On Ethical Writing & Avoiding Plagiarism

Create and express your own ideas.

Present unbiased information. Use sound evidence in support of your position. Acknowledge conflicting evidence and alternative interpretations.

Understand your sources. Be sure, when summarizing, that you use your own words and sentence structure but that you take care to reproduce the meaning of the author’s ideas or facts.

ALWAYS acknowledge the contributions of others to your work. When summarizing another’s work or quoting, identify the source of the information (placing quotation marks when quoting directly) and credit the source with a full citation.

Cite facts, data, journal articles, books, web pages, and images. Cite non-traditional sources, such as radio, streaming video, or a conversation with a friend. Only common knowledge does not need to be cited, e.g., water freezes at 32 degrees or famous heroes or events. When in doubt as to whether a concept or a fact is common knowledge, provide a citation.

Always cite the exact work being relied upon, do not cite an original paper if you are relying on a secondary summary of that paper.

Avoid reusing your own work from previous assignments and reports unless properly cited.

Using images or video? Be aware of copyright law and fair use when using images, videos, and other copyrighted content.

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Adapted from the 28 Guidelines at a Glance on Avoiding Plagiarism published by The Office of Research Integrity (https://ori.hhs.gov), revised 2015.