

# SYNTHESIZING & DOCUMENTING SOURCES

ENC 1101, Instructor Alling

# Definitions

- **Synthesis** = “process of building your own arguments using support and arguments from other writers” (R, G, & M 532)
- **Documentation** = a system of notation that refers the reader to the sources you consulted in writing the paper (532)
  - (*In-text citation* + *Works Cited entry* = **Documentation**)

# Objectives

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- Learn reasons for **incorporating sources**
- Learns reasons for **documenting sources**
- Learn **three ways to avoid plagiarism**
- Learn **three techniques** for incorporating sources
- Learn **two symbols** used to adapt quoted material

# Discussion

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- Why incorporate sources into an academic essay?

# Reasons for Incorporating Sources

- “Academic writers are **expected to know what others have said** about their topic” (532)
  
- Knowing what others have said:
  - ▣ “help[s] **establish foundation** for an argument”
  - ▣ “...**substantiate** your own argument”
  - ▣ “...**set up a point** you intend to challenge or support” (532)

# Discussion

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- Why must writers document their sources?
- What does documentation do for an essay?

# Reasons for Documenting Sources

- To indicate **material you “did not produce”** (532)
- To **follow the conventions** of your field (*MLA, APA, Chicago, Turabian, etc.*) (532)
- To **facilitate future research** for your readers (532)
- To **enhance your argument** through ethos (532)

# Discussion

- Define plagiarism.
- Give examples of plagiarism.
- Can an essay writer be blamed if he/she simply forgot to include parenthetical citations?
- What can writers do to avoid plagiarizing?

# Definition

- **Plagiarism** = the presentation of someone else's work as your own...[w]hether deliberate or accidental..." (Fowler and Aaron 626)

\*Turn to pp. 626-7 for examples

# How to Avoid Plagiarism

## **#1. When researching, take clear notes.**

- Use quote marks & citations even on note cards
- Note page numbers
- Note whether information is you're your thought, common knowledge, summarized, or paraphrased

# How to Avoid Plagiarism, cont.

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## **#2. Paraphrase from memory.**

“Close the book, write from memory, and then open the book to check for accuracy” (Hacker 596).

# How to Avoid Plagiarism, cont.

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## **#3. When in doubt, cite as a precaution.**

“a source citation for common knowledge is not wrong” (Aaron 426-7).

# Knowing What You Must Cite

## Unnecessary

- **Your independent material**
  - ▣ Your thoughts
  - ▣ Your observations from experience
  - ▣ Compilations of facts
- **Common knowledge**
  - ▣ History
  - ▣ Folk literature
  - ▣ Commonsense observation
- **Fair Use material**
  - ▣ Web sites w/ explicit releases
  - ▣ Small portions of the whole source (Aaron 426-7)

## Necessary

- **Other people's independent material**
- **Facts or ideas that are not common knowledge**

Examples:

- ▣ Books, articles, web pages, movies, interviews, discussion forums, blogs, opinions expressed on the radio, etc. (Aaron 426-8)

# Discussion

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- What are the consequences of plagiarizing?

**Mrs. Alling says:**

“There is always a price to pay for academic dishonesty.”

- Reduction of grade/failure of assignments
- Mark on transcripts
- Loss of trust and reputation
- Still not knowing how to complete assignments

# Three Techniques for Incorporating Sources

- 1) **Quotation** = using another writer's exact words
  - ▣ Use quotation:
    - “When the exact wording is...striking” (533)
    - “When the author is considered...“authoritative” (533)
    - “When you *take issue* with the author's statement” (533)
  - ▣ Use signal phrases:
    - Make the quote meaningful (534)
    - Make the quote part of the sentence
      - Use verbs: *notes, comments, observes, explains, posits, suggests, etc.* (534)
  - ▣ Use correct formatting:
    - Four lines or fewer = part of sentence, double space, quote marks, period after in-text citation (534)
    - More than four lines = double indent, double space, no quote marks, period before in-text citation (533-4)

# Example of Quotation

## □ Four lines or fewer:

- Showing that he believes in personal responsibility, Neal Boortz opines that “[i]f you’re an adult between the ages of eighteen and sixty-five who has been in the workplace for longer than six months, and you still can’t manage to earn more than the minimum wage...YOU’RE A PATHETIC LOSER!” (Boortz 157).

## □ More than four lines:

- The predominantly government-run education system also bothers him:

I believe the easiest and quickest way to turn this country around is to begin to educate its citizens, and the best way to do that is through an educational marketplace that stresses excellence brought on by free and open competition. If some union school teachers lose their jobs along the way, so be it. The schools aren’t there to provide them with permanent employment. They’re for our children. We need to take them back. (151)

# Three Techniques for Incorporating Sources, cont.

- 2) **Paraphrase** = “when you put someone’s ideas into your own words” (R, G, & M 535)
  - Use paraphrase:
    - When you want to emphasize another writer’s *ideas over their exact wording* (535-7)
    - When you want to use *your own wording* (535-7)
    - When you need *variety from quotation* (535-7)
    - When you want to demonstrate *your ability to synthesize* (535-7)
  - Use *your own words & sentence structure* (536)
  - Use approximately the *same number of words* as original (535)
  - Use *in-text citations* as with quotation

# Example of Paraphrase

- **Original text:** “The novel by J.K. Rowling was muscular and vivid, and the danger was that the movie would make things too cute and cuddly. It doesn’t” (536).
- **Faulty paraphrase:** According to Ebert, the novel by J.K. Rowling was brawny and brilliant, and the danger was that the movie would make things too delightful and cuddly. It does not (536).
- **Acceptable paraphrase:** According to Ebert, the film avoids the trap of making Harry’s story too cutesy while remaining true to the novel’s power (536).

# Three Techniques for Incorporating Sources, cont.

- 3) **Summary** = “condensing the material...into a briefer form” (537)
  - Use summary:
    - When you want to emphasize *ideas over exact wording* (537)
    - When you want to use *your own wording* (537)
    - When you want to demonstrate *your ability to synthesize* (537)
    - When you want to *lay a foundation* for what you have read (537)
    - When your *original material is too long* to quote or paraphrase (537)
  - Use *your own words & sentence structure*
  - Use *fewer words* than the original source
  - Use *in-text citations* as with quotation & paraphrase

# Discussion

- What can a writer do if he/she needs to manipulate a quotation? For example, what if a passage he/she wants to quote is very long, and the writer wants to omit part of the passage?

# Two Symbols for Incorporating Sources

- Ellipses = three periods with a space between each
  - ▣ to indicate material omitted (538)
  - ▣ to condense material responsibly (538)
    - See example on page 538
- Brackets
  - ▣ To clarify the original material (538)
  - ▣ To make the original material seem correct (538)
    - See example on page 538

# Discussion

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- Where should the parenthetical citations be placed?

# A word on placement of citations:

Most times: (author last name & page #) (Fowler and Aaron 644-45)

Keep citations close to borrowed material

Keep citations “unobtrusive” (Fowler and Aaron 651)

# Works Cited

- Boortz, Neal. "Minimum Wage." *Somebody's Gotta Say It*. New York: Harper Collins, 2007. Print. 156-68.
- Hacker, Diana. *The Bedford Handbook*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Bedford St. Martin's, 2009. Print. 592-608.
- Roen, Duane, Gregory R. Glau, and Barry M. Maid. "Synthesizing and Documenting Sources." *The Concise McGraw Hill Guide: Writing for College, Writing for Life*. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2009. Print. 531-588.