

UCLA LAW REVIEW

Plagiarism Policy

Your submission for publication will not be considered until a fully completed Plagiarism Policy and Declaration of Academic Integrity are submitted to the Comments Department. Be sure to provide your initials at the bottom of all six pages, as well as your signature and identifying information on the final page. This form should be submitted electronically as a PDF with your Comment submission to comments@law.ucla.edu.

I. Policies and Definitions

The UCLA Student Conduct Code defines plagiarism as:

[T]he use of another's words or ideas as if they were one's own; including, but not limited to representing, either with the intent to deceive or by the omission of the true source, part of or an entire work produced by someone other than the student, obtained by purchase or otherwise, as the student's original work; or, representing the identifiable but altered ideas, data or writing of another person as if those ideas, data or writing were the student's original work.¹

The UCLA Law Review has further articulated its own policy as follows:

Plagiarism of other authors' works will *not* be tolerated. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to: (1) using an author's ideas without appropriately crediting the author; (2) paraphrasing text from an author's work without appropriately crediting the author; and (3) duplicating portions of text from an author's work without indicating with either quotation marks or block quote format that the relevant language is directly quoted.

II. Common Forms of Plagiarism

Most acts of plagiarism fall into one or more of three categories: (1) quoting without so indicating; (2) paraphrasing a source without giving credit; or (3) using another's ideas without giving credit. Each is illustrated below.

All examples are based upon the following passage² from Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address (Nov. 19, 1863): "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth, upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation, so conceived, and so dedicated, can long endure."

A. Quoting

All language taken directly from another source must be designated as such with quotation marks (or indentations to designate a block quote if over 50 words) and the source must be cited. If either the quotation marks or the source is omitted, use of the phrase constitutes plagiarism.

¹ UCLA Student Conduct Code § 102.01(c).

² The following passage contains 53 words. Although a quote of this length would normally be block quoted, for clarity, the passage is intentionally not block quoted. In addition, all cites will be placed immediately following the quoted passage, not in a footnote.

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Plagiarism, example 1:

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth, upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

- This entire phrase should be in quotation marks, and the source should be cited.

Plagiarism, example 2:

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth, upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address (Nov. 19, 1863).

- This entire phrase should be in quotation marks. It is not enough to merely cite the source.

Plagiarism, example 3:

Many years ago our fathers created a new nation, conceived in Liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address (Nov. 19, 1863).

- Changing a few key words or grammatical signals does not make a sentence or phrase your own work. Even though this sentence has been slightly changed, it is still substantially similar to that of the original author, and should therefore be in quotation marks with brackets to indicate the changes or omissions.

Correctly credited text for example 3:

“[Many] years ago our fathers . . . [created] a new nation, conceived in Liberty . . . and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.” Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address (Nov. 19, 1863).

B. Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is rewriting a sentence or paragraph in your own words. If the language is completely your own, you may omit quotation marks, but you must always provide a pin cite to indicate the location of the original material within the source. Changing only a few words (or the verb tense of original words) is not paraphrasing, and you must cite the source and place the material in quotation marks as shown above.

Plagiarism, example 4:

America was created under a new philosophy, namely that all people are equal. The American civil war tested this underpinning of our society, and forced our nation to truly examine whether it could survive as a nation of equals.

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- Although this is rewritten and thus correctly paraphrased, this material must be cited, including a pin cite to indicate the location of the original text within the source if it is paginated.

Correctly cited text for example 4:

America was created under a new philosophy, namely that all people are equal. The American civil war tested this underpinning of our society, and forced our nation to truly examine whether it could survive as a nation of equals. Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address (Nov. 19, 1863).

It is often difficult to determine when you have sufficiently rewritten material to include it in your scholarship as a paraphrase rather than a quotation. If there is any doubt, it is likely that the material too closely resembles the original to not quote it. You should either rewrite the passage again, or quote the material used.

Plagiarism, example 5:

America was conceived in Liberty, and to this day continues to dedicate itself to the proposition that all men are equal. When we engaged in the Civil War, we tested whether our nation, or any nation so conceived, and so dedicated, could long endure. Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address (Nov. 19, 1863)

- This phrase is substantially similar to the original text, but the changes (including the verb tense changes) are not enough to make it your own words. Instead, the material should be placed in quotations with brackets to indicate the changes.

Correctly cited text for example 5:

America was “conceived in Liberty,” and to this day continues to “dedicat[e] [itself] to the proposition that all men are ...equal.” When we “engaged in . . . civil war, [we] test[ed] whether [our] nation, or any nation[] so conceived, and so dedicated, [could] long endure.” Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address (Nov. 19, 1863).

