
Plagiarism Quiz

In order to not plagiarize, you have to make several key decisions based on the kind of materials you are dealing with. This quiz puts you into that decision-making framework. Answers appear at the end of the quiz. Most entries are from Jane Jacobs' *Dark Age Ahead* (2004); Jane Jacobs has been an authority on cities since her 1961 book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*.

Here is a passage from *Encyclopedia Britannica* on the Dark Ages:

the early medieval period of western European history. Specifically, the term refers to the time (476–800) when there was no Roman (or Holy Roman) emperor in the West; or, more generally, to the period between about 500 and 1000, which was marked by frequent warfare and a virtual disappearance of urban life. It is now rarely used by historians because of the value judgment it implies. Though sometimes taken to derive its meaning from the fact that little was then known about the period, the term's more usual and pejorative sense is of a period of intellectual darkness and barbarity.

1. Here is what you have to decide: do you quote when you are working with an encyclopedia entry? Which of the two sentences below is correct?
 - a. According to *Encyclopedia Britannica*, The Dark Ages refer to the period between 476 and 800 when no leadership and many wars meant little advancement of society.
 - b. The Dark Ages refer to a period between 476 and 800 when no leadership and many wars meant little advancement of society.

2. Here is another decision related to the encyclopedia passage: which one of the sentences below is plagiarized?
 - a. The Dark Ages refer to the early medieval period of western European history when there was no emperor in the West. It was marked by frequent warfare and considered a period of intellectual darkness and barbarity.
 - b. When Jane Jacobs uses the term Dark Age, she wants readers to recall a period between 476 and 800 when western civilization did not flourish because of the lack of leadership and because of constant war.

3. Jane Jacobs believes that when cities had places where people could meet each other, that urban life grew. She writes, "Not TV or illegal drugs but the automobile has been the chief destroyer of American communities" (37). Would it be better to paraphrase this information (i.e. put it in your own words) or to quote it directly?
 - a. Paraphrase it
 - b. Quote it

4. In virtually every academic field, according to Jacobs, scientific reasoning is absent:

The combination of the appearance of professional respect for scientific rigor coupled with professional contempt for scientifically rigorous behavior is toxic, a poison that infects more activities in North America than the few I have pointed out here. It cripples foreign aid programs, pedagogy, and illegal-drug policies, and it promotes dubious and harmful medical treatment fads, nutrition and other lifestyle advice, and agricultural recommendations. (99)

Below is a paraphrase of the above passage; decide if it is plagiarized or not plagiarized.

Jacobs warns of many future problems for North Americans because of the unwillingness of workers in every industry to engage in scientific thinking that requires hypotheses, testing, and evidence (99).

- a. plagiarized
- b. not plagiarized

5. Here is another paraphrase of the above passage; tell whether it is
- a. plagiarized
 - b. not plagiarized

When workers in any industry refuse to engage in scientific thinking, according to Jane Jacobs in her latest book *Dark Age Ahead*, they risk ruining foreign aid programs, pedagogy, and illegal-drug policies along with medical treatment fads, nutrition and other lifestyle advice, and agricultural recommendations (99).

6. Jacobs points to Japan and Ireland as cultures that have survived Dark Ages. Here is a passage about Ireland:

Ireland is almost miraculous in not having sunk into a Dark Age. . . . Famine, Pestilence, War and Death devastated Ireland for centuries; its population dropped from nine million to two million in the mid-nineteenth century. . . . But during all these ordeals, the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse were never joined by the fifth demonic horseman, Forgetfulness. The Irish stubbornly remembered who they were and what they valued, and refused to lose their treasured culture. They accomplished this marvel largely through the fragile medium of song. . . . Song is an extremely effective way of passing a culture down through the generations. . . . England now has the lowest productivity of any country in the European community, while the Republic of Ireland has surpassed it. (172-173)

Much of this information is known, so you would not give Jacobs credit for telling Irish history; yet what she does want to point out in *Dark Age Ahead* is how certain cultures pulled out of a Dark Age. Which of the following sentences is respectful to her own ideas while still giving proper citation?

