

# Understanding Plagiarism and Effective Referencing Strategies

Soon after arriving at university, you will hear the word 'plagiarism'. You may have heard this word before and already know something about it, or you may be hearing it for the first time, but either way, it is important to fully understand what plagiarism means and how it is relevant to you.

In its most basic form, plagiarism means presenting someone else's work or ideas as your own (standard plagiarism) or presenting your past work or ideas again, as if they are new (self-plagiarism). UCT has several plagiarism [policies](#) that you should take the time to read (e.g., [Avoiding Plagiarism: a guide for students](#); [Avoiding collusion in collaborative work: a guide for students](#); [Standard Plagiarism Declarations](#)), but sometimes these policies can be confusing, and so in this resource, we are going to simplify the concept of plagiarism, explain why it's important and how it applies to you and explain the strategies you can use to ensure that you use resources correctly and effectively.

## What is Plagiarism?

At university, we primarily share and assess knowledge and learning through writing. This writing may take the form of textbooks, journal papers, essays, tutorials, reports, theses, PowerPoint presentations, and posters, to name a few. As a student, you will use some of these forms of writing as *sources of information*, AND you will also be asked to produce some of these forms of writing as *evidence of your learning*.

Although these forms of writing may be very different, all academic writing shares a common purpose; to grow and expand our knowledge and understanding. If you are writing something for assessment, such as an essay, you will demonstrate how *your* knowledge and understanding have grown. While, if you are writing for dissemination (e.g. a journal paper), you will demonstrate how *the discipline's* knowledge and understanding have grown. BUT, if we plagiarise, we cannot grow.

To put it in simpler terms, think of a flower. A flower cannot grow by taking petals from another flower (standard plagiarism) or by pretending that its old leaves are new ones (self-plagiarism). Instead, to help us grow, we should draw on the sources of information around us, and our own prior knowledge, as a foundation upon which to build something new. And, the way we do that, the way we draw from those around us in an honest and constructive manner, is through 'referencing'.

Referencing is another word you hear a lot at university. Again, you may already know this word, or it may be new to you. But even if this is a new word or one that you don't really understand, I promise that this is something that you are already practising. Let's use an example to understand what I mean.

Imagine your friend is coming to visit you, and you want to bake a cake. Your aunt is a really good baker, and her cake is always delicious, so you ask her for a recipe. She gladly shares it with you, and you use it to help you make your own cake.

Your cake doesn't come out exactly like your aunts' cake, but it still looks okay. When your friend takes a bite, they smile and say, 'This is great! Did you bake it yourself? Where'd you get the recipe?'



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How would you respond? You'd probably say something like, "Yes, I baked it myself using my aunt's recipe".

And that's it, folks. That is a reference. You didn't steal a cake your aunt had baked and pretend that it was your own (plagiarism); you didn't pretend that you had created the recipe yourself (plagiarism); instead, you drew on your prior knowledge of baking and your aunt's recipe to make your own cake (growing your own knowledge and understanding – i.e. learning!), and when you presented the cake for tasting (assessment) you were honest about where you got the information that helped you make your cake (referencing).

Now let's take it one step further, so we complete the picture.

Based on what your cake tasted like, your friend might tell you what they think would help you make a better cake next time (feedback). For example, they may say, 'I think the texture is lovely and light, but it could be a little sweeter. Perhaps try adding more sugar next time?'

So, the next time your friend visits, you make a similar recipe. You whisk the eggs for as long as you did with your first cake because your friend said the texture was good, but you also add in more sugar. When your friend tastes your new cake, they say, 'Wow, now *this* is really good. It's light and just sweet enough. How did you do this?'

You'd probably say something along the lines of, 'Well, I used a similar recipe to last time, but that one was an apple cake, and this one is pear. I whisked the eggs in the same way I did for the apple cake (self-reference), but I added more sugar this time, as you suggested (reference). So, I think I'll keep this ratio of fruit to sugar in the future (growing your knowledge and understanding).

I hope that from these examples, you now have a better understanding of the different types of plagiarism and can see that based on your life experience you already know something about the principles of referencing, even if this is the first time you are being asked to do it in a formal way.

