

Name _____

LA Period _____

Date _____

Mini Lesson

Summarizing, Plagiarism, and Note-taking

One of the first and probably most important parts of doing your research is taking notes on your topic from the sources you have found. The information that you gather will be what you use to piece together your project or paper and so you need to make sure of two things: the first is that you have documented accurate information and the second that you have enough to complete the assignment. You will need to **consider which facts are necessary and which are not**, and that will all depend on the focus of your research. "Basically, as you read through the books and articles you have chosen, **you should be looking for ideas, facts, statistics, statements, speeches, (images,) or other information**—whether it be a sentence or a complete paragraph—that you feel will be important support material when you assemble your notes into" the finished product (Stark, 2002).

When taking notes on your source, there are a few different ways to do this:

1. Copy a sentence, statement, or phrase directly from the writing - This method is okay if you make sure to put quotations around it to show that it is a direct quote. If you do not credit the source with appropriate citations, you are guilty of plagiarism!

Definition of plagiarism: "the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author", taken from the Latin *plagiarius*, which means "kidnapper" (Dictionary.com)

To make sure you are citing the sources correctly, before you begin to take notes, write down the information (author, title, location, publishing information, page number(s) etc.). We have suggested using a site such as www.easybib.com to assist you in this!

2. Put the facts and information you are gathering into your own words. "This is called *paraphrasing*, and it simply means that you are summarizing an author's thoughts and ideas" (Stark, 2002). You can make sure that you get all the details that you need by remembering to answer the Five W's: who, what, where, when, and why. It is suggested that most, if not all of your notes be done using this format, since putting it into your own words right away will help to avoid plagiarizing. The best method of note-taking paraphrasing is to use bulleted lists of information that is not written in complete sentences, like the facts below detailing the life of William Wallace (Ferguson, 2005):

- Not a lot of information because he was not of noble birth
- Facts disputed, which created myth/legend aspect
- No firm knowledge of where/when he was born, his parents, his marriage, etc.
- DOB 1272 in many sources, but no evidence- range of 1260 to 1278 has been used
- Father believed to be Sir Malcolm Wallace of Elderslie in Paisley OR Alan Wallace of Ayr
- Two brothers: Malcolm and John (second died in similar way as William)

"Strategies for Avoiding Plagiarism:

- Put in **quotations** everything that comes directly from the text especially when taking notes.
- **Paraphrase**, but be sure you are not just rearranging or replacing a few words.
- Instead, read over what you want to paraphrase carefully; cover up the text with your hand, or close the text so you can't see any of it (and so aren't tempted to use the text as a "guide"). Write out the idea in your own words without peeking.
- **Check your paraphrase** against the original text to be sure you have not accidentally used the same phrases or words, and that the information is accurate " (Indiana University, 2004)

Activity Directions: [from "Take Notes for Your School Report with Note Cards: Research Paper Study Guide" (Stark, 2002)]

The task is to decide what is important and how to record and/or paraphrase the necessary facts. Let's look at different ways that you might put the information into your own words or how you can quote it directly. As you practice, remember that you are always striving to be accurate and precise as you paraphrase.

Read the following passage which is taken from the book *The American People, Creating a Nation and a Society, Second Edition* by Nash, Jeffrey, Howe, Frederick, Davis and Winkler (Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., New York, 1990.) In these sentences, the authors of this American history textbook describe the last moments of President John F. Kennedy as his motorcade rode through the streets of Dallas. They wrote:

"As the party entered the city in an open car, the president encountered friendly crowds. Suddenly shots rang out, and Kennedy slumped forward. Desperately wounded, he died a short time later at a Dallas hospital. Lee Harvey Oswald, the assassin, was himself shot and killed a few days later in the jail where he was being held." (p. 963)

Clearly, this paragraph describes the last moments of President Kennedy's life and is an important quote. Paraphrase, or put the same information into your own words, but remember you must record *who* was hurt (Kennedy) and *what* happened (shots were heard). You also need to make sure you have not *changed* any of the facts. For the last bullet, write down a direct quote you could use from the passage and make sure to be exact and include quotation marks.

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- **QUOTE:** _____

SOURCES:

"Plagiarism." *Dictionary.com*. Dictionary.com, LLC, 2011. Web. 08 Mar. 2011. <<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/plagiarism>>.
"Plagiarism: What It Is and How to Recognize and Avoid It." *Writing and Tutorial Services: Indiana University*. 27 Apr. 2004. Web. 08 Mar. 2011. <<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>>.
Ferguson, Norman. "Scotland's Hero- William Wallace". *Wallace- Man and Myth*. The Society of William Wallace, 2005. Web. 07 Mar. 2011. <<http://www.wallace-manandmyth.org/>>.
Stark, Rachel. "Take Notes for Your School Report with Note Cards: Research Paper Study Guide". *Research & Writing Skills Success in 20 Minutes A Day*. *Education.com - An Education & Child Development Site for Parents*. Learning Express, LLC, 2002. Web. 08 Mar. 2011. <<http://www.education.com/study-help/article/notetaking/?page=3>>.