Writing Centre
Quick Tip Sheet: How to Avoid Plagiarism and Use Proper Citations

Find out about the different services offered:
– Writing Centre: mohawkcollege.ca/studentservices/writing-centre
– The Library: library.mohawkcollege.ca/
  http://mohawkcollege.ca.libguides.com/CiteYourSources

Understanding your Assignment:
(See the powerpoint ‘Workshop ‘College Writing Survival Guide’ on the Writing Centre website)
• Ensure you read the entire assignment outline before beginning
• Make sure you understand ALL the assignment requirements and goals
• If you’re unsure about anything, ask your instructor immediately

Creating an Outline:
• Plan out how you are going to approach the assignment and the steps you will take
  Step 1: Brainstorm – create a brainstorming tree with your ideas for the assignment
  Step 2: Decide on a thesis or main idea
  • This is the idea, topic or argument that your written assignment will focus on
  Step 3: Research if necessary
  • Research your topic if your instructor has made it a requirement for the assignment or if you think it will improve your understanding
  • Consult library staff or the library’s website for how and where to find resources

The Writing Process:
  Step 1: Organize your ideas and your research
  • Create the broad structure of your paper – what your main ideas, points and arguments will be, and the order
  Step 2: Create a Draft
  • Create a draft version of your assignment including an introduction, body and conclusion
  • Remember, this is just a draft so things can be changed
  • Keep referring to the requirements of the assignment to make sure you are meeting them
Step 3: Revising:

- Improve the focus and structure of your assignment by ensuring each paragraph reinforces the main idea introduced in your introductory paragraph.
- Sharpen your paragraphs by ensuring you have a clear topic sentence at the beginning.
- Make sure you are only including supporting points relevant to your topic sentence.
- Your introductory paragraph should contain your thesis or main idea, and a sentence for each of your body paragraphs (commonly 3).

Step 4: The Final Copy:

- Once your draft version has been revised for structure and proofread for grammar and spelling, you can begin to finalize your assignment.
- Verify that you are using an appropriate tone for your paper – avoid using informal words, contractions (can’t, could’ve, wouldn’t) and first person (I, me, my) unless instructed otherwise.
- Follow proper presentation guidelines from the outline, such as line spacing (commonly double), font style and size, cover page and margins.

Referencing:

- If you have used any outside resources in your paper, you MUST use references according to a specific style guide (commonly APA or MLA).
- You can find style guides for how to reference resources on the library website, in the library, or in the Writing Centre.
- References are used in your paper as in-text citations or footnotes and a separate page at the end of your assignment listing all resources used.

When Should I...?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paraphrase?</th>
<th>Quote?</th>
<th>Summarize?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The author’s words will be difficult for your reader to understand</td>
<td>1. Everything the author writes is important</td>
<td>1. Not all the author’s words are necessary e.g. If the author gives examples or explanations that you don’t need to put in your text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Your instructor wants to know if you understand the author correctly</td>
<td>2. The quotation will not make your text too long</td>
<td>2. If paraphrasing or quoting will make your text too long</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. You haven’t used many quotations already</td>
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