- This presentation has quotation marks and numerous brackets. From a stylistic standpoint, this presentation may indicate to the reader that you lack a sufficient grasp of the material to present it in your own words.
- In such situations, you should entirely rewrite the material, performing additional research as necessary.

Sometimes it isn't practical to convey information without using language substantially similar or even identical to that of the original author. Lists and scientific or other technical information, for example, often must be conveyed verbatim or it will lose its proper meaning. The need to maintain the original language, however, does not excuse the requirement to give credit to the source. Both quotation marks and a full citation are still necessary.

C. Ideas

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Ideas that are taken from another source must be credited to the original author even if you do not quote or paraphrase the original text. Ideas must be credited whether they are central to the thesis of your paper or simply help support a minor point.

Plagiarism:

The Civil War challenged our nation to determine whether it truly wanted to be a society based on equality.

- This concept reflects the thoughts of the original author (as reflected in this passage and throughout the entire Gettysburg Address) and must be cited accordingly. You must attach the following footnote:

See generally, Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address (Nov. 19, 1863).

D. Structure

Copying the structure of the discussion in another source is also plagiarism, even if the material is cited. Avoid structural plagiarism by changing both the language and the structure of the language whenever you are paraphrasing. Do not directly mimic the order in which the ideas are conveyed, or allow your sentences to track the original.

III. Self-Plagiarism

Self-plagiarism may sound like an oxymoron, but it does exist. For Law Review members, it is most likely to arise if a paper prepared for another purpose is submitted in whole or in part as a Comment. This includes pieces prepared for an employer or any academic credit outside of law school, including, but not limited to, courses during undergraduate, graduate, and high school. If you use such material, you must receive permission from the Chief Comments Editor to submit such material for Law Review Staff Editor credit, and from the Dean of Students to submit such material for any academic credit. No special permission is required for publication.

IV. Implications

As stated in the Law Review Disciplinary Guidelines, “plagiarism of other authors’ works will *not* be tolerated.” In addition, “[t]he Law Review considers plagiarism a strict liability offense.”

If a piece is thought to contain plagiarism, the Chief Managing Editor will thoroughly cite-check the piece to determine whether any of the material has been plagiarized, and if so, the scope of the violation.

If a violation is found, the Chief Managing Editor will notify the Board of Editors. At the Board’s discretion, its members may choose to approach the author about the violation (“conference”). The purpose of this conference is to clarify whether a violation actually occurred. This step, however, is not required. Regardless of whether a conference occurs, the next step is an evaluation and hearing by the Board to determine the appropriate course of action. The following special remedies may be considered at the hearing for members of the UCLA Law Review:

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- Dismissal from Law Review
- Reporting members' behavior to the Dean of Students
- Revocation of any offer of publication that has been made by the Law Review
- Requiring the Comment to be rewritten as a condition of continued Law Review membership
- Demotion of member from board position to staff
- Prohibition from resubmitting any written work for publication consideration in future issues

For those UCLA School of Law students who are not members of the UCLA Law Review and submit works that violate this policy, the following special remedies may be considered at the hearing:

- Prohibition from competing in a Write-on and seeking Law Review membership
- Reporting author's behavior to the Dean of Students
- Revocation of any offer of publication that has been made by the Law Review
- Prohibition from resubmitting any written work for publication consideration in future issues

V. Avoiding Plagiarism in your Writing

Organization is extremely important, and is the best way to prevent committing plagiarism. Be sure to keep careful records of your research, and always include quotation and citation information when you take notes.

Keep copies of anything from which you take detailed notes. Students can inadvertently commit plagiarism by jotting down notes from a source and then later rewriting the idea in more formal prose, not realizing that they have rewritten the phrase in substantially the same language as the original text.

Double check all quotations to make sure that quotation marks encompass all of the directly quoted text.

Carelessness is not a defense to plagiarism. While a small number of minor quotation or citation omissions throughout a substantial piece of scholarship are reasonable mistakes that may be corrected before publication, it is the author's sole responsibility to ensure that all material is properly credited to its original source.

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Declaration of Academic Integrity

I have carefully read and I understand the UCLA Law Review Plagiarism Policy, and all of the accompanying information. I affirm that all work I have submitted is my own, and includes proper and complete credit to all sources used in its preparation. I understand that failure to do so may result in disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, the sanctions described in the Policy.

Comment Author Signature

Comment Author Name (please print)

Comment Author E-mail Address

Date

Examination Number

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