

Dear Scholars and Parents,

As we begin our work this year, I want to take a moment to explain an important academic expectation that applies to all writing assignments in our class: avoiding plagiarism and giving proper credit for research.

What Is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is using someone else's words, ideas, or structure without giving them proper credit. Even if it's unintentional, it is still a form of theft. According to the *American College Dictionary*, plagiarism is "copying or imitating the language, ideas, and thoughts of another author and passing off the same as one's original work."

This means that simply changing a few words is not enough to make something your own. You must rewrite the idea in your own words *and* organize the information in your own way. Copying someone's structure of thought or organization without credit is also considered plagiarism.

Paraphrasing vs. Quoting

Scholars often confuse paraphrasing with quoting. Paraphrasing means you've taken someone else's idea and restated it *entirely* in your own words. Even when paraphrasing, you must still cite your source.

If you quote someone directly, you must:

- Use quotation marks for short quotes
- Use block formatting for quotes of 40 words or more
- Include a citation at the end of the quote
- Add full source information in your **Works Cited** (MLA) or **References** (AMA) list

How to Cite Properly

We will use two accepted academic formats depending on the assignment:

MLA Format (Modern Language Association):

- **In-text citation** includes the author's last name and the page number:
Example: "Photosynthesis is a food-making process" (Jones 382).
- **Works Cited entry** includes full bibliographic information:
Jones, Mark. "Plant Processes." Biology Today, vol. 5, no. 3, 2015, pp. 380–385.**

AMA Format (American Medical Association):

- **In-text citation** uses superscript numbers in the order sources appear:
Example: Photosynthesis is a process that occurs in green plants, enabling them to produce food.¹
- **Reference list** is numbered to match those citations and placed at the end:
1. Jones M. Plant Processes. Biology Today. 2015;5(3):380-385.

Scholars will be guided on which format to use based on the assignment. I will provide templates and examples in class and on assignment sheets.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Scholars are expected to use their own voice in writing. The use of AI tools to write or rewrite work is not allowed. Any AI-generated content submitted will result in a zero and will be reported to the PEP campus administrator for academic dishonesty.

To protect your scholar's independent thinking, writing skills, and academic integrity, scholars should avoid AI writing and rewriting tools when completing assignments. This includes tools such as ChatGPT, Grammarly Premium or GrammarlyGO, QuillBot, and similar programs that generate, revise, paraphrase, summarize, or substantially improve written work.

Scholars are expected to complete their own research, organize their own ideas, and write assignments in their own words and voice. Lab reports, homework, research papers, and other written assignments should be handwritten or typed directly by the scholar. Handwritten work is welcome as long as it is legible.

If you are ever unsure whether your use of AI is appropriate, please ask before submitting your work. Learning how to use these tools with integrity and discernment is part of being a responsible digital citizen and a thoughtful communicator.

I'm excited to walk alongside you and your family as you grow in your ability to think critically and communicate clearly. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.

In Christ,

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PEP Instructor