



**Plagiarism Prevention Tutorial:
How to Avoid Common Forms of Plagiarism**

*Based on the 7th Edition of the
Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*

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Description of the Tutorial and Quiz



The plagiarism prevention tutorial includes the following resources:

- This Introduction (PDF document)
- The Plagiarism Prevention Tutorial (PowerPoint document)
- The Plagiarism Prevention Quiz Questions (Word document)
- The Plagiarism Prevention Quiz Key (Word document, requires login)
- The Plagiarism Prevention Quiz Bank (compatible with Canvas, other LMS)

The Plagiarism Prevention Tutorial

The Plagiarism Prevention Tutorial (now in its third revision) has been updated to reflect the 7th Edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association published in 2020. The tutorial includes a 95-slide PowerPoint that discusses common errors that can lead to plagiarism, including (a) failure to properly cite sources, (b) overreliance on the words or organizational structure of someone else's work, and (c) overuse of other people's work, at the expense of one's own contributions. Students learn how to correct these errors as they progress through five sections of the tutorial:

1. What is plagiarism?
2. Citing sources using APA style.
3. Paraphrasing information.
4. Making it your own.
5. Preparing a list of references.

The Plagiarism Prevention Quiz and Answer Key

The tutorial comes with 50-question quiz bank containing true-false (T/F) and multiple choice (MC) quiz questions. The quiz questions are organized into the same sections as the tutorial:

1. What is plagiarism? [9 T/F and 3 MC questions].
2. Citing sources using APA style. [7 T/F and 11 MC questions].
3. Paraphrasing information. [3 T/F and 7 MC questions].
4. Making it your own. [5 T/F and 2 MC questions].
5. Preparing a list of references. [4 T/F and 7 MC questions].

The quiz questions can be accessed as a Word document or as a zipped folder for upload into Canvas (and possibly other learning management systems). The answer key for the quiz can be found by uploading the Canvas file into your LMS or by accessing the Word document after logging into the members-only site or by e-mailing the author. The key is not released to students. (I have, however, appreciated the irony of students contacting me in an attempt to cheat on their assigned plagiarism prevention quiz). If emailing the author for the key, please send the email from an institutional email address and include a link to a faculty website, course calendar listing, employee directory, or other source that establishes you as a librarian, instructor, instructional designer, teaching assistant, administrator, or other qualified staff who would have legitimate reason to access the answer key.

Empirically-Supported Teaching Strategies

Some acts of plagiarism occur intentionally as an attempt to cheat, but plagiarism can also arise when students do not properly understand when and how to cite, paraphrase, and reference



information (Pittman et al., 2009). Indeed, Valentine (2006) notes that what counts as plagiarism can be ambiguous, as some disciplinary contexts require citations, and others do not. I created the plagiarism prevention tutorial because I realized that if I wanted students to understand how to cite, paraphrase, and reference information, I was going to need to explicitly teach them when and how to do it. The plagiarism prevention tutorial is built on the following empirically-supported teaching strategies: (a) create a culture of academic integrity, (b) help students build knowledge and self-efficacy skills via the careful scaffolding of new learning content, and (c) use active learning techniques to help students gain hands-on practice citing, paraphrasing, and referencing information.

Create a Culture of Academic Integrity

In their review of the research on academic integrity, McCabe et al. (2001) note that there are many factors that contribute to a student's decision to engage in an act of academic dishonesty. These factors can include contextual factors, such as policies, honor codes, academic culture, and peer influences; and individual factors, such as GPA, age, extracurriculars, and gender. Importantly, however, contextual factors have been found to exert a more powerful influence on whether students cheat than individual factors (McCabe & Treviño, 1997).

From a teaching perspective, this is good news as it indicates that there are concrete, proactive steps that faculty can take to create a cultural of academic integrity and reduce incidences of cheating in their classrooms. For example, students are less likely to cheat when faculty take academic integrity concerns seriously, clearly communicate their expectations with students, and connect those expectations to explicit policies and consequences (McCabe et al., 2001).

