

Avoiding Plagiarism

Cite sources properly to:

- Acknowledge and respect those individuals and scholars who produced the evidence you are using to support your arguments.
- Help the reader distinguish your voice and your ideas and conclusions from ones that are **not** yours.
- Give the reader a trail to follow to check the accuracy of your evidence, and the totality of the sources you used to develop your thesis.
- Avoid plagiarism and the negative consequences that come from it.

Healthy habits to help you avoid plagiarism:

- **Record complete and accurate details** of sources as you find them. A good way to keep track of all necessary information about sources is to use RefWorks.
- **Use the Notes fields in records in your RefWorks database.** Make direct quotes or paraphrase material here so that you can be sure the quotes or paraphrases go with the correct source.
- When you take notes from sources, **always put quotation marks around passages that are direct quotes.** This applies to material you copy and paste and to material that you type or hand-write. If you do this, you won't have to try to remember if a passage you've written was a direct quote or a paraphrase.
- **Common knowledge does not need to be cited.** However, it is often hard to know what knowledge is considered "common," so if you are in doubt, cite it anyway.
- Remember to always **collect source information on all non-textual information** too: data (in the form of charts, tables or graphs), images, and audio and video clips. Any material that you use that is not your own needs to be cited properly.

Avoiding Plagiarism: Citation Basics

The foundation to avoiding plagiarism is knowing when and how to cite sources properly. This page gives two examples of proper and improper citation of a direct quotation and paraphrase (using the MLA style).

Key passage from a source:

Activists counter that the COGCC has not tested specifically for the chemicals Colborn is concerned about, and that many drilling mud and fracking fluid recipes are proprietary and thus unavailable to the public. Without such tests, the true concentrations of these chemicals in produced water remain unknown, says Lisa Sumi, research director at the Oil and Gas Accountability Project in Durango.

Brown, Valerie J. "Putting the Heat on Gas." *Environmental Health Perspectives* 115.2 (2007): A76. *GreenFILE*. Web. 10 Feb. 2011.

Citation examples:

Activists counter that the COGCC has not tested specifically for the chemicals Colborn is concerned about, and that many drilling mud and fracking fluid recipes are proprietary and thus unavailable to the public.

This is incorrect because the sentence is a direct quote and is not presented as a direct quote in the paper, and it has no citation.

“Activists counter that the COGCC has not tested specifically for the chemicals Colborn is concerned about, and that many drilling mud and fracking fluid recipes are proprietary and thus unavailable to the public” (Brown A76).

Brown, Valerie J. "Putting the Heat on Gas." *Environmental Health Perspectives* 115.2 (2007): A76. *GreenFILE*. Web. 10 Feb. 2011.

This is cited correctly. It is a direct quote and has quotation marks and has a citation.

Some environmental activists are concerned that government agencies cannot adequately test for harmful chemicals in water systems because the chemical mixtures used in fracking operations are proprietary and not known to the testing agencies.

This is incorrect because it is paraphrased and is not cited.

Some environmental activists are concerned that government agencies cannot adequately test for harmful chemicals in water systems because the chemical mixtures used in fracking operations are proprietary and not known to the testing agencies (Brown A76).

Brown, Valerie J. "Putting the Heat on Gas." *Environmental Health Perspectives* 115.2 (2007): A76. *GreenFILE*. Web. 10 Feb. 2011.

As a paraphrase, this is correctly cited.