I also hope it is now clear why plagiarism is a problem; if you plagiarise, you will not be presenting a true reflection of your growth and development in your assessments, and any feedback you receive will be based on the plagiarised work, and thus not useful to your further growth and development. So, although plagiarism hurts many people, the person it hurts the most is you because it breaks your cycle of learning, practice, assessment, and feedback, which leads to more learning.

The following guide will help you learn more about the best practises for referencing and paraphrasing, which will support you to write in your own 'voice' (in other words, how you understand an idea(s), how you want to structure your argument, tell your story, and retain your own writing style, to name a few), while following the appropriate academic and referencing conventions.

# Section 1 - What is a reference?

## What is a reference?

An acknowledgement that you have referred to information from credible sources. Recognition that you have borrowed either people's work to build your argument or their ideas or opinions.

## Why do we reference?

We use references to show the history of a particular idea. References are also used to establish that our sources are credible and allow readers to engage with our sources. In academic writing, referencing your sources is considered ethical and respectful.

## What is a source?

A source is a thing that you get information from (a source of information)

## Type of sources

Journal articles, websites, lecture notes, textbooks, newspaper articles, policy/government documents, etc

## What kind of information does not have to be referenced?

1. **Citations are not necessary to support statements of common knowledge.** Common knowledge refers to information well known by everyone (layman), not just those in the discipline or experts.
  - a. **Example:** Food contains calories and nutrients (no reference needed).
2. **Personal communications (pers. comm.),** in other words, the information you have learnt through an informal conversation (not an interview) with someone. You should indicate this as in the example below and include the **surname** of the person you spoke to.
  - a. **Example:** "Given the volume of mature termitaria, attempts to excavate them using earth-moving equipment has unfortunately resulted in the destruction of the colony (**Picker**, pers. comm.)."

## When do we reference?

All information that is not common knowledge, that is, accessed from peer-reviewed sources should be referenced accordingly. In addition, all direct quotes should be referenced.

## Two types of referencing are needed in academic writing:

1. **In-text referencing:** You need to acknowledge the direct quotes or paraphrased findings of another author within the main body of your assignment. Generally, you mention the author and published year within brackets (see examples below) wherever you make reference to a source.
2. **Reference list:** This is placed at the end of your assignment/paper and includes the full details for all the references you have cited in your main text. This is different from a bibliography that includes all the sources you have read regardless of whether they are included in your text or not. The format for a referencing list depends on the type of referencing style used.

Here is a short guide to the most commonly used styles:



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**APA (American Psychological Association)** is an author/date-based style. “This means emphasis is placed on the author and the date of a piece of work to uniquely identify it” (Liang, Zhong, Rosseau., 2014, p.5).

Liang, L., Zhong, Z., Rosseau, R. (2014). Scientists’ referencing (mis)behavior revealed by the dissemination network of referencing errors. *Scientometrics*, 101:1973–1986.

**Harvard** is very similar to APA. Where APA is primarily used in the USA, Harvard referencing is the most used referencing style in the UK and Australia, and “is encouraged for use within the Humanities” (Liang, Zhong, Rosseau 2014).

Liang, L., Zhong, Z., Rosseau, R 2014. ‘Scientists’ referencing (mis)behavior revealed by the dissemination network of referencing errors’. *Scientometrics*, vol. 101, pp 1973–1986.

**Vancouver** is mainly used in medical and scientific papers<sup>1</sup>. It makes use of a system to number papers in the order in which you cite them in your text, which then corresponds to your reference list.

1. Liang L, Zhong Z, Rosseau, R. Scientists’ referencing (mis)behavior revealed by the dissemination network of referencing errors. *Scientometrics*, 2014; 101:1973–1986.

**For a more detailed guide, please see the following:**

UCT library referencing guide: <https://lib.uct.ac.za/research/referencing-help>

APA - <https://apastyle.apa.org/>

UCT Harvard – <https://lib.uct.ac.za/media/14488>

Vancouver - <http://libguides.lib.uct.ac.za/vancouver>

## Section 2 - Integrating your sources effectively

Source integration is an essential practice in academic writing. It entails weaving in another author's ideas (or several authors) to help support the credibility of your argument. By introducing sources (in-text citing) in your text, you allow your reader to see that you have researched the topic and have taken the works of experts in the field into consideration to support your ideas. Importantly, it allows your 'voice' to be heard by signposting how that source is relevant for the story you want to tell.

