

Introduction to Scholarly Writing: Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Is plagiarism a concern at Walden?

Yes—just as it is a concern in institutions throughout the world. However, in a largely online environment where the written word is the only evidence of a student's knowledge of a topic, it is more than a little tempting for students to “borrow” the words and ideas of others, especially when it's late at night and the hard-working student has finally put the kids to bed (especially when someone else has written such brilliant words so beautifully).

But in starkest terms: Plagiarism is not tolerated at Walden University.

What Do We Mean by Plagiarism?

The Walden Student Catalogue (2004) defines plagiarism as the use of intellectual material produced by another person without acknowledging its source. For example, plagiarism includes:

- Wholesale copying of passages from works of others into an assignment, paper, discussion board posting, or thesis or dissertation without acknowledgment.
- Using the views, opinions, or insights of another without acknowledgment.
- Paraphrasing another person's characteristic or original phraseology, metaphor, or other literary device without acknowledgment.

What does that all mean to you? Compare the following two paragraphs on the next page. (The paragraph on the left appeared in a journal. A student wrote the paragraph on the right.)

Journal Article	Student Writing
<p>In recent decades, men have been bombarded with images in society that depict the "ideal" male: strong, muscular, lean, with perfect features. What many adolescents do not realize is that most of the male bodies that they idealize can be acquired only with the use of anabolic steroids. Thus, many adolescent boys find themselves pursuing a body type that is impossible to obtain. By the time these boys reach adulthood, many have developed an eating disorder, such as bulimia, or an image disorder, such as muscle dysmorphia. In this article, the authors describe body image disorders in adolescent males and offer intervention strategies for school counselors.</p> <p>Stout, E. J., & Frame, M. W. (2004). Body image disorder in adolescent males: Strategies for school counselors. <i>Professional School Counseling</i>, 8(2). 176–181.</p>	<p>Over the past 30 years, men have seen many images that show the "ideal" male: strong, muscular, lean, with perfect features. Many adolescents do not realize that most of the male bodies that they idealize can be acquired only with the use of steroids. Thus, many teenaged boys find themselves pursuing a body type that is impossible to obtain. When these boys reach adulthood, many have developed an eating disorder, such as bulimia or anorexia, or an image disorder, such as muscle dysmorphia. In their article, Stout and Frame (2004) described body image disorders in adolescent males and offered intervention strategies for high school and junior high school counselors.</p>

Is the paragraph on the right an example of plagiarism?

Put it this way: These paragraphs might not be identical twins, but they are certainly fraternal twins. In the student version, a few words were changed here and there, but the ideas, the order in which they were presented, and nearly all of the words were written as if they were the student's own rather than those of Stout and Frame, who actually wrote them.

So yes, the paragraph on the right is plagiarism.

You cannot take someone else's words and ideas and recast them as your own, as if the original work were not at your elbow. Does that mean that you can never refer to someone else's writing? Use a few of someone else's words? Quote another author? **Only if you document your sources carefully so your reader knows who wrote what.**

Remember, scholarly writers read and think critically, so there is no reason to copy material word for word. And, scholarly writers synthesize what they have read to show, in their own words, that what they are writing is factual.

Using Direct Quotes

Direct quotes can enhance your writing; however, there are important considerations to keep in mind. Consider using direct quotes when

- the writer has expressed something in a way you consider to be “just right”;
- the writer has revealed something about himself or herself by the words he or she has chosen; or
- the original words are critical to a specific definition or point that you are trying to make.

There are a considerable number of rules when it comes to using direct quotes. Here is just a sampling (based on APA style).

- Direct quotes require quotation marks and, in parentheses, a page or paragraph identifier.
- Generally, the close quote mark comes before the parenthetical citation and is followed by a period.

Example: In an earlier study, Davis (1978) reported, “Children need to exercise every day for at least 45 minutes” (p. 36).

- Block quotes are required when direct quotes are 40 words or longer.
- The final punctuation comes before the parenthetical citation at the end of a block quote.
- Most Walden instructors prefer single-spaced block quotes.
- Block quotes require no opening or closing quotation marks or ellipses.
- Block quotes are best avoided or used minimally.

Example:

Capuzzi and Gross (2005) asserted:

The testing process, when focusing upon characteristic behaviors, also facilitates counselees' self-understanding. Many tests incorporate logical, semantic, and relatively "transparent" approaches to analysis of human behavior. Thus, actually engaging in the testing process may enable counselees to learn new ways of evaluating themselves (p. 289).