

Cite Right and Avoid Plagiarism

It is unfortunately the case that many people plagiarize when they write. That is, they use the words or ideas of others without giving them credit. The best to avoid plagiarism to understand what you are allowed to do, and to use good citation practices.

What is acceptable:

1. When knowledge is common and everyone knows it, you do not need to use citation. For example, it is common knowledge that Zambia achieved independence from the British in 1964 and that Kenneth Kaunda was its first president. When stating that fact, one need not cite any source. That Lake Kariba is the result of a dam across the Zambezi River requires no citation.
2. It is acceptable to refer to other people's ideas, but if those ideas are specific, one should give credit and direct the reader to the source for the ideas. The simplest method for citing in this instance is "in-text citation," which is illustrated below.
3. It is acceptable to quote a source. This should be done selectively. Moreover, academic writing avoids quoting long sections of other people's work unless it is absolutely necessary. When quoting short passages (less than four sentences), the quotation should be enclosed in quotation marks and included in the paragraph (see below). When the quotation exceeds four sentences, it should be indented on the left and preceded with an introductory phrase such as "According to Michael Kelly." When quoting, the citation should also include the page number (see below).
4. It is acceptable to use graphs or tables created by others, but the source must be given along with the page number.

The University of North Carolina has a good webpage explaining the reasons for academic citation:

<https://guides.lib.unc.edu/citing-information/why-we-cite>

Citation involves two basic steps

1. **Create in text citation.** In the case of a paraphrase of an author's thoughts, put the author's name and the date of the source in parentheses: e.g., (Kelly, 2000). When quoting someone's exact words, add the page number to the in text citation: e.g., (Kelly, 2000, p. 23).
2. **Created a References section.** At the end of the document, include a "References Cited" section with full details for every cited source.

Example #1

Below is an example from Dr. C. Thomas's dissertation. Because her Ph.D. is in education, she used the APA style of citation, but MLA in-text citation is similar and both fulfill the same purpose. Notice that the paragraph begins with an indent; this is common practice in academic writing. Also, notice that she does not include page numbers for these borrowings because she is paraphrasing the author and the knowledge is somewhat general in nature.

The educational development in Northern Rhodesia under the rule of the British South African Company was entirely established and maintained by the mission societies. Schools were seen as an integral part of mission work, since the missionaries placed their main hope for unwavering converts to Christianity on the young people of the villages (Kelly, 1999). As in the period prior to British South Africa Company rule, the mission schools were motivated to teach reading so people could read the Bible and spread the gospel message to others. Some of the mission schools also wanted to teach carpentry, blacksmithing and other skills that would help Africans raise their living standards. At first, local people showed little interest in school, but this slowly changed with the realization that an education increased the possibility of obtaining paid employment and thus augmented the ability to pay their hut taxes

(Kelly, 1999).

Example #2

In the following paragraph, Dr. C. Thomas includes a short quotation. Because it she is quoting someone else's exact words, this example requires a page number. The quoted text is not indented but included in the paragraph. The sentence appears in red for your benefit only; it would normally be black. Note the form of the in text citation: (Küster, 1999, p. 268).

Changes in the socio-economic climate of Northern Rhodesia, which were the effect of more education, became apparent within the culture. Education of young men enabled them to obtain salaried employment and subsequently pay the required bride wealth demanded by their brides' families, instead of working for their future in-laws' families as payment for their brides, which could take years to complete. School attendance therefore enabled young men to "circumvent certain long-standing social practices" (Küster, 1999, p. 258). Girls also benefited during this timeframe as education slowly became available for them. The London Missionary Society established a girls' boarding school in Mbereshi in 1915 and by the year 1925, five additional girls' schools were established by various mission societies, due to the success of the school in Mbereshi (Department of African Education, 1952/1999).

Step #2

At the end of Dr. C. Thomas's dissertation, she included a "References" section which showed detailed information about all her sources. The Kelly and Küster examples shown above appeared as follows:

Kelly, M. J. (1999). *The origins and development of education in Zambia from pre-colonial times to 1996: A book of notes and readings*. Lusaka, Zambia: Image Publishers.

Küster, S. (1999). *African education in colonial Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi: Government control, settler antagonism and African agency, 1890-1964*. Hamburg, Germany; New Brunswick: Lit; Distributed in North America by Transaction Publishers.

Additional information on citation standards can be found in many places online. Three reliable sources are:

1. Purdue University Online Writing Laboratory (OWL) for APA: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html
2. Penn State University for MLA: <https://guides.libraries.psu.edu/mlacitation>
3. University of North Carolina for Chicago: <https://guides.lib.unc.edu/citing-information/chicago-notes-in-text>