### Effectively integrating sources is important as it helps you to:

- Bolster your point with the credibility or reputation of the source.
- Identify others' opinions, theories and personal explanations.
- Present assertions of fact that are open to dispute.
- Present statistics.
- Establish your ethos as a good, reliable scholar/researcher.
- Let readers know where to find information on your topic.
- Let readers know the true understanding of that material.
- Restate in your own words the full meaning of complex jargon-riddled passages into your own story.

Essentially, there are two main ways to integrate your sources into a text – **QUOTING** or **PARAPHRASING**. You will paraphrase most of the time to allow your own voice and understanding to be heard, and you will use direct quotes sparingly.

### 1. **Quoting:**

Quoting refers to **using the exact words from a source**. In other words, it places emphasis on the exact words and phrasing used. There are several reasons for using direct quotes:

- The source author has made a point so clearly and concisely that it cannot be expressed more clearly and concisely.
- A certain phrase or sentence in the source is particularly vivid or striking.
- A claim you are making is such that the doubting reader will want to hear exactly what the source said. This will often be the case when you criticise or disagree with a source; your reader wants to feel sure you are not misrepresenting the source, so you need to quote enough of the source, so the context and meaning are clear.
- Wanting to use a person's words directly, for example, the person being interviewed (qualitative research)
- You are quoting a definition, where the exact words and phrasing influence the meaning of the definition

**Some additional notes about using direct quotes:**

1. While quoting is a legitimate way of incorporating sources into your text, it is not commonly used in the sciences, where the emphasis is on summarising and synthesising source information.
2. Always have a good reason for using a direct quote.
3. Do not allow quotes to speak for themselves. Your research paper/essay is ultimately about communicating your ideas. Your piece of writing simply helps to support those ideas or provides a counterclaim. So, you should not just string other peoples' ideas together giving quote after quote.
4. Always make sure you provide an analysis of the quote. Show your readers that you understand how the quote relates to your ideas by telling your reader what it means, why it is important, or what you want them to pay attention to.
5. Do not use quotes as padding. This is related to tips 1, 2 and 3. Very long quotes will require long explanations of their significance. If quotes do not have adequate analysis, readers will feel that you do not have a grasp on what that quote means, and they also might feel that you are using quotes as a "filler" to take up space.
6. Extract those parts of the passage that need quoting and integrate quotes smoothly into your text.
7. Remember to enclose all direct quotes in quotation marks.

## **2. Paraphrasing:**

Paraphrasing requires understanding the relevant and key idea(s) from a source, crediting the idea to the original author while making the phrasing one's own by relating the idea to your own story. You can paraphrase a single statement or idea, a paragraph or the entire paper (this is known as summarising - see below) and across several readings. Paraphrasing is not simply replacing words with synonyms or rearranging the structure of sentences. It is best to paraphrase when the original wording is not essential to understanding the concept under discussion. Most importantly, paraphrasing involves acknowledging the original source with proper referencing.

### **Steps to paraphrase:**

*The first step in paraphrasing is to read the original text and get a full grasp of it. You may need to read the original text a few times and check the meaning of keywords to fully understand it. While you are reading, think about the overall meaning of each paragraph, section or paper - don't just focus on the individual words and sentences. After going through each section, put the reading aside and state it in the way you understand it. When you can do this, you are ready to write your paraphrase. Finally, proofread, revise and edit your paraphrase as necessary. Don't forget to include a proper citation when paraphrasing and be careful not to change the author's meaning.*

**Note:** Summarising as a type of paraphrasing for paragraphs/whole papers

A summary should concisely capture the key points of a text. Summarising requires presenting all of the main ideas (overall message and key points) in a more cursory way. Summarise a source when the entire text is relevant to the discussion. For example, if you are asked to write an analysis based upon a specific article, readers would need an overview of the entire source in order to understand the argument being made in the student's essay.



