

### (1) Plagiarism – What it is and how to avoid it

**Plagiarism** refers to any use of another author's research, ideas, or language without proper attribution. This definition includes intentional plagiarism and accidental plagiarism. Someone who intentionally plagiarises uses others' information and claims it as his/her own; uses others' information without acknowledging the sources; hands in works that are bought, or has the work written by someone else. Accidental plagiarism means the writer forgets to place quotation marks around someone else's words; omits a source because the writer is unaware of the need to acknowledge it; carelessly copies a source although he/she intends to paraphrase or summarize it. To avoid plagiarism, you can remind your students to summarize, paraphrase, or quote directly from other writers.

A **summary** is a shorter version of the original source. Only the important points of the source are included, which means that details and supporting examples are left out. In order to summarize, (1) read the passage carefully; (2) underline the main ideas and delete most details and examples; (3) rewrite the main ideas in complete sentences; (4) substitute synonyms for words in the original; and (5) identify the original source. A good summary must be about a third as long as the original source, have the same meaning as the original, and include a complete bibliographical reference to the original source.

A **paraphrase** contains all the information in the original source written in your own words. Details and supporting examples must be included. To paraphrase, (1) read the passage carefully; (2) substitute synonyms and rearrange words and sentences to make the writing your own; (3) break up long sentences; (4) make sure that the resulting paraphrase is worded very differently from the original, yet means the same thing as the original sentence. No more than three consecutive words in the paraphrase can be identical to the original; and (5) identify the source in the introduction of the paraphrase. The paraphrase has the same meaning as the original. However, it must be different enough from the original to be considered your own writing, and should include a complete bibliographical reference to the original source.

The word 'quote' here is used synonymously with 'quotation.' There are several ways of handling quotes, including direct quotations, indirect quotations, and partial quotations.

**Direct quotes** require quotation marks. The quotation marks imply to the reader that the words inside the quotes are the precise words of the speaker.

E.g. President Johnson said, "I shall not seek, and I will not accept, the nomination of my party for the presidency of the United States."

**Indirect quotes** recast the speakers' words in another way. Hence, no quotation marks are required. For example, indirect quote is used if, while notetaking, the writer got most of the words right, but not enough to justify writing a full, direct quote.

E.g. President Johnson said he would neither seek the Democratic nomination for president, nor accept it if it were offered to him.

**Partial quotes** are useful for capturing the tone of a speaker's remarks. It is used to indicate that the words inside the quotes are the speaker's words, not yours.

E.g. President Johnson said he "shall not seek" and "will not accept" the Democratic nomination for president.

#### References:

Braine, G. & May, C. (1996). *Writing from sources: a guide for ESL students*. Mountain View, California: Mayfield Publisher.

McIntyre, B. (2001). *Working with sources. Lecture notes*. Department of Journalism and Communication. CUHK.

Gordon, C., Simmons, P. & Wynn, G. (1999). *Lecture notes on Plagiarism*. The Faculty of Arts. The University of British Columbia.

For details on plagiarism in CUHK, refer to <http://www.cuhk.edu/gss/REGACK.html> or the student handbook.