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# Avoiding Cut and Paste Plagiarism with Citations

**Plagiarism** is the act of stating or implying *that another person's work is your own*. Plagiarism can range from submitting a paper you didn't write to omitting key citations. Any action in which you misleadingly claim an idea as your own when it is not could constitute plagiarism. Here are some examples of **what not to do**.

## Wholesale Copying

When plagiarism is discussed, most people picture someone handing in a paper they copied from a Web site, a friend, or some other source. This is clearly plagiarism because:

1. The person did not do any original research or writing.
2. The work is created by another author, yet the submitter has put his or own name on it.

To give a specific example, suppose you have an assignment to explain how bilingual speakers learn how to fluently speak more than one language, and you find a nice explanation on the Linguistic Society of America's [Bilingualism FAQ Web Page](#).

If you were to copy this text, paste it into your document and hand it in as your assignment, you would be committing plagiarism.

## Cut and Paste

Another type of plagiarism involves copying large chunks of text from one or more original sources and inserting it into the assignment.

For instance, suppose you are doing the assignment on how bilingual children learn language, and you include a paragraph from the [Bad Linguistics Page](#) Web site (Pyatt, 2000). Unless you present the paragraph as a quote with full citation, you are committing plagiarism.

**Bad** ([bold, red text] = "inserted text')



Contrary to what many people may expect, it is very easy for young children to learn more than one language at a time. **[The minds of children are "wired" to acquire language automatically (undergoing exactly the same stages, no matter what the language is). From ages 1-5, kids can acquire any possible language (from English to Chinese to Hawaiian), and acquiring multiple languages is no problem, provided children have enough exposure. From 5-10, kids still have an easy time, but once adolescence hits, most people lose the ability to pick up languages easily.]**

Good (with quoted text indented and the author cite afterwards)

Despite the anxieties of many immigrant parents in the United States, it is actually very easy for young children to become multilingual.

“The minds of children are “wired” to acquire language automatically (undergoing exactly the same stages, no matter what the language is). From ages 1-5, kids can acquire any possible language (from English to Chinese to Hawaiian), and acquiring multiple languages is no problem, provided children have enough exposure. From 5-10, kids still have an easy time, but once adolescence hits, most people lose the ability to pick up languages easily.”

— Pyatt, 2000

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Pennsylvania State University  
University Park, PA 16802  
814-865-4700

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