# Avoiding Plagiarism

In academic writing, the use of somebody else’s ideas or information without giving that person credit is known as plagiarism. This can be a very serious offense no matter if the writer purposely copied somebody else’s words or simply borrowed an idea for their paper and forgot to mention where the idea came from. There are two steps that writers must take to avoid this problem. The first is to cite any information that is not considered “common knowledge,” meaning any facts, theories, or opinions that the writer had to research. Citations vary depending on the discipline, but they all give credit to the author or the corporation responsible for the information. The second step is to properly integrate the information. There are three methods for integrating research: summarizing, paraphrasing, or quoting. Quoting means that you take someone else’s statement word-for-word (or edit it only slightly to make it fit your content). Quotations will be marked with a quotation mark (“) at the beginning and at the ending. Summarzing and paraphrasing involve restating somebody’s idea in your own words. This is more than just replacing a few words with their synonyms; it means completely restructuring the statement.

For more information on how to avoid plagiarism, see the Center for Writers’ helpful tips: <http://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/cfwriters/Plagiarism_article_March2011.docx>

For more information on using citation styles, you can check out the Purdue OWL: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>