

Cañada College Library

How to Avoid Plagiarism

INTRODUCTION

Here is an example of plagiarism by well-known historian, Doris Kearns Goodwin, in her book on Joseph Kennedy¹:

Here is what Goodwin read in a book by Hank Searls:

Joe had shivered on benches from West Point on the Hudson to Dartmouth in the mountains of New Hampshire.

Here is what she wrote in her book:

[Joe was] shivering on benches from West Point on the Hudson to Dartmouth in the mountains of New Hampshire.

Here is another example of Goodwin's plagiarism.

The first sentence is by Searls:

Naval pilot training held coldly to the premise that it was better to remove the accident-prone early, before too much time and money had been wasted on him.

And here is Goodwin's version:

Naval pilot training held coldly to the premise that it was best to remove those who couldn't conquer the tensions of flying early, before too much time and money had been wasted on them.

- 1. Why are these two passages by Goodwin considered plagiarism? Discuss with a partner and record your thoughts in this box:**

QUOTATIONS

How could Goodwin have avoided plagiarism? There are two easy ways:

She could have used quotation marks and given a citation, like this:

When it came to football, Joe Kennedy was the quintessential bench warmer, who “shivered on benches from West Point on the Hudson to Dartmouth in the mountains of New Hampshire” (Searls, 1969, p. 101).

If you only do half – only use quotation marks but do not give a citation, or if you only give a citation but do not use quotation marks, you are committing plagiarism. The only way to avoid plagiarism when using someone else’s words is to do both parts of the job – put the words in quotation marks **and** cite the source.

- 2. Try it with a partner! Take the words below by Hank Searls (p. 178) and, using quotation marks, add them to some of your own words to form a sentence that is approximately half yours and half Searls’. Do not forget the citation !**

Naval pilot training held coldly to the premise that it was better to remove the accident-prone early, before too much time and money had been wasted on him.

Example: *Training a pilot for the navy was based on the inflexible philosophy of removing “the accident-prone early, before too much time and money had been wasted on him” (Searls, 1969, p. 178).*

PARAPHRASING

Goodwin could have avoided plagiarism another way. She could have paraphrased (used her own words) and given a citation, like this:

Joe Kennedy never played very much football in college. He got to know intimately the benches of many New England football fields (Searls, 1969, p. 101).

- 3. With a partner, paraphrase Searls’ words and provide a citation. Read Searls’ words a few times, and then try not to look at Searls’ words while writing yours:**

Naval pilot training held coldly to the premise that it was better to remove the accident-prone early, before too much time and money had been wasted on him.

Sometimes students think they do not have to provide a citation when they paraphrase, but they are wrong! You must inform your reader of the source of an idea, even if you change every single word of it. If you are not sure whether or not to cite a sentence or a phrase, ask your instructor, the Learning Center, or the Library for advice. Or, if there is not time, be on the safe side and overdo the citations.

COMPLETE CITATIONS

Your job when citing a source is to make it possible for the readers to get their hands on the sources of your quotes. You do this through two steps: First, you provide the reader with a short citation in parentheses in the body of your paper, such as this:

(Searls, 1969, p. 101)

Second, you provide a page of complete citations at the end of your paper, such as this:

Searls, Hank. (1969). *The lost prince: Young Joe, the forgotten Kennedy*.
New York: Ballanchine Books.

- 4. In the box below, rearrange the following information in the correct format for a complete citation at the end of your paper:**

Title:	The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys
Author:	Doris Kearns Goodwin
City of Publication:	New York
Publisher:	Simon and Schuster
Year of Publication:	1987

FEEDBACK

- 5. Instructors at Cañada College are looking at new ways to help students avoid plagiarism this year. What thoughts and advice can you and your partner offer on this topic?**

¹ These comparisons come from the following source:

Crader, Bo. (2002). "A Historian and Her Sources." *The Daily Standard*.

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