Writing Resources
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✶These two sections are particularly important
How Can I Improve my Writing and Why Should I Care?

Why is it necessary to have good written communication skills?

You would not show up to work in shorts and a holey T-shirt and expect your patients to take you seriously as a professional. Similarly, you cannot write sloppily and expect to be taken seriously as a professional.

Communication is how we convey information to other people. *How* we communicate also conveys information. How well you write reflects the quality of your education and how well you learn. If you write sloppy, you are conveying the message that you lack the ability to pay attention to detail, that you are uninterested in learning basic skills, and that you are generally a sloppy worker. Poor writing can convey a lack of respect and consideration to the person you are communicating with.
Why is graduate level scholarship important?

Graduate education is more than simply cramming additional information into your brain. At the graduate level you are expected to think critically and to be able to demonstrate that critical thinking. When you take the time to paraphrase what you have read, to put those ideas into your own words instead of merely quoting them, you are communicating to others that you truly understand those concepts and are able to contextualize them.

Paraphrasing someone else’s ideas, however, does not make them your own. Proper citation of the source of those ideas, is not only the ethical thing to do – providing credit where credit is due – but illustrates to the reader that you are well read on the subject and are capable of supporting your arguments with information and ideas already presented in quality peer-reviewed journals and books.
OK. So what can I do to improve my writing?

Our **University Writing Center** is a terrific resource. We strongly encourage our students to take advantage of this resource while you are still enrolled at A.T. Still and have access to the Center. Even if you think you are already a good writer, you should still utilize their services – why not try to become a great writer?

The University Writing Center can help you improve the technical elements of your writing, such as the organization of your paper, sentence structure, grammar and punctuation, and citations and references. Instructions for submitting papers are on the [Home Page](#). Papers under 20 pages normally will be returned to you within 24 hours.

The UWC also provides special consideration for our English as a Second Language (ESL) students. If you are an ESL student, put “ATTN: ESL” in the subject line when you submit your papers to the UWC in order to access this resource.

Numerous brief brochures on various aspects of writing are also available you. [Scroll down the webpage](#), and take the time to review some or all of those handouts.

Click for a list of [Additional Useful Resources](#).
OMG!
My instructor said that I plagiarized!
But I am not a cheater!!

Plagiarism is a very serious issue – one that we hate to see students stumble into due to ignorance. Plagiarism can be more than simply purchasing a pre-written paper or blatantly copying someone else’s work and pasting it into your own manuscript. You could be plagiarizing even when you think that you are carefully paraphrasing. Given the confusion and misunderstandings regarding plagiarism, some information and resources are included here to help clarify some concepts.
What is plagiarism?

From the *Collins English Dictionary* (plagiarism, n.d.), plagiarism is defined as “an act or instance of using or closely imitating the language and thoughts of another author without authorization and the representation of that author's work as one's own, as by not crediting the original author.” Plagiarism – whether done on purpose, or inadvertently – consists of the *theft* of someone else’s ideas or words and *lying* about your own contribution by either directly taking credit for the ideas or implying through silence that those concepts are your own.

Reference:

Why is plagiarism such a big deal?

**Morality:** Consider the last time that you made something with your own hands. How would you feel if someone took that item from you without your permission and went around telling people that *they* made it? How would you feel if people praised them for such good work?

**Professional Integrity:** Consider that you are faced with having to undergo extensive oral surgery. Just before the surgery you find out that the dentist cheated their way through school by passing off someone else’s work as their own. Wouldn’t you consider trying to find another provider?

How would you feel if you found out that your lawyer *lied* to you? What would you think if you found out that your accountant had been convicted of *theft*? (See “What is plagiarism?”)

**What are you Learning?** You are not only cheating the source of the ideas out of proper acknowledgement, *you are cheating yourself.* You are not learning if all you are doing is aping someone else. By taking the time to understand the concept well enough to write about it in your own words, you contextualize the ideas, analyze them, retain them longer, and *learn.* You are spending a lot of money for your education – make the most of it and *find your own voice!*
CGHS Academic Integrity Policy

Academic Integrity Policy

As a university devoted to medicine, dentistry, and other health professions, the academic integrity of ATSU programs and the work of its faculty, students, staff, and administration must be beyond reproach. Violations of academic integrity are grievous offenses against the University community. Academic integrity violations generally fall into one of three categories: plagiarism, cheating or fabrication/falsification.

Plagiarism Defined

Plagiarism is the presentation, whether intentional or unintentional, of another’s work as if it were one’s original work. Proper and complete citation and reference, in accordance with APA style guidelines, is required of all student work. Specific examples of plagiarism include:

- Cutting and pasting or re-entering information from another’s work into a document without correct citation or attribution;
- Information is attributed to a source other than the original;
- Material authored by someone else is submitted as original work;
- Turning in previously prepared work, in part or in whole, is considered self-plagiarism and is unacceptable. In instances where it might be appropriate to include prior work the student must obtain permission from the instructor to include the prior work;
- Information is properly cited but the paraphrasing is not substantively different from the original source;
- Infrequent or missing citations;
- Inordinate overuse of quotations
Plagiarism Sanctions

Assignments submitted for a grade, including papers and discussion posts, are subject to review for plagiarism. The consequences of plagiarism vary based on whether the incident is a first, second, or third occurrence.

