Cheat Sheet Module 11

Essential Concepts

Integrating Source Material

- **Use the "source sandwich" structure to frame your evidence.** Each use of a source should include an introduction (with transition and signal phrase), the quoted/paraphrased material, a citation, and an explanation of how the source supports your point.
- **Signal phrases establish credibility and clarity.** Lead into each source with a signal phrase that names the author and highlights their credentials or relevance, helping readers distinguish your ideas from the source's. Quotations must be introduced and explained; don't insert them abruptly. Explain who the author is, why their words matter, and how the quote supports your argument.
- **Quoting should be strategic and selective.** Use direct quotations when the original wording is especially powerful or precise, and only include as much as necessary. Avoid overusing long quotes as filler.
- **Paraphrasing conveys ideas in your own words while maintaining meaning.** Paraphrasing allows you to restate a source's point with clarity and precision while preserving the original intent—and still requires citation.
- **Summarizing condenses key ideas to focus on the big picture.** Summaries are useful for giving an overview of a source's main points without going into detailed evidence, and they help maintain your voice in the writing.
- **Use brackets and ellipses for clarity and precision in quotations.** Use brackets to insert necessary clarifications and ellipses to omit unnecessary parts of long quotes while keeping the original meaning intact.
- **Synthesis and thoughtful integration are the ultimate goals of source use.** Strong academic writing weaves together ideas from multiple sources to create new insights, address differing perspectives, and establish your position. By clearly explaining source relevance, analyzing connections, and citing accurately, you demonstrate critical thinking and build credibility as a knowledgeable and trustworthy writer.

Writing Ethically

- **Academic integrity means doing your own work honestly and responsibly.** This means completing your own assignments, accurately representing research, and properly crediting sources, as well as avoiding dishonest behaviors like cheating, collusion, data falsification, and all forms of plagiarism—including self-plagiarism.
- **Plagiarism can be obvious or subtle, but it's always serious.** Whether you copy someone's work directly, paraphrase too closely, fail to cite sources properly, or rely too heavily on others' words, it still counts as plagiarism. Both intentional and unintentional plagiarism violate academic standards and carry real consequences.
- **Citing sources correctly is key to avoiding plagiarism/** To maintain academic honesty, always cite the ideas, words, and media of others using the appropriate style (APA, MLA, etc.). This includes in-text citations and full entries in a bibliography or reference page. Know what counts as common knowledge so you can focus your citations where they're needed.
- **Time management and organization help prevent unintentional plagiarism.** Plagiarism often stems from procrastination or poor note-taking. Starting early, tracking sources carefully, using citation tools, and distinguishing your own ideas from those of others are critical habits for staying honest and avoiding mistakes.
- **Copyright and citation are related but distinct concerns.** Citing a source does not automatically give you the right to use it. Copyright law protects creative works, and using someone else's work—especially media—may require permission unless it falls under fair use, public domain, or an open license like Creative Commons.

MLA Documentation

- **MLA style provides a consistent format for writing in the humanities.** Used primarily in literature, media studies, and related disciplines, MLA style ensures clarity and uniformity in both formatting and citation. It includes rules for page layout, font, spacing, headers, and more.
- **MLA in-text citations require the author's last name and page number.** To credit sources in the body of your paper, include the author's name and page number in parentheses. Variations exist for multiple authors, anonymous works, and digital sources without page numbers.
- **The Works Cited page organizes full citations for all referenced sources.** MLA uses a "container" model that includes key details like author, title, publisher, and access location. Entries must be double-spaced, alphabetized, and formatted with hanging indents.
- **Block quotations are used for longer excerpts and follow special formatting.** When quoting more than four lines of prose or three lines of poetry, start the quote on a new line, indent it one inch from the margin, and omit quotation marks. The citation follows the punctuation.