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Here are some examples to illustrate paraphrasing and quoting:

Table 1: Examples for paraphrasing and quoting

Original text	Strategy to integrate the source into text	How you would write it
<i>There are two ways to become wealthy: to create wealth or to take wealth away from others. The former adds to society. The latter typically subtracts from it, for in the process of taking it away wealth gets destroyed. A monopolist who overcharges for his product takes away money from those whom he is overcharging and at the same time destroys value. To get his monopoly price, he has to restrict production (Stiglitz, 2013).</i>	Paraphrasing a paragraph (summarising)	Stiglitz (2003) suggests that creating wealth adds value to society, but that taking away the wealth of others, detracts from it. He uses the example of a monopolist who overcharges for his product, resulting in loss of wealth for the customer, in addition to the loss of value, since the monopolist must restrict production in order to charge the higher price.
<i>Chochinov's framework may help health professionals to provide more compassionate and respectful care for our patients. However, great ideas alone don't always lead to better practice, even when supported by training and re-training (Watson, 2007).</i>	Paraphrasing a single idea	More than just good theory and training is required to produce health professionals that truly integrate the A, B, C & D of dignity conserving care into their practice (Watson, 2007).
<i>The person's developmental structure can be defined as, the present nature of the person as a holistic being with sensorimotor, cognitive, and psychosocial characteristics (Nelson, 1996).</i>	Paraphrasing a single statement	People need to be viewed as holistic beings capable of mental, physical, psychological and social development (Nelson, 1996).
<i>The empathic dimension is concerned with the 'being' and moral-ethical sensitivity of the health professional (Olckers, Gibbs &amp; Duncan (2007).</i>  <i>Peloquin (1995) suggests that empathy is "finding you in me". It involves the recognition of likeness; a grasp of the universal nature of human problems; an appreciation of uniqueness and a caring alliance that reveals to 'the other' a belief in their innate capacity to resolve their own issues.</i>	Paraphrasing across several readings	The empathic dimension focuses on the sensitivity of the health professional (Olckers, Gibbs & Duncan, 2007). As a health professional, this sensitivity can be demonstrated by "putting yourself in their shoes". This involves treating patients with care, recognizing that their concerns are valid and believing in their ability to overcome their issues (Peloquin, 1995).
<i>The person's developmental structure can be defined as, the present nature of the person as a holistic being with sensorimotor, cognitive, and psychosocial characteristics (Nelson, 1996).</i>	Direct quoting	Nelson (1996, p.8) defines a person's developmental structure as the "present nature of the person as a holistic being with sensorimotor, cognitive, and psychosocial characteristics."
<i>The person's developmental structure can be defined as, the present nature of the person as a holistic being with sensorimotor, cognitive, and psychosocial characteristics (Nelson, 1996).</i>	Quoting + paraphrasing	Nelson (1996, p.8) believes that a person must be regarded as a "holistic being" endowed with the ability to evolve on the mental, physical, social and psychological fronts.

## Section 3 - Citing sources in-text using reporting verbs

After introducing your paraphrase or quote and providing your own analysis to show the significance of the ideas, you do not want your reader to become confused about which information is yours and which is the source. This means that you must reference appropriately. You could either use a **BACKGROUND** or **FOREGROUND** technique to cite the source depending on how you want to integrate that source into your own story.

**BACKGROUNDING:** Emphasis is on you as *the writer*, your voice is heard, and you can position your sources in support of what you write. For example, citing the source in parentheses ( ) for Harvard or using numbers for Vancouver<sup>1</sup>.

**FOREGROUNDING:** Emphasis on the *source* allowing you to use reporting verbs to position yourself in relation to the source (i.e. what is your stance or intellectual attitude regarding the author's idea).

### Using reporting verbs when integrating your sources:

You can refer to ideas or the research of others by using reporting verbs. Your choice of reporting verb represents your intellectual attitude about the research/idea you have mentioned and/or your stance relative to that source material. The stance can range from having a neutral position which is most common as we become student researchers understanding the subject knowledge, to a tentative position (to show that there are other opinions present as you read more into the field) or showing a strong position in favour or against a particular idea (taking a confident stance, more common at a PhD level).

