare the Plagiarism Tutorial prequiz to quiz questions that measure the same concepts
Summary of our Success

• Librarian representation on Planning and Developing Committees
• Collaboration among librarians
• Librarians teaching the FYE course
• Flexibility in who teaches the Academic Honesty component
• Good active learning exercises
• Support from the university
References


Questions?
APSU 1000 Paraphrase Assignment

Original Statement:

Businesses are increasingly the target of both competitors and the curious. Even computer companies like Apple Computer are not immune to attacks by computer criminals. In December 1987, Apple Computer found a virus in its electronic mail system. The virus succeeded in shutting down the system and erasing all of Apple’s voice mail. Apple also reported that computer criminals may have reverse-engineered the highly secret code that underlines its Macintosh computers. This copy-righted and seemingly highly protected code could be used to build a clone of the Macintosh computer.


Your paraphrase:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

This exercise is contributed to APSU 1000 by Dr. Al Bekus, Professor of English, APSU.
Plagiarized Version of Original Apple Paragraph

Many businesses have been the target of both competitors and the curious. Even Apple Computer is not immune to attacks by computer criminals. In December of 1987, Apple found a virus in the electronic mail system. The virus shut down the system and erased all of Apple’s voice mail. Computer criminals may also have reverse-engineered the highly secret code that underlies the Macintosh computer. This copyrighted and seemingly highly protected code could be used to build Macintosh clones.

Correctly Paraphrased Version

According to David Icove, Karl Seger, and William Von Stroch in “Fighting Computer Crime,” computer criminals may be either a company’s corporate rivals or simply those who are curious. Among the unlikely targets of these criminals is Apple Computer, which found an e-mail virus in its system in December 1987. The virus shut down the system and erased all the voice mail. The secret code that runs Macintosh computers may also have been reverse-engineered by computer criminals, despite the fact that it is obviously something Apple jealously guards.

This exercise is contributed to APSU 1000 by Dr. Al Bekus, Professor of English, APSU.
Citation Anatomy

Objective: To give students practice in deciphering citations found in indexes and putting together citations for paper bibliographies.

Time: 20 minutes

1. Briefly discuss the reason the class is participating in this exercise.

2. Go over a sample citation. You can use the one below, which is for a print periodical article in MLA format, as are all the exercises on the worksheet.


   Author: Harvard Sitkoff
   Title of article: Harry Truman and the Election of 1948: The Coming of Age of Civil Rights in American Politics
   Title of journal: Journal of Southern History
   Volume: 37
   Issue: 4
   Date: 1971
   Page numbers: 597-616

3. Have students get in groups and handout the “citation anatomy” worksheet.

4. If time allows, go over the citations with students and have them put the citations in the second part up on the board.
Citation Anatomy

Part 1 – Citation decoding
Do you know what makes up a citation? This part of the exercise is to help you in identifying the various citation components. For each of the following citations, write down the requested information.

1. Book:

   Author: __________________________________________
   Date of publication: ________________________________
   Place of publication: ______________________________
   Publisher: ________________________________________
   Title: ____________________________________________

2. Full-text article in a database:

   Author: __________________________________________
   Database: _________________________________________
   Date: ________________________________
   Date of access: _____________________________
   Issue: __________________________________________
   Page number: ___________________________________
   Title of article: ________________________________
   Title of journal: ________________________________
   URL: __________________________________________
   Volume: ________________________________________
3. Source on the Web:

Date viewed: 
Sponsoring Group: 
Title of web page: 
URL: 

Part 2 – Puzzle pieces
When you do research for your assignments, you will need to note from which sources you got your information. Following is the kind of information you would need to write down in order to put together a bibliography of sources used. In this exercise, the information about the sources has already been gathered and you just need to put together the pieces of information to form the citations in the space provided following the models in Part I.

4. Book:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Bernard A. Weisberger</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date of publication</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of publication</td>
<td>New York, NY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publisher</td>
<td>Perennial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>America Afire: Jefferson, Adams, and the First Contested Election</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Final note:
All the citations in these exercises follow the MLA (Modern Language Association) format, which is used when writing about literature and languages. Citation formats vary by subject. Ask your professor which style you should use if you are not sure. More information about citing source can be found at http://library.apsu.edu/guides/1_3_14.htm.
Plagiarism 101

Objective: To introduce students to plagiarism by discussing correct versus incorrect uses of source material and analyzing sample sentences using in-text citations in the MLA format style.

Resources:

- Plagiarism 101 (MLA Format) Worksheet A and B

Activity:

1. Briefly discuss the types of academic dishonesty:
   - Cheating
   - Giving or receiving unauthorized help
   - Aid in tests, examinations, or other assigned work
   - Changing or falsifying any academic materials
   - Plagiarism

2. Inform the students that they might be plagiarizing if they:
   - Change every 5th word and don’t give credit
   - Change pronouns (he/she/they) or verb form and don’t give credit
   - Buy or get a paper from the Internet or other source
   - Turn the same paper in for two different classes
   - Copy any part of your classmate’s paper
   - Have/pay a classmate to write your paper or translate your paper

Suggestions:

Ask, Can you think of other instances that might apply?