APA Documentation

- **APA style is the standard for writing in the social sciences.** Used in fields like psychology, sociology, and political science, APA style emphasizes clarity, structure, and source documentation through specific formatting rules and citation conventions.
- **APA papers follow a structured format with distinct sections.** A typical APA paper includes a title page, abstract, body, and references. Research-based papers may follow the IMRAD structure—Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion—to present findings logically and clearly.
- **In-text citations in APA include the author and year of publication.** APA in-text citations use the author-date system, and for direct quotes, include a page number. Different rules apply for single, multiple, and group authors, as well as sources without page numbers.
- **The References page must be alphabetized and formatted with hanging indents.** APA references should follow strict formatting, including author names, publication dates, titles in sentence case, and italics for books and journal titles. All sources cited in-text must appear in the References list.
- **APA formatting includes specific rules for fonts, spacing, headings, and title pages.** APA style requires double-spacing, 1-inch margins, and consistent font usage. Headings are organized hierarchically from Level 1 (bold, centered) to Level 5 (bold, italic, and inline with text), helping organize complex documents.

Glossary

academic integrity

the commitment to honesty and ethical behavior in all academic work, including completing assignments truthfully, doing one's own work, and properly acknowledging the ideas and words of others

APA style

a formatting and citation style developed by the American Psychological Association, commonly used in the social sciences to ensure clarity and consistency in writing; it includes guidelines for citing sources, structuring papers, and presenting research findings

block quotation

a long, indented excerpt from a source (typically more than four typed lines), formatted without quotation marks and introduced by a full sentence followed by a colon

brackets

square punctuation marks [ ] used to insert clarifying or explanatory words into a quotation without altering the original meaning. brackets are also used to modify capitalization or add emphasis when quoting

cheating

using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or assistance in any academic exercise, including copying others' work, using cheat sheets, or submitting someone else's work as your own

collusion

unauthorized collaboration with others on assignments intended to be completed independently

common knowledge

information that is widely known, easily verifiable, and generally accepted by the public, such as basic facts, historical dates, or well-known quotations that do not require citation in academic writing

copyright

a legal protection granted to creators of original works—such as literature, music, film, and art—that gives them exclusive rights to reproduce, distribute, adapt, perform, or display their work

Creative Commons licensing

a system that allows creators to grant the public permission to use their copyrighted works under flexible terms, often supporting sharing, remixing, and educational reuse

direct quotation

the exact words from a source, placed in quotation marks and properly cited, used to preserve the original language for emphasis, clarity, or authority

ellipsis

a set of three dots (...) used within a quotation to show that part of the original text has been omitted

fair use

a legal exception to copyright that allows limited use of copyrighted material without permission—typically for purposes such as criticism, commentary, teaching, scholarship, or research

falsifying results

fabricating or altering data, research findings, or results to misrepresent the outcomes of a study or experiment

IMRAD

a common structure for organizing research reports, especially in the sciences and social sciences, that stands for Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion; each section presents a different part of the research process, from the research question and background to methods used, findings, and their interpretation

licensing

the act of a copyright owner granting permission for others to use their copyrighted work under specific terms and conditions

MLA style

a citation and formatting style developed by the Modern Language Association, commonly used in humanities disciplines like literature and media studies to document sources and format academic papers

misrepresentation

presenting false or misleading information about yourself or your work, such as exaggerating credentials or claiming unsupported conclusions

paraphrasing

restating someone else's ideas in your own words without changing the original meaning or length, while still crediting the source with proper citation

plagiarism

presenting another person's words, ideas, or work as your own without proper acknowledgment, whether intentional or unintentional

public domain

creative works not protected by copyright and therefore free for anyone to use, modify, or share without permission or payment

References page

a list at the end of an essay in APA style that includes full citation details for every source cited in the text, except for personal communications

self-plagiarism

reusing your own previously submitted work in a new assignment without permission or proper citation, often violating course expectations or academic policies

signal phrase

a phrase used to introduce a source by naming the author and often mentioning their credentials or relevance, helping to establish credibility and smoothly integrate quotations, summaries, or paraphrases into your writing

source sandwich

a strategy for incorporating sources into your writing by introducing the source with context and a signal phrase, presenting the material with a citation, and following up with an explanation that connects it to your argument

summarizing

condensing a source's main idea and key points into a brief overview, significantly shorter than the original, while still crediting the original author

synthesis

the process of combining ideas from multiple sources to create new insights, arguments, or perspectives in reading and writing

Works Cited section

a list at the end of an MLA-style paper that provides full citation information for all sources referenced in the text, allowing readers to locate the original works; each entry corresponds to an in-text citation used in the paper