For example:

Smith (2010) **shows**... (neutral stance)

Smith (2010) **advises**... (tentative stance)

Smith (2010) **challenges**... (strongly against)

Table 2: List of reporting verbs and their associated stance

Neutral	Tentative	Strong (in favour)	Strong (against)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to show</li> <li>• to demonstrate</li> <li>• to investigate</li> <li>• to explore</li> <li>• to state</li> <li>• to report</li> <li>• to list</li> <li>• to describe</li> <li>• to outline</li> <li>• to note</li> <li>• to comment</li> <li>• to express</li> <li>• to remark</li> <li>• to declare</li> <li>• to inform</li> <li>• to discuss</li> <li>• to define</li> <li>• to mention</li> <li>• to address</li> <li>• to present</li> <li>• to reveal</li> <li>• to find</li> <li>• to view</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to suggest</li> <li>• to propose</li> <li>• to advise</li> <li>• to recommend</li> <li>• to speculate</li> <li>• to hypothesise</li> <li>• to reason</li> <li>• to imply</li> <li>• to postulate</li> <li>• to question</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to assert</li> <li>• to advocate</li> <li>• to encourage</li> <li>• to argue</li> <li>• to affirm</li> <li>• to believe</li> <li>• to appraise</li> <li>• to conclude</li> <li>• to stress</li> <li>• to emphasise</li> <li>• to accentuate</li> <li>• to urge</li> <li>• to insist</li> <li>• to claim</li> <li>• to convince</li> <li>• to satisfy</li> <li>• to confirm</li> <li>• to support the view</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to challenge</li> <li>• to dispute</li> <li>• to disagree</li> <li>• to refute</li> <li>• to negate</li> <li>• to object</li> <li>• to contradict</li> <li>• to dismiss</li> <li>• to caution</li> <li>• to doubt</li> <li>• to oppose</li> </ul>



Reporting verbs can thus be combined with backgrounding or foregrounding as exemplified in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Using reporting verbs in backgrounding and foregrounding

Examples*	Your position	Style of integrating the source
<b>*Note: using the author-date referencing style</b>		
<b>Jones (2013) notes that</b> using a variety of reporting verbs can improve students' writing style.	Neutral	Foregrounding
It has been <b>suggested that</b> using a variety of reporting verbs can improve students' writing style (Jones, 2013).	Tentative – other opinions may be present	Backgrounding
<b>Jones' (2013) study affirms that</b> using a variety of reporting verbs can improve students' writing style.	Strong – evidence in favour	Foregrounding
A study by <b>Jones (2013) challenges</b> the view that using a variety of reporting verbs can improve students' writing style.	Strong – evidence against	Foregrounding

In summary, implementing the above strategies for integrating your sources and citing them in the text, will allow you to write more effectively while ensuring that your own voice is heard in your piece of academic writing.

**References:**

Piedmont Virginia Community College, United States. Integrating sources into your paper. Available at: <https://www.pvcc.edu> (accessed: 24<sup>th</sup> August 2021)

Germanna Community College, United States. Incorporating sources into research writing. Available at: <http://www.germannna.edu> (accessed: 24<sup>th</sup> August 2021)

Monash University, Australia. Paraphrasing, summarising and quoting. Available at: <https://www.monash.edu/rlo/research-writing-assignments/writing/paraphrasing-summarising-and-quoting#paraphrasing> (accessed: 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021)



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## Section 4 – Using Turnitin as a developmental tool for understanding your paraphrasing techniques

When you submit an assignment or thesis, you will be required to submit your work to Turnitin. This is an internet-based similarity detection software that contains a database comprised of:

- Archived web content that is publicly available.
- Books, journals, newspapers.
- Student papers submitted to Turnitin.

Turnitin is an artificial intelligence tool that analyses your written text and compares it to the database of various texts to detect any similarity. After this analysis, Turnitin then produces a similarity report that indicates similarity as a percentage. This percentage is known as the similarity index, which can be seen on the top right corner of our image below. This index along with the consequent report is a valuable developmental tool as it allows you, the writer, to see how much similarity there is in your text compared to other texts to enhance your paraphrasing.

