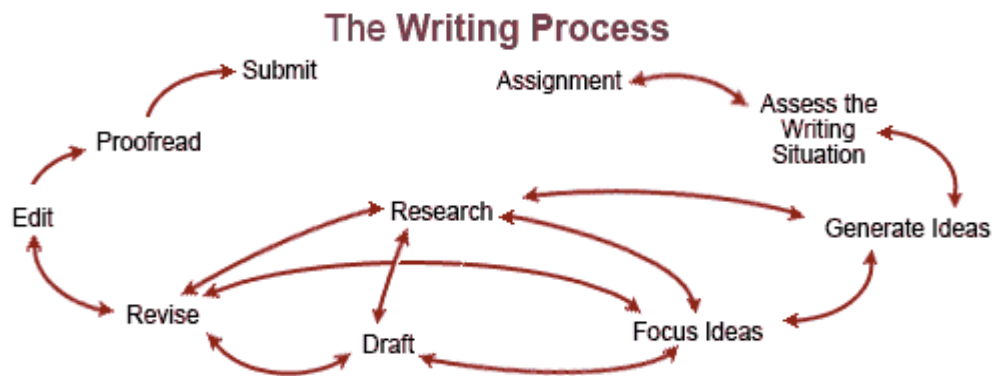


ACADEMIC HONESTY



Above is a map of a writing process that will help you produce strong academic writing. While this is not the only writing process you might follow, it does allow time for all of the important steps you need to take, including organizing your thoughts, collecting research, drafting multiple versions of your paper, and polishing your work. The most important aspect of this model is that it highlights the relationships among those pieces, while putting research at the center of your writing and thinking activities.

Maintaining academic honesty isn't something to do at the last minute when you throw together your bibliography. It is far better to adhere to the standards of academic honesty throughout your entire writing process, from the moment you begin generating ideas for your topic until the time when you double-check your citations and references before you submit your writing. Whether you are conducting library research, taking notes on what you've read, or integrating sources in your writing, the information in this module will help you write your way to academic work that adheres to the standards of academic honesty.

“I'd rather be caught holding up a bank than stealing so much as a two-word phrase from another writer.” --Jack Smith

Although there are many styles of, and formats for, academic writing, they all have something in common: they communicate new and emerging knowledge in a discipline by building upon knowledge that has been established previously. That "old" knowledge must be recognized and credited through proper citations and references of the sources. Acknowledging sources in this way is one of the most important things academic writers—at all levels—do. Recognizing others' contributions is more than just an academic convention; it shows respect for the full academic community by connecting readers and writers to the web of knowledge.

In addition, acknowledging your sources accurately and appropriately will help you present your ideas and original statements in your own voice, distinguishing your argument from the arguments made by others. When you cite others, it should most often be to provide the evidence, context, and counterpoint that supports your argument.

Taking Notes: Maintaining Academic Honesty

The faintest ink is better than the sharpest memory. (Chinese Proverb).

How effective is your method of taking notes? Do you struggle during the writing process to remember where you found certain ideas? Do you have trouble remembering if a certain passage was a quote or a paraphrase-or even an idea of your own?

One of the most important, and most efficient, habits you should develop is keeping track of your sources as part of your note-taking process. Academic writers use notes not only to track their comprehension and learning, but to protect themselves from plagiarism. One fairly simple way to avoid plagiarizing other people's work is to take organized and precise notes during the research process.

- Consider keeping a working bibliography that tracks every source you review. If you format this bibliography as you write it, you'll save yourself time in the long run (because you won't have to create a reference page from scratch).
- Consider putting all of the bibliographic information for a source on the same page where you write your notes so the information is there if you choose to use it later.
- No matter your system, make sure you keep all of the bibliographic information from your sources, and that it is always accurate and complete. This will help you cite your information properly and create an accurate reference list-both of which will help prevent plagiarism.
- When you take notes on and write summaries of your sources, make sure that you 1) put direct quotes in quotation marks, and 2) note the page number(s) where the quotes can be found. If you paraphrase an author's words, make a note to remind yourself that you have paraphrased (as well as the pages where the original passage can be found) so that you don't forget to cite the paraphrase later. Your notes should always distinguish between your words and ideas, and those of your sources.

Tips on Note Taking

- Accuracy is paramount. Make sure your notes reflect your sources-the main ideas, evidence, examples, analysis, and so on-accurately.
- Distinguish among quotations, paraphrases, and your own ideas. (Develop a tri-color code system if it helps.)

- Never copy or paste someone else's words directly into your notes unless you put quotation marks around them and write down the location of that quote.
- Write or print clearly today so that in the future you can read what you wrote.
- Don't worry about over-referencing at this stage-it's safer to over-reference than under-reference.
- Personalize your note-taking so that it is enjoyable and convenient for you to take notes and transform your research into writing.
- Keep complete files of all of your research notes.
- Visit your notes often to keep them fresh in your mind.

For more information on how not to use notes, check out the film *Shattered Glass* starring Hayden Christensen as former New Republic journalist Stephen Glass, who was caught fabricating sources.