

How Not to Plagiarize - Giving Credit Where Credit is Due

Plagiarism is when you copy someone else's words and pass them off as your own. It is a serious academic offense that will get you into serious trouble. However, it is perfectly okay to use someone else's ideas as long as you give credit to the original person who said/wrote these ideas. Here's how you do it:

Direct Quote = Exact wording of another's ideas from the text.

Example: "His early works are very similar in style to Perugino's paintings, their figures having the same meek, graceful poses and sweet expressions" (Halliwell 62).

Paraphrase = Restating the meaning of the original text in your own words.

Example: His paintings are much like Perugino's in that the people have similar poses and expressions (Halliwell 62).

OR,

Halliwell tells us that Raphael and Perugino painted in a similar style, "their figures having the same meek, graceful poses and sweet expression" (62).

When Don't You Have to Cite?

Common Knowledge

You don't have to give credit for a fact stated in your own words. For instance, information that is common knowledge does not need to be cited:

Example: Raphael was born in Urbino, central Italy, on April 6, 1483.

A Note on Notes

If you are not careful in your note-taking process, it's very easy to closely paraphrase or even copy a source unintentionally. When in doubt, copy out the exact words of the original quote in your notes, put it in quotation marks, and include the citation information. Then you can later decide whether to quote or paraphrase, according to your reason for citing the text.