The screenshot displays the Turnitin interface for a 'Film Essay' by Tom Sawyer. The overall similarity index is 19%. The 'Match Overview' pane on the right lists five sources with their respective similarity percentages:

Rank	Source	Similarity
1	www.slideshare.net (Internet source)	4%
2	www.antiessays.com (Internet source)	3%
3	Submitted to Edge Hill... (Student paper)	3%
4	socrates.berkeley.edu (Internet source)	3%
5	www.dreamcast2k.com (Internet source)	2%

Callout boxes provide instructions: 'Paper information' (top left), 'Download/print a PDF version of the Originality Report or the Digital Receipt' (bottom left), 'Click within the text to view the source' (bottom center), 'Filter the report to include or exclude the bibliography, quotations and/or small matches' (bottom right), 'Overall Similarity Index' (top right), 'View all sources' (top right), 'Match overview' (top right), and 'Click on a source in the right hand pane to view the matching text in your document' (top right).

Reference: <https://elp.northumbria.ac.uk/bbcswebdav/orgs/ORG1/bb9student/Turnitin/images/pic014.png>

### Interpreting the Turnitin report

It is important to remember that Turnitin works by identifying areas of similarity. The software matches the areas of similarity in your document to the information available on the database. This can be seen on the right-hand side of the report which shows different percentages of similarity.

That percentage corresponds to a specific section in your text which is matched using colour coding. The colour highlighted in the text corresponds to the source, e.g website, article or student paper.

The image shows a Turnitin report snippet. On the left, a paragraph of text is displayed with a red box highlighting a specific section. An arrow points from this highlighted section to a table on the right. The table lists three sources with their respective percentages: 1. www.slideshare.net (4%), 2. www.antiessays.com (3%), and 3. Submitted to Edge Hill... (3%). The third entry is highlighted with a red box, and an arrow points from it back to the highlighted text in the paragraph on the left.

1	www.slideshare.net	4%
2	www.antiessays.com	3%
3	Submitted to Edge Hill...	3%

As seen in the image above, the section highlighted in purple (3%) matches the information from a student paper **submitted to Edge Hill**. The percentage of 3% may seem small, however, it is important to look at the text to see which section is highlighted and how much of it is highlighted. If we look at the above example, we can see the highlighted section is showing word for word similarity.

This is something we need to be aware of, that is, entire sentences which implies plagiarised text/idea. However, upon closer inspection, it may be a quotation of which you will need to add quotation marks and referencing accordingly. This is one way you can use the Turnitin report to understand and improve your text. Another way is when your attempt at paraphrasing may need more work or too closely resembles the original author's ideas, which you can see by the highlighted text below.

#### Wikipedia Text (2<sup>nd</sup> Version)

Notably, as [Rubin \(2021\)](#) pointed out,<sup>[1]</sup> Fisher was against the concept of a Type I error "rate," as proposed by Neyman and Pearson, because it makes the assumption of "repeated sampling from the same population" (e.g., [Fisher, 1955](#); [Rubin, 2020](#)).<sup>[2][3]</sup> Nonetheless, Fisher (1937) advised researchers to use a significance threshold as a "convenient convention" for making provisional decisions about rejecting null hypotheses.<sup>[4]</sup> Hence, from this perspective, researchers may also make a provisional Type I error with regards to their sample-specific decision about the null hypothesis ([Rubin, 2021](#)).

You would then need to revisit your paraphrasing and then you could resubmit your work to see whether it is a better attempt. Here, we can see in the image below that less similarity has been detected to the original source. Therefore, when interpreting your Turnitin report **do not** just focus on the percentage but need to select the individual sources to identify which section of your text matches and see if you have referenced it correctly or if you have possibly plagiarised. This will then allow you to work on your text and make sure that you have paraphrased correctly.

