

DOCUMENTING SOURCES
(Documenting Sources You Use in Your Essays)

How much of your paper should come from outside sources?

Practice Exercises:

Decide which of the two examples below uses sources in a better way, and explain your reasons.

Example A:

Adults who are faced with changing careers half-way through their working life must deal with the problem of "not keeping pace" with changes in the new technology and ways of doing work that are entering their fields of work (Zunker, 1990, 345). What is happening in the economy, or "the economics of the labor market," affects what kind of jobs people will be able to do (Stevens, 1986, 7). Especially starting in the 1980s there were no longer as many jobs in unskilled factory work and more jobs in high-technology fields and in the service industry (Kimmel, 1990).

Example B:

A major trend associated with the 1980s and 1990s is that many adults who have worked at the same job for years are suddenly being forced to find new kinds of work. One of the main reasons given for changes in jobs that are available is, as Stevens (1986) argues, the "economics of the labor market" (7), by which she means that in hard times, companies lay off employees in order to survive as businesses. Another reason often given is that new, more sophisticated technology is being introduced into the workplace, so that older workers are faced with the problem of "keeping pace" with new, more highly-skilled ways of doing their work (Zunker, 1990, 345). Although it is important to recognize that these changes in the economy and in technology have devastating effects on people, it is also important to recognize that such major shifts in employment patterns and opportunities are not new, and that in many respects history is repeating itself.

Using Sources Well When You Are Writing

Your paper should never be primarily a "patchwork" of other peoples' words and ideas. Most your writing should be your own analysis of a topic. The first example (A) above is three sources patched together with no evidence that the student is even present. Rather than using sources as evidence to make his/her point, the student depends on the sources to say everything.

In the second example (B), the student adds outside sources only to provide evidence for a point that she/he is developing her/himself. One way to avoid falling into the trap of patching together what other authors say is to use the following rule of thumb:

* try to use other authors' ideas no more than once or twice per paragraph. The rest of the paragraph should be your own explanation, analysis, or point.

Plagiarism

If you do not let the reader know your sources of information, you are plagiarizing, which is a serious enough problem to result in an automatic failing grade for the paper, or even for the course.

Practice Exercise:

Decide if each of the following examples use the original with or without plagiarizing. Then fix the ones that are plagiarized.

[Original from Kimmel, 1990]

"Research on the effects of employment on morale indicates that employment can provide either a psychological boost or a stress. Most studies do indicate a higher level of satisfaction among employed mothers, but stress can result when the demands of the dual role are excessive." (291)

1. Research about workplace morale indicates that employment can provide boosts or stresses psychologically (Kimmel, 1990, 291).
2. Research about morale in employment shows that workers can get either "psychological boosts or stresses" (Kimmel, 1990, 291).
3. Many studies about how work affects employees suggest that working can either be psychologically positive or negative.
4. As Kimmel (1990) points out, working mothers tend to have a "higher level of satisfaction," which is offset, however, when heavy responsibilities at both home and at work lead to a great deal of stress (291).
5. Studies about how employment can affect employed mothers suggest that they have a higher level of satisfaction. However, as Kimmel reports, stress can result when the demands of the dual role are "excessive" (291).

How to Use Parentheses for Documenting Sources

You need to include only three (3) pieces of information in a sentence when you include an author's words, ideas, or facts in a sentence that you are writing:

- (1) the author's last name
- (2) the date of the book or article
- (3) the page number

There are three ways to include this information in a sentence:

- (1) altogether in parentheses before the information is given

Some authors (for example Zunker, 1990, 345) suggest that mature workers who are faced with job change, face problems because they have not been able to keep pace with changing technology.

- (2) altogether in parentheses after the information is given:

Adults who are faced with changing careers half-way through their working life are often faced with the problem of 'not keeping pace' with changes in technology and new ways of doing work that are becoming part of many jobs (Zunker, 1990, 345).

- (c) split up so that the date is in parenthesis after the author's name, and the page number is in parenthesis at the end of the information:

Zunker (1990) states that 'a variety of changes in technology, occupational structure, organizational format, and management techniques' have recently brought into more focus the issue of 'job obsolescence (345).

