

# Tips for Avoiding Plagiarism

You have heard “Do not plagiarize!” fairly often, but do you understand *why* not? There are two compelling reasons to cite your sources in academic writing:

1. To acknowledge someone else’s work
2. To add credibility and authority to your own work

## Types of Plagiarism:

- **Direct Copying:** Taking the exact words of someone else (whether found on a website, a book, another student’s work, or journal article, etc.) without using quotes or acknowledging the original source.
- **Word-switching:** Taking someone else’s work and simply switching a few words without acknowledging that the work and sentence structure belong to someone else.
- **Copy-And-Paste Plagiarism:** Copying and Pasting sections of different texts together to create a new text. This can include word-switching portions of the original texts.
- **Concealing Sources:** Using other people’s ideas and work (including that of a fellow student) and making it look as if it is your own.
- **Buying or Copying Assignments:** This includes purchasing papers, copying papers from another student, using an assignment previously submitted for another class without permission, etc.

## Ways to Avoid Plagiarism: Summarizing, Paraphrasing, and Direct Quotation

*All three of the examples illustrating summarizing, paraphrasing, and direct quotation on the next page will use the following original text:*

Penguins are sentinels of the marine environment, and by observing and studying them, researchers can learn about the rate and nature of changes occurring in the southern oceans. As ocean samplers, penguins provide insights into patterns of regional ocean productivity and long-term climate variation. Having studied several species of temperate penguins for more than 30 years, I know firsthand how sensitive they are to their environment. I synthesize my observations to suggest that we have entered a new era of unprecedented challenges for marine systems.

*Original citation:*

**MLA:** Boersma, P. Dee. “Penguins as Marine Sentinels.” *BioScience*, vol. 58, no. 7, 2008, pp. 597–607. *JSTOR*, doi: 10.1641/b580707.

**APA:** Boersma, P. (2008). Penguins as marine sentinels. *BioScience*, 58, 597-607. doi: 10.1641/b580707

**Chicago:** Boersma, P. Dee. “Penguins as Marine Sentinels.” *BioScience* 58, no. 7 (2008): 597-607.

## Summarizing

Summarizing is putting an author's main ideas and key points into your own words. Summaries are much shorter than the original text and give a broad overview.

*Examples:*

**MLA:** Studying penguins can reveal significant data on the ocean climate and environment (Boersma 597).

**APA:** Studying penguins can reveal significant data on the ocean climate and environment (Boersma, 2008).

**Chicago:** Studying penguins can reveal significant data on the ocean climate and environment.<sup>1</sup>

## Paraphrasing

Like summarizing, paraphrasing also involves putting a passage in your own words. It is usually shorter than the original passage but unlike summarizing, it contains more details rather than just the main points.

*Examples:*

**MLA:** After studying penguins for over 30 years, P. Dee Boersma discovered that penguins can provide useful information on changes taking place in the southern oceans. Penguins are very sensitive to changes in the marine environment. By tracking them, researchers can gain insight on ocean productivity and climate change over time (597).

**APA:** After studying penguins for over 30 years, Boersma (2008) discovered that penguins can provide useful information on changes taking place in the southern oceans. Penguins are very sensitive to changes in the marine environment. By tracking them, researchers can gain insight on ocean productivity and climate change over time.

**Chicago:** After studying penguins for over 30 years, Boersma discovered that penguins can provide useful information on changes taking place in the southern oceans. Penguins are very sensitive to changes in the marine environment. By tracking them, researchers can gain insight on ocean productivity and climate change over time.<sup>1</sup>

## Direct Quotation

Use direct quotations sparingly to highlight significant points or striking phrases from the author. Quotations must be identical to the original passage.

*Examples:*

**MLA:** According to marine researcher P. Dee Boersma, "penguins provide insights into patterns of regional ocean productivity and long-term climate variation" (597).

**APA:** According to marine researcher P. Boersma (2008), "penguins provide insights into patterns of regional ocean productivity and long-term climate variation" (p. 597).

**Chicago:** According to marine researcher P. Boersma, "penguins provide insights into patterns of regional ocean productivity and long-term climate variation."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> P. Dee Doersma, "Penguins as Marine Sentinels," *BioScience* 58, no. 7 (2008): 597.