



9. Why Can't I Cut & Paste?

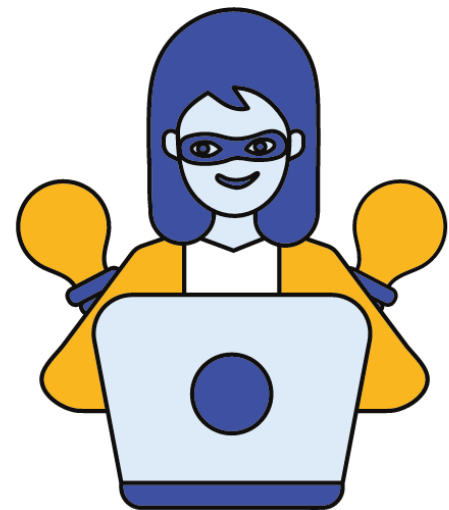
With so much information available on the Internet, it can be tempting and easy for students to cut and paste the work of others into their own essays and papers. So it's important for them to know that copying even one sentence without "quotations" and giving credit is considered plagiarism and can result in serious consequences in high school and beyond (if not before). Plagiarism—**“the taking of another person's work (without asking) and calling it your own”**— can be a tricky concept for middle school students to grasp. In this lesson, students will learn how to avoid plagiarism by **paraphrasing**.

Key Standards—CCSS.ELA.LITERACY: RI.7.1, RI.7.2, W.7.2, W.7.2.a, W.7.2.b, W.7.2.c, W.7.2.d, SL.7.2, L.8, L.8.1, L.8.1.d, L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3. ISTE: 1c, 2c, 3a, 3d, 4d, 5a, 5c, 7c. CASEL: 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e, 5f.

Learning Objectives

Students will...

- ✓ Understand the definition of plagiarism and its consequences.
- ✓ Learn how to paraphrase in order to avoid plagiarism.
- ✓ Practice their new paraphrasing skills.



Introducing The Lesson

Ask students: *When you find information online, how tempting is it to cut and paste what you see and use it in your own work?* Quiz students to find out if they know what “plagiarism” is. Ask if they know what the possible consequences may be of getting caught plagiarizing the work of others.

The Lesson

1. Screen [Video 1].
2. Have students record the following:

PLAGIARISM

When you take another person's words or ideas and use them as your own.

The Lesson, continued...

3. Explain that plagiarism can be entirely unintentional (like forgetting to include a source in your "Bibliography" or "Works Cited") or intentional (using another person's exact words in your own paper without giving them credit). Nevertheless, both cases are considered plagiarism. You may want to be sure students understand these terms too:

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A list of all the sources (e.g. books, articles, websites) used to write an assignment or essay.

WORKS CITED

In MLA style, the list of Works Cited (also known as a reference list or bibliography) appears at the end of a paper. It gives full details of every source cited in the text.

4. Discuss all of the following examples of plagiarism:
- Copying and pasting from the Internet and using without a proper citation.
 - Putting your name on another person's essay or project (or buying an essay).
 - Using another person's photo, diagram, sounds, or ideas without proper citation.
 - Presenting research in your own words without providing your reference.
 - Presenting ideas in the same format and order as the source of the material.
5. Explain that many teachers require students to submit their work to [Turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com), a software program that detects plagiarism. Sometimes teachers will give students a second chance if the copying was unintentional, but many will not accept any excuses. Tell students that the punishment for plagiarizing can be severe. Discuss how *you* handle plagiarism.
6. Tell students that a good way to avoid plagiarism is to learn how to paraphrase. Have them record:

PARAPHRASING

Putting someone else's passage in your own words.

7. Tell students that paraphrasing is a great way to use material they find online in their own work. Teach them the "3 Steps to Effective Paraphrasing." Have students record the steps as you explain them:
1. **Read and re-read the material you want to use.** Doing this helps you understand the material better, before you begin rewriting it in your own words.

The Lesson, continued

2. **Identify the main ideas.** It helps to either write down or circle the main ideas in the text you want to use so you can refer to them later.
3. **Write about it in a different order and in a different way.** Once you have read and re-read the material and identified the main ideas, simply reorder those ideas and write about them in your own way.

Activity

8. Show students (or read) the following examples of an acceptable and plagiarized version of a passage (in Slides):

The original passage:

Students frequently overuse direct quotation in taking notes, and as a result they overuse quotations in the final [research] paper. Probably only about 10% of your final manuscript should appear as directly quoted matter. Therefore, you should strive to limit the amount of exact transcribing of source materials while taking notes. (From: Lester, James D. Writing Research Papers. 2nd ed. (1976): 46-47)

An acceptable paraphrase:

Students should take just a few notes in direct quotation from sources to help minimize the amount of quoted material in a research paper (Lester 46-47).

A plagiarized version:

Students often use too many direct quotations when they take notes, resulting in too many of them in the final research paper. In fact, probably only about 10% of the final copy should consist of directly quoted material. So it is important to limit the amount of source material copied while taking notes.

9. Have students practice what they've just learned by paraphrasing the passages that follow. This can also be offered as homework.

Goal

To help students avoid plagiarism by paraphrasing instead.

Reference: [Plagiarism Example from The Purdue Writing Lab](#)

Paraphrasing Practice

Use the steps you learned to paraphrase a portion of each of the following passages:

"Mr. Bucket was the only person in the family with a job. He worked in a toothpaste factory, where he sat all day long at a bench and screwed the little caps on to the tops of the tubes of toothpaste after the tubes had been filled. But a toothpaste cap-screw is never paid very much money, and poor Mr Bucket, however hard he worked, and however fast he screwed on the caps, was never able to make enough to buy one half of the things that so large a family needed." (Excerpt from "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" by Roald Dahl).

Your paraphrase:

"On April 15, 1947, Jackie Robinson, age 28, becomes the first African American player in Major League Baseball's modern era when he steps onto Ebbets Field in Brooklyn to compete for the Brooklyn Dodgers. Robinson broke the color barrier in a sport that had been segregated for more than 50 years. Exactly 50 years later, on April 15, 1997, Robinson's groundbreaking career was honored and his uniform number, 42, was retired from Major League Baseball by Commissioner Bud Selig in a ceremony attended by over 50,000 fans at New York City's Shea Stadium. Robinson's was the first-ever number retired by all teams in the league." (Excerpted from "Jackie Robinson Breaks Color Barrier," *History*, <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/jackie-robinson-breaks-color-barrier>).

Your paraphrase:



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PARAPHRASING

Putting someone else's passage in your own words.

3 STEPS TO EFFECTIVE PARAPHRASING

1. Read and re-read the material want to use.
2. Identify the main ideas.
3. Write about it in a different order and in a different way.