

# East Los Angeles College Library

## Cite Your Sources and Avoid Plagiarism—Outline

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### Student Learning Outcomes

**SLO 1:** Students will be able to demonstrate awareness of the issues regarding intellectual property and plagiarism

**SLO 2:** Students will be able to create accurate references using an appropriate citation style

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Bring to class:

- Copies of the “Cite Your Sources and Avoid Plagiarism” handout
- Copies of the pre- and post-assessment
- Roster
- Attendance verification forms
- Date stamp
- MLA Handbook
- APA Style Guide

1. Introductions—Give email address in case they have questions that come up later
2. **Give students the pre-test (FIVE MINUTES)—COLLECT PRE-TESTS, ATTACH TOGETHER WITH A CLIP, AND USE A POST-IT TO IDENTIFY THE PILE AS PRE-TESTS**
3. Tell students the objectives for this workshop: to help them understand **why** they should cite their sources, and to start to show them **how** they can cite their sources; to teach them what plagiarism is, how to avoid it.
4. Begin by asking if anyone knows what a works cited page is. Have they ever written one? Why do we cite works? When asked to consider this question, students will often answer:
  - To avoid plagiarism
  - to follow the directions and guidelines given by an instructor

Encourage them to think about other reasons, such as:

- allowing the reader an opportunity to see related sources that would allow the reader to continue their learning on the topic
- allowing the reader an opportunity to see related sources so that they may review the current discussion and consider how the conversation may continue
- allowing the reader to see a writer’s authority on a topic by offering the resources referenced during the writer’s line of inquiry
- giving credit to the authors whose intellectual property have been valuable in the construction of new texts
- situating the writer’s work within the other voices and discussions on the topic
- encouraging readers to participate in the discussion by writing their own essay or response.

**For each of the points above, try to come up with examples to make the reason relevant to students’ own experiences. Stay away from trying to explain to students that it is wrong to cheat/plagiarize; they already know this. Instead, concentrate on how much it benefits them not to cheat/plagiarize: how it makes their arguments stronger, gives them their own voice, identity, etc.—tell them these are all the things that will help them get good grades and do well in their classes.**

5. Ask students if they can define plagiarism. Help them, if they need it, to come up with something along the lines of “using someone else’s works or ideas without properly giving them credit for it.”
6. Ask:

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- Would copying a couple of sentences out of someone else's essay without citing them be plagiarism?
  - What about if you didn't copy the sentences word for word, but changed some of the words?
  - What about if you didn't copy any of the words at all, but used the same structure and arguments sentence by sentence, or paragraph by paragraph?
  - What about using notes you took down during a class lecture, and copying the materials into a paper for another class?
  - What about using an assignment from a previous semester and turning it in for a class you're taking this semester.
  - What about using something that is considered common knowledge without referencing where the info came from?
7. Now introduce a game (Exercise 1). Have students form into groups of 4 or so as class size permits.. You might have to do this for them, otherwise it could take forever.

First, read the original paragraph out loud. Then working in groups, each group reads and discusses their own version only—so group A reads only version A, group B reads only version B, and so on. I give them ten minutes to read their version and discuss within their group if they think their version is plagiarism or not. They need to write down their reasons. (GIVE THEM 10 MINUTES)

After the ten minutes are up, ask each group to read their version out loud to the class. This way the rest of the groups can follow along as the version is being read to them (accommodates different learning styles). The group then tells the class if they think their version is or isn't plagiarism, and why they think so. The rest of the class gets to comment on what the group says.

Usually, this makes for a really lively discussion. I even had students asking me if they were allowed to disagree within their own groups. They really got into it! (REFER TO THE INSTRUCTOR'S COPY OF EXERCISE 1 FOR CORRECT ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS)

### Instructor's Copy

The text below was written by Armstrong Williams in an article titled "The Rules of Loaning Money to Family Members." The article was published in the New York Amsterdam News 11/29/2007, Vol. 98 Issue 49, p. 13.

**It goes without saying that families are there to help each other. But what happens when a family member asks for a loan? During the holidays in particular, sometimes family members find themselves struggling financially under the burden of holiday festivities and other financial hardships. Often times, their financial woes are the result of poor decision-making. While we would like to believe that the person asking for money has sincerely learned from his or her mistake and is working to correct those decisions, loaning them money may not always be the best way to help them.**

Below are some possible uses of this text. As you read through each version, try to decide if it is a legitimate use of Williams's text or if it is a case of plagiarism.