#### Wikipedia Entry (Version 3)

Notably, as [Rubin \(2021\)](#) pointed out,<sup>[1]</sup> Fisher disapproved of Neyman-Pearson's concept of a Type I error "rate," because it makes the assumption of "repeated sampling from the same population," which he felt to be inappropriate in scientific contests (e.g., [Fisher, 1955](#); [Rubin, 2020](#)).<sup>[2][3]</sup> Nonetheless, Fisher (1937) advised researchers to use a significance threshold as a "convenient convention" for making provisional decisions about rejecting null hypotheses.<sup>[4]</sup> Hence, from this perspective, researchers may also make a provisional Type I error based on a one-off test of their null hypothesis ([Rubin, 2021](#)).

### What to note about Turnitin:

- A high similarity index does not mean you have plagiarised, while a low similarity index does not necessarily mean there is no plagiarism.
- Quotation marks will increase your similarity index - ensure referencing quotes correctly.
- Reference lists will also increase your similarity index.
- Sometimes when you resubmit your work several times, your work can be stored on the database resulting in self plagiarism (speak to your course convenor)

Do not be alarmed by the percentage of your similarity index for quotations or the reference list as Turnitin detects similarity. However, take the time to go through your Turnitin report to see where you may need to rephrase a sentence, use quotation marks or paraphrase. Turnitin allows you to analyse your own work and learn more about your paraphrasing techniques. As you analyse your Turnitin report, you may see areas highlighted that you were not aware of which allows you to work on your text more.

Adapted from: <https://top-au.libguides.com/c.php?g=593329&p=4104388>  
<https://www.turnitin.com/static/plagiarism-spectrum/>

## Section 5 - Final Tips

After you have submitted to Turnitin you might come across some challenges and need some quick guidance. Below are some common problems you might encounter with some possible solutions.

### Problem: Word-for-word quotation without clear acknowledgement

#### Solutions:

- Direct quotations must always be used in context
- Direct quotations must also be identified as such by the use of quotation marks.
- Copy the author's exact words and punctuation (if part of a sentence, the punctuation slightly differs).
- The source must be cited (as per referencing style)

### Problem: Cutting and pasting from the internet without clear acknowledgement

**Solution:** Cutting and pasting information, from any source, without acknowledgement is plagiarism. To integrate the information into your work, either paraphrase it or use it as a direct quote. derived from the internet must be Cite the information correctly referenced in-text, and the full citation must be included in the reference list, as well as the date on which you accessed the information.

### Problem: Unintentional Plagiarism

- An attempt at paraphrasing by merely re-ordering the original words or using synonyms
- Or by closely following the structure of their argument, forgetting to give due acknowledgement to the author.

**Solution:** When in doubt, use a similarity detection software such as Turnitin (see the section above on the use of Turnitin as a developmental tool).

### **Problem: Borrowing/adapting information**

#### **Solutions:**

- Correctly cite the source when borrowing or adapting a figure, graph, map, data, or table from another author's work.
- This citation should be consistent with the referencing style used in your document.

### **Problem: Inaccurate citation(s) or missing details**

#### **Solutions:**

- It is important to cite correctly, according to the conventions of your referencing style (consult a referencing guide from the UCT library - see section 1).
- All sources used in-text must be included in the reference list
- Make sure that you cite the 'original' source (i.e. go back to the original source where the particular idea/statement was first mentioned)

### **Final Tips**

- Always reference your sources and use quotation marks where necessary
- Avoid using non-peer reviewed sources such as common websites.
- Resist the temptation to cut and paste from your sources. Take notes in your own words instead and use quotation marks or highlight direct quotations in your notes.
- Use multiple credible sources to show your wide reading of the topic, do not cite all your information from one paper.
- When you synthesize ideas from many sources, you are more likely to understand the subject and develop your own ideas. However, remember that the purpose is not just to include several sources but also to understand an idea from different authors' perspectives.
- If you are unsure if something needs a citation, remember this rule: When in doubt, it's best to cite!

**Adapted from:** University of Oxford. 2015. *Plagiarism*. [ONLINE] Available at:  
<http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism>. [Accessed 20 February 2015].

Compiled by the FHS Writing Lab Team, 2021. Revised, 2024.