First occurrence. A first instance of plagiarism is generally believed to result from a lack of familiarity and inexperience in using APA guidelines and is perceived as a “misuse of sources”.

The sections for a first offense generally are, but are not limited to:

- Required completion of the ATSU University Writing Center Proper Use of Resources tutorial.
- A grade of zero on the assignment
- Resubmission of the assignment for a reduced grade.
- Students who choose not to participate in the tutorial or fail to complete the tutorial will retain the grade of 0 on the assignment.

Second occurrence. A second occurrence of plagiarism is a more serious academic offense and is not attributed to naiveté, ignorance of guidelines, or a misunderstanding of what constitutes acceptable graduate scholarship at ATSU.

The sanction for a second plagiarism offense is, but is not limited to:

- A grade of F in the course

Third occurrence. A third occurrence of plagiarism is seen as a student’s chronic inability or refusal to produce acceptable graduate-level scholarship.

The sanction for a third plagiarism offense is, but is not limited to:

- Expulsion from the university
**Appealing plagiarism sanctions:** On a first offense, recognizing that the results may come from a lack of familiarity and inexperience using APA guidelines and scholarly writing standards, a student may not appeal the plagiarism findings. They may, as is university policy, appeal their final grade.

On a second offense, a student may, in writing, appeal the finding to the Dean or his/her designee.

On a third offense, after a formal referral to the University Standards and Ethics Board Chairperson, a student may proceed with the appeal policy in the ATSU student Handbook under (page 30-32) Code of Academic Conduct.

See also “Code of Academic Conduct”, p. 35-36; and “Code of Behavioral Standards”, p. 36-37, in the A.T. Still University | ATSU Student Handbook
How to avoid plagiarizing

Cite your sources

Whenever you use someone else’s ideas, data, or theories in your composition, you must cite your source. The format required for such citations depends on where your work will be submitted. All CGHS courses require APA format (American Psychological Association, 2010). Citing your sources actually strengthens your arguments by establishing the authority behind your statements, and exhibits your own knowledge of the subject by demonstrating how well read you are (The Writing Center, n.d.; Harris, 2013).

Use quotation marks around direct quotes or quoted phrases.

Be prudent in your use of quoted phrases. Use them primarily for emphasis or authority. The use of too many quotes looks like you really did not understand the source material, and are simply copying to avoid contextualizing what you have read.

Write, and even take notes, in your own words.

Use your own words whenever possible. Be sure to consult the links in the following section so that you may learn to recognize when you have paraphrased incompletely and require further revision. Even when you do use your own voice, if the ideas that you express are not entirely your own you must cite the original source (e.g., Gordon, Simmons & Wynn, n.d.).

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Paraphrasing Examples

https://sites.google.com/a/atsu.edu/online-writing-center/files

Among the useful writing guides listed at ATSU’s University Writing Center is “Improving paraphrasing.pdf” (Anast, 2013), which provides an example of an “unacceptable” paraphrase, followed by examples of “acceptable” methods of presenting the same material by paraphrasing, summarizing or directly quoting.

http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml
(Writing Tutorial Services, 2004)

The above link provides an example of an “unacceptable” paraphrase, explains why it is plagiarism, and then presents two examples of how to rewrite the same concepts without plagiarizing.

http://blogs.ubc.ca/firstyearbiology/plagiarism/ (Reproduced from McMillan (2001) and Gabbott (n.d.))

The above link discusses proper paraphrasing. Three different “types” of humorously defined improper paraphrasing are presented and discussed.


The above link provides an example of an “unacceptable” paraphrase, explains why it is plagiarism, and then presents an example of how to rewrite the same concepts without plagiarizing.

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How to check for plagiarism before you turn the assignment in

Proofread your work

Double check to make sure that any thoughts, words, theories, etc., that are not entirely your own are properly cited. Try reading the paper aloud: Does the writing sound like you? If it sounds like someone else wrote it, then you probably have incompletely paraphrased the concepts. Review the examples presented here to help you with further revisions.

Submit the assignment ahead of time to the University Writing Center

While the UWC does not submit your paper through a plagiarism checker, it is a useful resource that can help you learn to write professionally. Instructions for submitting papers are on the Home Page. Papers under 20 pages normally will be returned to you within 24 hours.

Utilize the TurnItIn Assignment Draft Tool

The Assignment Draft Tool is located in the left-hand menu of each classroom.

Even properly cited and referenced material can produce a high similarity index. Double-check to make sure that items marked as identical were quoted, properly cited, and referenced. If you are unsure, ask your instructor or the University Writing Center. Review the paraphrasing examples presented here in order to learn how to avoid high similarity scores.

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References


Writing Tutorial Services (2004), *Plagiarism: What it is and how to recognize and avoid it*. from the Indiana State University Bloomington website: 
http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtm

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Additional Useful Resources

**General Writing Resources:**


**Academic Writing Resources:**

**Books:**


Handouts and Guides:

Writing guides from A.T. Still University’s University Writing Center:

https://sites.google.com/a/atsu.edu/online-writing-center/files

Writing guides from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill’s The Writing Center:

http://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/

Examples of proper (and improper) paraphrasing

Websites:

Thesaurus: http://thesaurus.com

Used properly, this site can be a tremendous help with your writing. However, do not become a “Thesaurus Fanatic” type plagiarizer!

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