

Research Paper Information
Dr. Turner
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How to Avoid Plagiarism

When you write your research paper, **it must be your own words.**

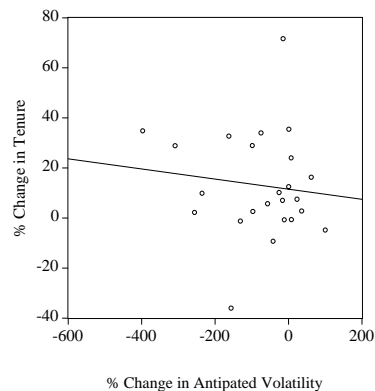
Obviously buying a paper off the internet or turning in someone else's writing is dishonest and constitutes plagiarism. *But – so is taking a paragraph word for word from someone else's writing or even lifting a single sentence* (unless you put quotation marks around the paragraph or sentence and give the source). In essence, **using someone else's words is stealing – it is plagiarism to pass off someone else's writing as your own.** You have to either rephrase their ideas, or put quotations when you use another writer's exact words.

Here are three things you must do to avoid plagiarism:

1. Include in the reference section of your paper **a list of all the sources** you use to write your paper. See the handouts "Research Paper Guide" and "Using Reference Material" for how to set up your paper's reference section. Remember, not only data and quotes get cited, *you must cite other people's ideas as well*, and list the source in your reference section.
2. If you want to reproduce or cut and paste a table or figure from the Internet, a book or a research paper, you may do so, but *you must document the source* both in the text of your paper (put a note underneath the table or figure indicating where you got it) and in the references section of your paper.

Example. You might write in your paper:

The following graph from Turner (2003) suggests that higher house-price volatility is associated with lower homeownership rates.



Source: Turner (2003).

In your references section, you would have listed:

Turner, Tracy M. "Does Investment Risk Affect the Housing Decisions of Families?" *Economic Inquiry*, 41(4), October 2003, pp. 675-691.

3. If you use a writer's exact words, you must place quotation marks around the words. If you paraphrased a researcher's words or ideas, you must give that person credit.

Example - Here is (i) a word-for-word excerpt from Hubbard and Skinner (p. 73, 1996), (ii) examples of incorrectly citing this passage, and (iii) examples of how to correctly cite this passage.¹

“The past two decades have witnessed the introduction of public policies designed to provide incentives for household saving. Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) were first permitted in 1974 to provide a tax preferred saving program for employees without pension plans... Despite the fact that half of all workers were eligible to contribute (because they had no pension at the time), fewer than 3 percent of taxpayers contributed.” Hubbard and Skinner (p. 73, 1996).

Incorrect Citation (i.e., plagiarism) #1:

The past two decades have witnessed the introduction of public policies designed to provide incentives for household saving. Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) were first permitted in 1974 to provide a tax preferred saving program for employees without pension plans... Despite the fact that half of all workers were eligible to contribute (because they had no pension at the time), fewer than 3 percent of taxpayers contributed.

Why is this plagiarism? *Answer:* Because the excerpt is taken word for word (the person is stealing Hubbard and Skinner's way of saying things) and no source is given.

Incorrect Citation (i.e., plagiarism) #2:

The past two decades have witnessed the introduction of public policies designed to provide incentives for household saving. Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) were first permitted in 1974 to provide a tax preferred saving program for employees without pension plans... Despite the fact that half of all workers were eligible to contribute (because they had no pension at the time), fewer than 3 percent of taxpayers contributed. (Hubbard and Skinner, p. 73, 1996).

Why is this plagiarism? *Answer:* Because even though the source is given, the person has again used Hubbard and Skinner's words, implying to the readers that these are the person's words. They are not. They are Hubbard and Skinner's words.

¹ The excerpt is from Hubbard, R. Glenn and Jonathan S. Skinner. “Assessing the Effectiveness of Saving Incentives.” *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, vol. 10, no. 4, Autumn, 1996, pp. 73-90.

Incorrect Citation (i.e., plagiarism) #3:

The past two decades have seen the introduction of public policies designed to provide incentives for household saving. Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) were first allowed in 1974 to provide a tax preferred saving program for employees without pension plans... Despite the fact that half of all workers could contribute, fewer than 3 percent of taxpayers contributed. (Hubbard and Skinner, p. 73, 1996).

Why is this plagiarism? *Answer:* Because the person has only changed a couple words, but is still essentially using Hubbard and Skinner's sentences.

Correct Citation #1:

The federal government has sought to increase household savings by creating a number of savings programs in the last two decades. For example, Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) were created in 1974 so that employees without pension plans at work could save in a tax preferred program. But at the time, IRAs were not very popular. In fact, only 3 percent of taxpayers took advantage of the IRA program, even though 50 percent of taxpayers were eligible to do so. (Hubbard and Skinner, 1996).

Why is this *not* plagiarism? *Answer:* Because the writer conveys the information from Hubbard and Skinner in her own words, and she gives the credit for the information to Hubbard and Skinner by inserting the citation in the text of her paper.

Correct Citation #2:

The federal government has sought to increase household savings by creating a number of savings programs in the last two decades. For example, Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) were created in 1974 so that employees without pension plans at work could save in a tax preferred program (Hubbard and Skinner, 1996). But at the time, IRAs were not used very much. As Hubbard and Skinner write, "Despite the fact that half of all workers were eligible to contribute (because they had no pension at the time), fewer than 3 percent of taxpayers contributed" (p. 73).

Why is this *not* plagiarism? *Answer:* Because the writer conveys the information from Hubbard and Skinner in her own words, and she gives the credit for the information to Hubbard and Skinner by inserting the citation. Where she uses their exact words, she puts quotations around them and tells the reader on what page of Hubbard and Skinner the words are written.

For more examples on how to avoid plagiarism, go to the K-State Honor System Web Page at: <http://www.k-state.edu/honor/students/index.htm>.