Ask, How can you avoid plagiarism?

Show students our Web pages that will help students avoid plagiarism:

- How to Avoid Plagiarism: http://library.apsu.edu/guides/1_6.htm
- How to cite your sources: http://library.apsu.edu/guides/1_3_14.htm

3. Divide the class into groups of three to five students.

4. Provide copies of the Plagiarism 101 worksheets (A and B). Read the directions to the students. Have the students select a member of their group to report back to the class on their findings.
5. Discuss the possible consequences of plagiarism at APSU.
In a little while all interest was taken up in stretching our necks and watching for the "pony-rider"—the fleet messenger who sped across the continent from St. Joe to Sacramento, carrying letters nineteen hundred miles in eight days! Think of that for perishable horse and human flesh and blood to do! The pony-rider was usually a little bit of a man, brimful of spirit and endurance. No matter what time of the day or night his watch came on, and no matter whether it was winter or summer, raining, snowing, hailing, or sleeting, or whether his "beat" was a level straight road or a crazy trail over mountain crags and precipices, or whether it led through peaceful regions or regions that swarmed with hostile Indians, he must be always ready to leap into the saddle and be off like the wind! There was no idling-time for a pony-rider on duty.

He rode fifty miles without stopping, by daylight, moonlight, starlight, or through the blackness of darkness—just as it happened. He rode a splendid horse that was born for a racer and fed and lodged like a gentleman; kept him at his utmost speed for ten miles, and then, as he came crashing up to the station where stood two men holding fast a fresh, impatient steed, the transfer of rider and mail-bag was made in the twinkling of an eye, and away flew the eager pair and were out of sight before the spectator could get hardly the ghost of a look. Both rider and horse went "flying light." The rider's dress was thin, and fitted close; he wore a "round-about," and a skull-cap, and tucked his pantaloons into his boot-tops like a race-rider. He carried no arms—he carried nothing that was not absolutely necessary, for even the postage on his literary freight was worth five dollars a letter.

He got but little frivolous correspondence to carry—his bag had business letters in it, mostly. His horse was stripped of all unnecessary weight, too. He wore a little wafer of a racing-saddle, and no visible blanket. He wore light shoes, or none at all. The little flat mail-pockets strapped under the rider's thighs would each hold about the bulk of a child's primer. They held many and many an important business chapter and newspaper letter, but these were written on paper as airy and thin as gold-leaf, nearly, and thus bulk and weight were economized. The stage-coach traveled about a hundred to a hundred and twenty-five miles a day (twenty-four hours), the pony-rider about two hundred and fifty. There were about eighty pony-riders in the saddle all the time, night and day, stretching in a long, scattering procession from Missouri to California, forty flying eastward, and forty toward the west, and among them making four hundred gallant horses earn a stirring livelihood and see a deal of scenery every single day in the year.


Adapted from Rob Lopresti, Western Washington University http://www.library.wwu.edu/ref/subjects/govinfo/twain.htm
Are these statements from term papers guilty of plagiarism?

Directions: Read the sentences and in-text citations below. Highlight the related original sentences within the reading. Once you have found the citations within the reading, decide if the statement below is guilty of plagiarism using the MLA format. Support your answers.

1. According to Mark Twain in Roughing It, the rider for the pony express was usually a little bit of a man, brimful of spirit and endurance.

   Circle: Guilty or Not Guilty
   Why:

2. The pony express rider had to be, as Mark Twain wrote, "always ready to leap into the saddle and be off like the wind" (52).

   Circle: Guilty or Not Guilty
   Why:

3. The pony express rider's horse wore a little wafer of a racing-saddle, and no visible blanket (Twain 53).

   Circle: Guilty or Not Guilty
   Why:

4. The rider traveled two-hundred, fifty miles a day, ten miles per horse.

   Circle: Guilty or Not Guilty
   Why:

5. The pony express rider generally traveled twice as fast as a stage coach (Twain 53).

   Circle: Guilty or Not Guilty
   Why:
Plagiarism 101 Answers

(MLA Format)

1. **Plagiarism.** The writer is partially correct in including the author within the sentence. The writer must also include quotation marks around the passage that is a direct quote of Twain’s work and place a page number inside parentheses at the end of the sentence.

   *Corrected Version:* According to Mark Twain in *Roughing It*, “the rider for the pony express was usually a little bit of a man, brimful of spirit and endurance” (52)

2. **Okay.** The writer has used quotation marks and a page number placed inside parentheses at the end of the sentence, as well as mentioning the author Mark Twain within the sentence.