**A. Without a doubt, families are there to help one another. But what do you do when a family member asks you for a loan? Sometimes, especially during the holidays, family members face**

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financial hardships. Many times, these hardships are a result of poor decision-making. While it is tempting to think that the person asking for money has learned a lesson and will try not to make the same bad decisions, giving them money is probably not the best way to help them.

**Plagiarism:** In Version A there is too much direct borrowing of sentence structure and wording. The writer changes some words and adds some new language, but the overall text closely resembles Williams's. Furthermore, there are no quotation symbols to indicate that Version A is a direct quote, and/or no parenthetical citations to indicate that Version A is a paraphrase.

**B. Family members are usually a good source of support. However, as Armstrong Williams has pointed out, sometimes family members find themselves struggling financially under the burden of holiday festivities and other financial hardships (Williams 13). The reason for such “financial woes” is usually a result of poorly made decisions, and loaning money to the family member might not be the best way of resolving their problems (Williams 13).**

**Plagiarism:** The writer now cites Williams, so we're closer to telling the truth about the relationship of the text to the source, but this text continues to borrow too much language. Furthermore, note the inappropriate use of a quotation in “financial woes.” This is a good chance to talk about what parts of the original source make for good quotations.

**C. Many people rely on their families when they need help and support. However, things might be a little different when it comes to money. The holidays are usually a time when some family members find their financial resources stretched beyond their means; and even though these family members might be the best of people, lending them money might actually serve to hurt them more than it would help them.**

**Plagiarism:** Version C shows decent paraphrasing of wording and sentence structure, but Williams's original ideas are not acknowledged. Also, note that the writer in this case has followed Williams's paragraph structure sentence by sentence. There should definitely be a parenthetical citation at the end of this paragraph.

**D. Because family members usually love and support one another, difficulties sometimes arise in knowing how best to channel that love and support. When it comes to helping a family member with financial difficulties, Armstrong Williams has argued that “loaning them money may not always be the best way to help them” (Williams 13). Perhaps a better way to help a family member going through such hardship would be by ...**

**No Plagiarism:** The writer makes use of the common knowledge in Williams's work (that family members support one another), but acknowledges Williams's original conclusion and does not try to pass it off as his or her own. The quotation is used properly to make a point, and it is properly cited. Furthermore, the writer carries the implication of what Williams has said by taking it one step beyond and writing in new ideas in the last sentence of the paragraph.

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8. Ask if anyone has any questions about paraphrasing, quoting, plagiarism, citation, etc. If you want, you can add a little here about how most plagiarism happens because people feel pressured for time, and how time-management strategies could help avoid this situation.
9. Once questions have been answered, talk a little about citations styles. Do they know of any? MLA, APA. Take a minute or two to tell them about why we have different styles.
10. No matter what style they end up using, there are some elements that are common to all citations. See if they can come up with these:
  - For books: author, title, year, publication info
  - For periodical articles: author, title, year, volume & issue, page numbers
  - For web sites: author, title, year, date of access, URL
11. OK, so you gather all this information. Now what? How do you put the info together to make it an MLA or APA or whatever style citation? Has anyone used any of these styles before? How did they figure out what to do?
12. Show them the MLA and APA books. Tell them that these books are the authority on how to cite materials—but make sure they understand that their instructor is the ultimate authority on how they should cite stuff. They should always ask their instructors for clear instructions on what style to use, etc.
13. Suggest that the style guides are good books to buy because they'll need to refer to these a lot in their career as students. But for now, we're going to look at some tools that will help you cite your sources.
14. Introduce NoodleBib Express: <http://www.noodletools.com/>
15. Take students through the process of making up a citation. Do the first example in Exercise 2 together as a class. Make sure students understand what type of article they're looking at: is it a newspaper, magazine, or scholarly journal article? How can one tell the difference?
16. Have students do the second example in Exercise 2 on their own.
17. Use NetSupport to have students demonstrate what they did. Have them talk about:
  - which style they used
  - what kind of source they cited (was it a newspaper, a magazine, etc.)
  - Make sure they did things correctly (e.g., capitalizations, etc.)
18. **Give students the post-test (FIVE MINUTES)—COLLECT POST-TESTS, ATTACH TOGETHER WITH A CLIP, AND USE A POST-IT TO IDENTIFY THE PILE AS POST-TESTS.**