In line with this research, the plagiarism prevention tutorial starts with a clear definition of plagiarism, provides several examples of what does and does not constitute plagiarism, clearly outlines the possible consequences of plagiarizing, and provides step-by-step instructions on how to avoid plagiarism. Importantly, to further create a culture of academic integrity, I take extra care to role model these principles by properly citing, paraphrasing, and referencing my sources throughout the tutorial.



Build Knowledge and Self-efficacy Skills

One of the strongest predictors of academic success is students' sense of performance self-efficacy (Richardson et al., 2012; Schneider & Preckel, 2017). Performance self-efficacy captures a student's beliefs that they are capable of performing well academically. Teachers can contribute to this success by developing instructional tools that are clear and understandable and by providing examples and illustrations in order to explain difficult concepts (Schneider & Preckel, 2017; Zheng, 2016).

Within the domain of academic writing, Pittman et al. (2009) have proposed that developing a strong sense of confidence and identity as a writer (what Pittman et al. coin "authorial identity") may be key for helping students improve their writing skills. In their research on the topic, they found that students' self-reported knowledge on how to avoid plagiarism was one of the strongest predictors of students' self-reported confidence in writing. Stoesz and Yuditseva's (2018) review of tutorial interventions designed to build students' citing, paraphrasing, and referencing skills reached similar conclusions. Learning how to avoid plagiarism can increase students' self-efficacy skills and make them better writers.

A key goal of the plagiarism prevention tutorial is to present clear step-by-step instructions on how to cite, paraphrase, and reference information. Consistent with principles of self-regulated learning scaffolds (Zheng, 2016), the plagiarism prevention tutorial provides students with opportunities to (a) make conceptual distinctions between related concepts (e.g., paraphrasing versus quoting), (b) learn concrete strategies for how to carry out these skills (via step-by-step instructions on how to cite, paraphrase, and reference), and (c) view concrete examples of how to cite, paraphrase, and reference information (via the illustrative examples provided). As outlined in the next section, the tutorial also provides students with multiple opportunities to try these skills themselves (via the guided 'try it' exercises) and to reflect on their learning progress (via the feedback provided).

Create Opportunities for Active Learning

Students learn best when they are actively engaged with learning content, rather than passively exposed to learning content (Freeman et al., 2014). They also remember information better when they have multiple opportunities to retrieve that information via practice tests (Adesope et al., 2017). In line with these best practices, the tutorial and associated quiz are designed to actively engage students in "try it" exercises in which they can actively test their conceptual understanding and practice citing, paraphrasing, and referencing information. The opportunity to practice paraphrasing information is particularly important, as several studies have found that this direct practice is key for developing students' writing skills (e.g., Barry, 2006; Landau et al., 2002).



The quiz bank that accompanies the tutorial is designed to test students' understanding of the tutorial content. In my own teaching, I have used the quiz function of our course management system to set up a quiz where students are presented with 5-10 questions at a time, pulled at random from the larger pool of quiz questions. Students are allowed to take the quiz as many times as they want, with only their highest grade counting towards their score. Students also receive feedback on their performance after each attempt. In this way I hope to reinforce the message that writing is a skill to be developed, and that it is okay for students to practice in order to develop these skills.

To further reinforce students' citing, paraphrasing, and referencing skills, I will sometimes also require that students submit a paraphrase along with their quiz. The passage that I assign for the paraphrase assignment tends to vary based on the course. For example, in an introductory course with large student enrollments, I might have students submit their paraphrased passage of the Myers' (2013, p.45) quote that is presented in the tutorial. This provides students with an incentive to actually complete the try it exercises as they complete the tutorial, and this quick "check in" activity it provides me with an opportunity to catch misunderstandings early and to provide feedback. For upper-level classes, I tend to assign longer passages, or even a short research article, for the paraphrase assignment. This paraphrase assignment often sets the stage for a larger, more involved, literature review paper or research proposal to be submitted later in the term.

Anecdotally I have found that since I started using the tutorial, incidents of plagiarism have gone down in my classes, and students seem better equipped to paraphrase and cite their sources. In addition, in the few rare cases when an act of plagiarism does arise, I can now refer back to the tutorial to give teeth to my argument that the student "should have known better."

Acknowledgements

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