   The pony express rider had to be, as Mark Twain wrote, "always ready to leap into the saddle and be off like the wind” (52).

3. **Plagiarism.** If you actually quote the text, then the author and page number inside parentheses is insufficient. You need quotation marks as well.

   *Corrected Version:* The pony express rider's horse, “wore a little wafer of a racing-saddle, and no visible blanket” (Twain 53)

4. **Plagiarism.** The writer has paraphrased correctly, but they must also cite the source of their information with the author’s name and page number inside parentheses at the end of the sentence.

   *Corrected Version:* The rider traveled two-hundred and fifty miles a day, ten miles per horse (Twain 53).

5. **Okay.** The writer has paraphrased Twain, so quotation marks are not needed. In addition, the writer was correct to include the author’s name and page number inside parentheses at the end of the sentence.

   The pony express rider generally traveled twice as fast as a stage coach (Twain 53).
Avoiding Plagiarism: Success Strategies in the Southeast Survey

If you provide instruction, when are users at your institution first introduced to the concept of plagiarism?

“This is a K-4 school. When any class comes to the library to do any type of research. There is a discussion on the importance of citing sources and how to take notes and write information.”

“Basic instruction at 4th grade, although even 1st graders must cite sources. Detailed instruction at 7th and beyond.”

“Plagiarism information is required to be posted in all syllabi, so that's probably the first time students run across it—long before the librarians are asked to the classroom.”

“All syllabi have information on acceptable conduct and professors instruct students to use turnitin.com; information literacy sessions include pointers on how to avoid plagiarism such as using online database citation guides.”

If you provide information on plagiarism, what information do you include?

“The teachers share some of the real-life consequences of plagiarism, even unintentional plagiarism, that have befallen some of our former students once they reached college.”

“College’s copyright policy is discussed in general library instruction sessions.”

“for faculty, tips on structuring work to detect plagiarism, citations to articles on plagiarism”

“Turnitin workshops, plus FYE reinforcements. The latter is an 11-week infolit course with 25% of classes relating to library issues and databases”

If you provide instruction, what do you cover in a typical session regarding plagiarism?

“I do a modified jigsaw, in which I have four groups. One group reads a chapter from Rebecca Moore Howard’s "Standing in the Shadow of Giants: Plagiarists, Authors, Collaborators" in order to help them think about plagiarism in complex ways; another group designs an assignment that invites plagiarism; another group designs a writing assignment that prevents plagiarism, and the final group designs a classroom environment of integrity. The focus is on preventing plagiarism—rather than acting as cops.”

“In each grade we cover the information again, each year stressing the ways to correctly treat borrowed information. We discuss paraphrase vs. summarization and have students do exercises on both. We cover direct and indirect quotations.”

“not threatening, just placing the issue in context of research. Why it's a problem—how to avoid it”

Which method(s) of delivery have you found to be most successful?

“Face-to-face, with examples”

“Hands-on in computer lab-type room.”

“We have moved to a school-wide MLA research packet that we use in all departments unless the teacher chooses to use APA instead. We insist that all research projects conform to the standards required by our English department.”

“Classroom instruction seems particularly effective— instructors often tell us that they like having us come in because it lets their students know how important it is, and they listen more if it's coming from someone other than their “normal” instructor.”

Which method(s) of delivery have you found to be most successful? Cont.

“I like to showing students examples of plagiarism. For example, I have a poster that a group of five students submitted for a graded assignment. The content, to include images, was printed from the Internet without any citations. I show this poster to my classes which promotes good discussions.”

“So far...an interactive approach which includes role playing and group exercises.”

“Practice in papers”

“Use of CSA’S Refbib software.”

“Repetition is essential across the curriculum and monitoring student work to keep them on the right track is important.”

How do you motivate users to be conscientious about avoiding plagiarism?

‘Honestly? Fear. It means a lot more to students to know the fairly severe consequences awaiting those that are caught, rather than appealing to their ethical sides. Likening plagiarism to copyright violations in "the real world" also seems to make the concept hit home for some.”

“We try to help them understand it from a personal view. If it were your life’s work, would you want someone stealing it?”

“With humor, but majority of responsibility falls on instructor”

“remind them of consequences, well-known cases, local cases”

“I make sure that any worksheet or anything they use to take notes has a section for citing sources.”

“we encourage note-taking, not printing. We also promote requiring bibliographies after all reports.”

What are the consequences of plagiarism at your institution?

“A centralized file is kept of dishonesty reports, two incidents made a student eligible for dismissal from the university.”

“Principal handles all episodes. Presently we have students serving Saturday school in the library doing in-depth research and producing quality research papers. These will not be replacements for the zeroes they took for their plagiarized papers.”

“A range from education for the student, to having assignment done again, to class failure, to expelling from the university.”
Teaching Students How to Avoid Plagiarism: Success Strategies

References


