

## Brief Brain Trick to Succeed at 3 Key Things: 1) No Plagiarism or “Half-Copy” Plagiarism, 2) Quotation Changes Revealed Clearly & 3) Accurate Citing

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### The Brain Trick to Succeed with Both 1) & 2) & 3)

The rules for showing what you have taken out (...) of the author’s words or put in ([ ]) are complex and for most of us they are **not** useful for most writing you do in the social or physical sciences or career programs. You can also look more polished in your writing if you use this brain trick.

This **brain trick lets you be accurate but avoid learning those rules:**

1. Choose **3 to 6** words to quote and **change nothing** (not an *ing* or an *ed*, not a comma, **nothing**) between the first and the last word.
2. Put a “ **before** the first word and a ” **after** the last word. <with the “” made larger below so you can see them
3. Place those words with the “ ” within your sentence.
4. **If something sounds awkward about your sentences, then change your own words**—the only words *you* have a right to change.
5. Before you leave the source, look at all of the words in the source. Be sure the meaning of the source remains in your quotation.

### Common Questions from Students

#### **Can I Use the Sample Paper’s Pre-Built Citation?**

Yes, please do. You will need to change the page number(s) in the pre-built citation **if** you use a different page. If you need to use a fact or quotation from a different page, you may do that, but look at the 4 Examples below.

#### **Do I Need Citation and/or Quotation Marks?**

What Kind of Fact Are You Using	Do You Need Citation (Page # etc.)?	Do You Need Quotation Marks (“”)?
A fact in <b>your own</b> words	Yes	No <b>&lt;Notice this.</b>
A fact in the <b>author’s</b> words (in other words, you are <i>quoting</i> )	Yes	Yes <b>&lt;Notice this.</b>

#### 4 Examples: Do I Need Citation & Do I Need Quotation Marks around These Words?

Look at all 4 examples to catch on. What you do depends:

- on what words the **author wrote**
- on what words **you want to write**

What the Author Wrote	What Words You Want to Write	Do I Need to Cite This Specifically?	Do You Need Quotation Marks ("" ) and Why+ An Example
the Mississippi River	the Mississippi River	No - If <b>this fact and all</b> the words <b>before</b> your current citation come from the <b>same already cited</b> page.	No – Proper nouns (like Mississippi River) belong to all of us.
the green, roaring river	the river	Same as above	No – Common nouns (like river) belong to all of us.
the green, roaring Mississippi River	the roaring Mississippi River	Yes—if this fact is from the same already cited source, then you must a) cite it individually and— unless it is the last sentence of the paragraph—b) repeat your 1 <sup>st</sup> citation.	Yes - These are the author’s unique string of words so you identify <b>his</b> words, with the "" made larger below so you can see them: Example: Trade was harder because of the “roaring Mississippi River.”
	roaring		Yes - This is the author’s labeling of a condition and it is easier to be clear by using the words, with the "" made larger below so you can see them: Example: The author explained that the “roaring” river made trade more difficult.

#### Your Future & Plagiarism or “Half-copy” Plagiarism Being Marked in the Rubric for Your Project

Students are usually puzzled about plagiarism or “half-plagiarism” or “patchwriting” being marked if they lack this basic information.

1. Your submission of a paper with words **from an author without citation and/or without quotation marks** can be the **professor's evidence** that you **plagiarized**.  
Some professors may not notice, but some may call it plagiarism and **act accordingly**.

**CAUTION:** Do **not** assume that past responses by professors guarantee what future professors or future bosses will want.

2. If you do things in bullets below, some professors may label your work as “half-copy” plagiarism or “patchwriting” (terms from *The Bedford Handbook*, page 746) if you:
  - Either **copy an author’s phrases without** quotation marks ("" )
  - And/or use the **author’s sentence structure and just swap a few words** with what you think are synonyms

**CAUTION:** Do **not** assume that past responses by professors guarantee what future professors or future bosses will want.

#### Optional: Plagiarism and “Half-copy” Plagiarism & Survival in the Workplace & in Personal Decision-Making

I have found this information helps some students:

- In my life, I never saw a safe decision made with anything but careful reading.

- In my life in varied industries, I **never** saw a job that **paid for** “half-copy” plagiarism and never saw a job that **paid well for passive reading**. FYI:
  - I did see some people demoted to a lesser job because they did not read correctly
  - I do not know for sure, but my guess is that some were fired.
- In my life in some industries, I saw some employees
  - Who knew and **understood all** company documents
  - Whose job meant they **carefully selected** words from company documents to use in their communication with customers.

Copying carefully selected words from company documents is **not** plagiarism if you are doing that for the company. It is a **company** employee using **company** documents for the **company’s** business.

**CAUTIONS:** It is, however, plagiarism (and perhaps a crime in a court) if you copy company documents to use in **your** own business. It is also plagiarism if you copied a paper (or parts of a paper) from the Internet and submitted it to this class as though you wrote it.

- In my life after returning to teaching in the community college, I have seen only **2** adult students in 13+ years (and that is working with over 5,000 students) who were in fields where they made a living copying words from one place to another.

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