

Doing Honest Work in College



**HOW TO PREPARE CITATIONS,
AVOID PLAGIARISM, AND ACHIEVE
REAL ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

Third Edition

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CONTENTS

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PART ONE ACADEMIC HONESTY

- 1 The Three Principles of Academic Honesty 3
- 2 Academic Honesty from Your First Class to Your Final Exam 5
- 3 Taking Good Notes 35
- 4 Plagiarism and Academic Honesty 45

PART TWO CITATIONS IN EVERY FORMAT: A QUICK GUIDE

- 5 The Basics of Citation 59
- 6 Chicago (or Turabian) Citations 65
- 7 MLA Citations for the Humanities 110
- 8 APA Citations for the Social Sciences, Education,
and Business 139
- 9 CSE Citations for the Biological Sciences 169
- 10 AMA Citations for the Biomedical Sciences, Medicine, Nursing,
and Dentistry 184
- 11 ACS Citations for Chemistry 192
- 12 Physics, Astrophysics, and Astronomy Citations 200
- 13 Mathematics, Computer Science, and Engineering Citations 206
- 14 FAQs about *All* Reference Styles 219

Thanks 231

Index 233

1

THE THREE PRINCIPLES OF ACADEMIC HONESTY

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Academic honesty boils down to three simple but powerful principles:

- When you say you did the work yourself, you actually did it.
- When you rely on someone else's work, you cite it. When you use their words, you quote them openly and accurately, and you cite them too.
- When you present research materials, you present them fairly and truthfully. That's true whether the research involves data, documents, or the writings of other scholars.

These are bedrock principles, easy to remember and follow. They apply to all your classes, labs, papers, and exams. They cover everything from English papers to chemistry experiments, from computer codes to architectural drawings. They apply to everyone in the university, from first-year students to professors. They're not just principles for students. They're principles for academic honesty across the entire university.

Of course each university has its own code of conduct, and each class its own rules for specific assignments. In the next chapter I'll discuss these detailed rules and explain how to follow them in papers, labs, study groups, and exams.

I'll also discuss how to use the internet properly for assignments and what you can—and cannot—do with your laptop and cell phone on those assignments and exams. I'll show you how to cite websites, social media, and podcasts as well as books, articles, poems, films, and many other types of sources. With this brief book you can avoid plagiarism and handle nearly every citation you'll ever do, from computer science to visual arts.

Speaking of sciences, what about honesty in study groups and labs? That can be confusing because you sometimes work with fellow students and

sometimes by yourself. What exactly are you supposed to do on your own, without any help? I'll pass along useful advice from lab supervisors, who explain how to use study groups effectively and how to avoid any problems.

On all these issues, I'll report on conversations with deans of students. They deal with academic honesty every day and know the issues well. Believe me, it's a lot better to read their advice here than to have them explain it to you privately! That is a meeting you do *not* want to have.

The most important advice is to *listen* to your professors' rules for each assignment, *ask* for clarification if you're unsure, and then *follow the three basic principles*: If you say you did this work, then you really did it. If you quoted others or used their research, you acknowledge it openly. If you say the data or lab experiment came out a particular way, then it really did. Never make up data, hide bad results, or present others' work as your own.

The most basic point is this: your work should be presented fairly and honestly. Don't misrepresent your findings or anyone else's. Don't misrepresent their ideas. Don't misrepresent the paper or exam as solely your own if you relied on someone else. Give credit where it is due. In a paper, cite your sources. In an exam, do the work yourself.

If you follow this straightforward advice, you'll stay on the right side of your university's rules and meet the highest standards of academic integrity. You will actually learn the material, and your grades will be honestly earned.

Now let's get down to nuts and bolts.