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Crediting Sources

Plagiarism is an unpleasant word, as some students will learn over the course of their education. Plagiarism can cost a high school student an entire grade, while the risk to a college student is much higher: universities expel students for plagiarism. Because the consequences can be so dire, it is important for students to know how to avoid accidental plagiarism (everyone knows how to avoid deliberate plagiarism: don’t do it!). A thorough understanding of source citation is therefore a necessary component of a student’s learning. In order to credit sources effectively, writers must use appropriate MLA-style in-text citation and compose well-formatted Works Cited pages that align with MLA standards.

Creating a Works Cited page has become a relatively simple process with the advent of the helpful website Easybib.com. This site helps students keep abreast of the newest developments in MLA style, which has had to change as a result of advances in research technology. Students can access Easybib.com and enter the web address of a specific research site, and the program will automatically fill in citation information for that research source. The site is not error-proof, and students may have to make adjustments to the citation, which the program allows. For example, the program may not have caught an author’s name, though there is an author. The student researcher may enter the information in the citation developed by Easybib.com. Students also have the option of removing the URL from the citation, which the program advises them is the new rule for MLA. Once the citation is complete, the student can move on to the next citation. When the researcher has created citations for each source, s/he can direct the program to create a Works Cited page. This page can be downloaded as a Word document and copied and pasted into the student’s essay as its last page.

The more challenging aspect of source crediting is in-text citation. Students usually know that they must cite quotes, but they don’t always realize that they must cite any information that they have acquired from a source other than themselves. Paraphrasing without proper credit is still plagiarism. If a writer obtains information or ideas from a source and then puts that idea into his or her own words, the writer is still required to credit the source of the idea. Without a proper citation, the student is indicating to the reader that this is his or her original thought. For example, a student learns from a specific source that a “yeast-related diaper rash is more likely to occur in babies who are not kept clean and dry, are taking antibiotics . . ., and have more frequent stools.” In his or her own words, the student writes the following: the causes of diaper rash in babies include poor hygiene and increased bowel movements (“Diaper Rash”). The student chooses to quote another source: “Sometimes a superficial skin infection is a factor in diaper rash” (“Read What”). In either case, the punctuation (period) comes after the source citation, which is in parentheses. This is called parenthetical citation, which is required in student research writing.

A few examples of in-text citation should be helpful in achieving it personally. Asking a teacher is also a good way to double-check citation. Students must always remember to credit their sources and avoid the risk of plagiarizing.

Works Cited

Board, A.D.A.M. Editorial. "Diaper Rash." *Diaper Rash*. U.S. National Library of Medicine, 18 Nov. 0000. Web. 16 Oct. 2012.

"Read What Your Physician Is Reading on Medscape." *EMedicineHealth*. N.p., n.d. Web. 16 Oct. 2012. <http://www.emedicinehealth.com/yeast\_infection\_diaper\_rash/article\_em.htm>.