- a. Song is the way that the Irish survived a Dark Age.
- b. Song and other art forms can be important tools for societies to preserve their own history and culture; the memory of both will eventually lead to future success.

- c. Jacobs points to the Irish as a culture that managed to overcome a Dark Age through songs that inculcated in children and adults a love of their rich history and culture; this knowledge eventually led to economic success after centuries of oppression (172-173).
7. Jacobs writes in Dark Age Ahead that self-regulation is a problem in many fields. She offers an example from architecture: “Another form of architects’ self-regulation is to ban criticism of another’s work, especially criticism that can be heard or read by outsiders. This is why one reads few critical reviews by architects of new buildings. . . . [In Jacobs’ experience] [o]nly after an architect was dead and his office dissolved . . . could critical lessons be learned. . . .” (127).

This direct quote has ellipses (omissions denoted by 3 or 4 periods depending on where the omission is taken from—3 are used when information comes from the middle of a sentence and 4 when information occurs at the end of a sentence). What is the purpose of ellipses when quoting?

- a. to highlight the writer’s own interest in using that quote
 - b. to cut out writing that would take up space in the writer’s paper
 - c. both a and b
8. Notice the brackets in the above quote. They are used for two purposes; can you tell what they are?
9. Here is a quote from Jacobs regarding why cities decline. Which of the two sentences below is an accurate paraphrase?

Only very minor taxation, such as property taxes, responsive neither to ability to pay nor to economic expansion, is typically permitted to cities. Because city sources of public revenue are frequently inadequate to needs, so-called senior governments sporadically come to their aid with grants of public money and programs devised for using the grants. (104)

- a. According to Jacobs, cities decline because the actual people in the city never raise money for what they need; government programs sometimes meet needs and sometimes don’t (104).
- b. The government will help cities with special aid programs, according to Jacobs (104).

Answers to the Quiz

1. b. You can freely use the information in dictionaries and encyclopedias—but be sure to read the next question!!!
2. a. The first sentence DIRECTLY TAKES THE LANGUAGE OF THE ORIGINAL SOURCE, WHICH IS CALLED PLAGIARISM. Notice that sentence b. uses the information **in conjunction with the writer's interests** (not strictly repeating information itself). Sentence b is an example of what you want to do.
3. b You would quote this sentence because it is so well worded: any attempt you made to rewrite it into your own words would be longer and less rhetorically effective.
4. b It is acceptable.
5. a This sentence takes the language of Jacobs and is therefore plagiarized even though Jacobs is cited. You cannot take information without citing it, and you also cannot take the language of the author without acknowledging by direct quotation that you are using it.
6. c The other sentences do not acknowledge the original interpretation of Jacobs—they simply steal it without giving her credit.
7. c. You are in charge of the paper—not a long-winded author, so when you quote, use ellipses to keep the quote but center in on what you want.
8. To make reading smoother and to keep the punctuation in line with your sentence structure and paper. Notice the “o” was capitalized in the original, but in this writer’s paper, it has to be small to make sense. Paying attention to this level of quoting is essential in academic writing.
9. a. The first sentence takes all the meaning of the quote; sentence b misconstrues Jacobs by taking only part of what she means.



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Pointers on Citation

- Turn the book over and write the meaning in your own words to avoid stealing the language of the author.
- Do not try to paraphrase when you are tired!
- Let your thesis statement/focus and voice guide your paraphrase, not the author's voice and focus
- Make good decisions about whether to quote or paraphrase.
- If information repeats 3-5 times in the sources you are reading, then consider it general information. Quote it if you think your reader would like more information. Most beginners at a subject have a difficult time making this decision; it is better to error on the side with too many references than be accused of plagiarizing.
- Use a handbook and follow it very closely to be sure you have correct citation format.
- Use a handbook to understand the use of ellipses and brackets.

More Worksheets on Plagiarism

The following links have more examples of plagiarism to practice with if you are unsure about citation:

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/print/research/r_plagiar.html

<http://education.indiana.edu/~frick/plagiarism/item1.html>

Tutorials in the Writing Center

You are always welcome to bring in a paper to have a tutor check for plagiarism. Your professor might also want you to use the plagiarism service www.turnitin.com. Call for an appointment at extension 6981.