The most common way, and probably the best way to document, is the split up way in the third example above because then the reader knows where the source material begins and ends, so that it is easy for the reader to see the difference between the student's own ideas and the sources that the student uses to support his/her own ideas.

What Should Be Documented?

Your essay or paper needs to have evidence, or support, or proof of the points you are making. One of the main ways to give support to your points is to include the ideas or words of an expert on the topic you are writing about. Below is a list of the situations where you should acknowledge the sources of information you use:

- (a) WHEN QUOTING: if you quote an author's exact words:

Zunker (1990) states that "changes in technology, occupational structure, organizational format, and management techniques" have raised the issue of "job obsolescence" (345).

- (b) WHEN PARAPHRASING: if you use your own words, but you use another author's ideas or facts:

More research is being focused on the problem of jobs being lost to changes in the way companies organize and supervise their workforce and bring in new technology (Zunker, 1990, 345).

- (c) WHEN SUMMARIZING: if you summarize one or more important main points in another author's writing:

One of the main points that Zunker (1990) makes is that, because of these new conditions in the workplace, career counsellors must have the proper skills and knowledge to be prepared to help mature workers deal with the problems of losing a long-held job, and preparing for, and looking for another one.

- (d) STATISTICS OR FACTS: if you use a fact or a statistic that is not common knowledge:

Statistics show that most men change occupations at least once, and that his change is reasonably frequent in mid-life (Kimmel, 1990, 301).

Attention to the Details of Documenting Correctly

Insert Quotations into Your Writing Effectively:

Quote only the words of parts of an author's sentence that you want to emphasize. In the following example, quoting several lines is not very effective because it is not clear what the author is trying to show.

According to Kimmel (1990), "In general, women earn less than men; that is termed an earnings gap" (286).

The writer should quote the most important words that need to be emphasized in order to make a point, as in the following example. Notice how most of the sentence is paraphrased, and only the significant words are quotes:

According to Kimmel (1990), the fact that men tend to make more than women is referred to as an "earnings gap" (286).

Punctuation of Short Quotes: Notice that in all of the quotations used above, the period at the end of the sentence comes after the parenthesis.

Block Quotes:

Occasionally, it is necessary to use long quotes. If a quote is longer than four typed lines, then you need to insert it differently, than for shorter quotes. These longer quotes are called "block quotes." A block quote is set off from your writing both by using single-spacing and by indenting it, not by using quotation marks around it. See the following example:

Kimmel (1990) describes some of the effects of employment on working mothers:

Research on the effects of employment on morale indicates that employment can provide either a psychological boost or a stress.

Most studies do indicate a higher level of satisfaction among employed mothers, but stress can result when the demands of the dual role are excessive. (291)

Whether work gives a "boost" or more "stress" depends to an extent on the kind of work.

Notice that for block quotes, the period at the end of the sentence comes before the parenthesis.

Match the Grammar, Style, and Mechanics of the Source to the Requirements of Your Sentence

You need to be careful to insert quotes and paraphrases smoothly into your writing so that the grammar matches.

The following is a very poor example of inserting a quotation:

According to Kimmel (1990), when mothers are employed "can provide either a psychological boost or a stress. Most studies do indicate a higher level of satisfaction among employed mothers" (291).

To make a quote match the grammar of the sentence into which you are inserting it, there are three things you can do:

- (1) paraphrase most of the sentence

(eg.)

According to Kimmel (1990), employment can give working mothers either a "psychological boost or a stress" (291).

- (2) use square brackets

According to Kimmel (1990), "[E]mployment [for mothers] can provide either a psychological boost or a stress" (291).

- (3) use multiple periods

According to Kimmel (1990), "Research . . . indicates that employment can provide either a psychological boost or a stress. Most studies do indicate a higher level of satisfaction among employed mothers" (291).

Using an Original Source that You Found in a Secondary Source

What do you do if you want to use a quote or a statistic that another author also used from an original source that you do not have?

Use the word "cite" in parenthesis to show in which secondary source you found the quote or statistic. For example, if you find

information about a study by Kohen in a chapter or article that you are reading by Kimmel, then your reference to these authors should appear like this:

In a five-year study, Kohen (1975) found that one out of four middle-aged men changed jobs near retirement (cited in Kimmel, 1990, 301).