

## How Not to Get BOC'ed

*What is Plagiarism?* Any time you present the ideas or words of someone else you must provide a reference for that person. This is true regardless of whether you quote an author directly, or paraphrase that author. It is true regardless of whether you encounter the author's words and ideas in a book, an article, a website, or in conversation. Even comments made by friends at lunchtime must be cited when you use them. You must provide a reference regardless of whether you are endorsing and defending the idea, or presenting it as a rival view with which you disagree. The purpose of such citations is twofold: 1. They give credit where credit is due. If you present an idea without a citation, you are presenting that idea as your own. If in fact you obtained that idea from another source, then you are guilty of academic fraud. 2. It gives the reader the opportunity to look up the ideas in their original source, and to double-check your interpretation of them. Failure to provide proper references for sources that you use constitutes plagiarism. Plagiarism is a very serious academic offense, on a par with fabricating or falsifying data. All cases of plagiarism will be reported to the Board of Control.

Three hundred years ago, scholarly work did not contain references. There was a canon that every educated person was expected to know, and hence explicit citation of references was not deemed necessary. In some cultures, this tradition still prevails. If you are not familiar with standards of citation used in American universities, please do not hesitate to contact me (or one of your other instructors) for further clarification.

*To Quote or Not to Quote?* When presenting the views of another author, you must often choose between quoting the author directly and paraphrasing the author's claims in your own words. The latter is very often preferable. Any fool can copy down the words written in a book; to understand those words is another matter entirely. If the author's wording is particularly important to the points that you will develop, then by all means include the relevant quote in your paper. Likewise, if you are going to defend a particular interpretation of an author's text, especially an interpretation that is controversial or non-standard, then it will be appropriate to back up your interpretation with textual evidence. If you do quote an author directly, never let a quote 'speak for itself' — always include some discussion that indicates your understanding of the passage you have quoted. If, instead, you choose to express an idea in your own words, you must use *your own words*. That is, you should not take a direct quote, change a few words here and there, and then pass it off as your own presentation of the idea. That is tantamount to using the author's own words without giving credit.

*References and Citations:* There is certain standard information that needs to be included in any citation. If the original source is a book, the citation should include the author, translator (if any), title, city of publication, name of publisher, and date of publication. For example:

Mackie, John. *The Cement of the Universe*. Oxford: Oxford University press, 1974.

The citation of an article in a journal should include the author's name, the title of the article, the name of the journal, volume number, year, and page numbers within the journal. For example:

Lewis, David. "Causation." *Journal of Philosophy* 70 (1973): 556 – 567.

The citation of an article or essay in a book should include the author's name, title of article, name of book editor, name of book, city of publication, publisher, date, and pages of the article within the book. For example:

Descartes, René. *Meditations of First Philosophy*. Translated by Donald Cress. In Steven Cahn (ed.), *Classics of Western Philosophy*, Seventh Edition. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 2006), pp. 484 – 516.

Details about punctuation and order vary, although the three examples given above illustrate fairly standard style. When citing an article that was handed out in class, you should cite the full title of the work as listed on the syllabus. You should note, however, that many of the handouts were made from anthologies, and not from the original work. When citing handouts, then, it is best to stick roughly to the format used on the syllabus, e.g.:

Paley, William. "The Argument from Design". From *Natural Theology*. Class Handout.

If you are citing something said by the professor in class, you should include the professor's name, the class number, and the date of the class:

Hitchcock, Christopher. Class lecture, Hum 9, October 8, 2009.

If you are citing a website, you should include the title of the document, the author (if known), and most importantly, the URL. Here is an example:

Arntzenius, Frank. "Reichenbach's Common Cause Principle," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/physics-Rpcc/>

*How to Cite:* When, in the course of writing your essay, you present another individual's idea, that is the point at which to provide a reference. You should also provide a reference when you first refer to a particular work. There are two generally accepted ways of doing this. The first is to insert a footnote at that point in the text. This involves inserting a number or some other symbol (such as an asterisk \*) in the text. Typically, the number or symbol should be in superscript type, such as <sup>1</sup>; it is also permissible to put the symbol in square brackets, such as [1]. Then, at the bottom of the page or end of the essay, the footnote should appear containing the appropriate number or symbol, as well as the reference, including a specific page number where the idea presented or passage cited is found. For example:

Descartes notes that our bodies are sometimes led to act in ways that are detrimental.<sup>1</sup>

[Bottom of page or end of text]

<sup>1</sup> Descartes, René. *Meditations of First Philosophy*. Translated by Donald Cress. In Steven Cahn (ed.), *Classics of Western Philosophy*, Seventh Edition. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 2006), pp. 514 – 515.

The second, generally accepted method, is to refer to the work parenthetically in the text by author and date, and to give the relevant page numbers. Complete references are then listed in alphabetical order in a bibliography at the end of the essay. In this case, the reference should list the date of publication after the author's name. For example:

Descartes notes that our bodies are sometimes led to act in ways that are detrimental. (Descartes 2007, 514 -515.)

[End of text]

#### Bibliography

Descartes, René. (1995) *Meditations of First Philosophy*. Translated by Donald Cress. In Steven Cahn (ed.), *Classics of Western Philosophy*, Seventh Edition. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co), pp. 484 - 516.

Whichever method you choose, use it consistently throughout your paper. I strongly encourage you to learn the conventions for citation that are most prevalent in your chosen field, and to use those when writing papers.

If you wish to acknowledge an idea that was suggested to you informally, perhaps in discussion with a friend, you may do so either in a footnote (if you are using footnote references), or in parentheses (if you are using the name-date method). In the latter case, it is not necessary to list the person in the bibliography. Examples:

Locke's distinction between the primary and secondary qualities is analogous to Eddington's distinction between the tables of science and of common sense.<sup>1</sup>

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