

Reporters Handbook & Academic Integrity Guide

“A people without reliable news is, sooner or later,
a people without the basis of freedom.”

– *Harold J. Laski, English political scientist, 1925*



COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

School of Journalism

Welcome to journalism

Journalism is sometimes called the first draft of history. It is designed to convey accurate, complete and unbiased information about an issue or event. Because governments and societies base many of their decisions on information collected, curated, presented and analyzed by the news media, properly trained journalists help us sustain a healthy democracy.

Journalistic practices have evolved over the past two centuries to meet the needs of our fast-paced, news-hungry society. Beginning students often are bewildered by a seemingly endless list of rules that govern journalistic writing. Although some may appear arbitrary, most have been driven by the need to produce detailed, accurate information under exacting deadlines.

Most editors – and indeed most of the public – believe that sloppy writing means sloppy thinking. Students will find it essential to learn and apply the rules found in this booklet and in *The Associated Press Stylebook*. These rules will apply to every reporting, editing, broadcast and multimedia class in the School of Journalism.

What follows is based on the standards and practices of the School of Journalism. For more details, see [The Associated Press Stylebook](#), the Society of Professional Journalism's [Code of Ethics](#) or your instructor.

Faculty expectations of students

We provide journalism students with the theoretical and practical instruction they need to work successfully in news organizations. Our expectations include:

Act professionally

Your responsibility starts with behaving in a professional manner at all times. Good conduct in the classroom includes participating in discussions, treating other students with respect, and following the rules established by the school and your instructor.

Your behavior is especially important outside of class. While you are interviewing news sources for assignments, you are perceived as representing the School of Journalism and the university. This means arriving for interviews a little early, dressing appropriately, doing your

background research in advance, listening well, and being polite even if you need to engage in adversarial questioning.

It also means meeting deadlines set by the instructor. Many instructors refuse to accept late papers, so you would earn an auto E for missing deadlines. Some instructors will accept late copy, but will reduce your grade by some percentage that they determine. Make sure to read the grading standards that your syllabus contains.

Be accurate

Accuracy is paramount. Question everything. Assume nothing. To reinforce the professional nature of our classes, instructors, like all editors, are demanding perfectionists. They accept no excuses for inaccuracy, incompleteness or missed deadlines. They expect every proper name and every fact to be correct.

Some instructors take off points or drop your grade by one or two letters for any paper with a large factual, grammatical or spelling error. Some may fail the whole paper. The School of Journalism is famous for Auto E's, as they are known. This may seem harsh, but in a newsroom, a reporter who consistently violates these rules winds up unemployed.

Be especially wary of the accuracy of information found on websites. Much of what appears on social media sites is not fact but opinion and even lies. Images that look authentic may turn out to be photo composites or illustrations. Stories without attribution and sourcing may turn out to be false information masquerading as news. Information that you take from the web, including Wikipedia, must be substantiated by more traditional sources. See the AP entry under "Internet" for useful warnings, as well as the section at the end of this document.

Be Transparent

Tell the source that you are a reporter working on an assignment for a class. Students working for the School of Journalism media class, Arizona Sonora News, should advise sources that the story could be published in Arizona news outlets, including the Daily Star or the Arizona Republic, among others.

However, do not claim to be a reporter for one of the campus news organizations or a professional news outlet. Explain what kind of information you need and how you plan to use it. Make sure you ask for your source's full name, occupation and title, and a phone number or e-mail address. You may need to contact the person again, and you may need to provide the contact information for the instructor.

Seek out credible news sources

The school wants students to get experience in interviewing people they don't know. For that reason, and because of the inherent conflict of interest, instructors generally require that students not interview family members, friends, classmates, roommates, sorority sisters, bosses or fellow employees. There may be rare exceptions, but these must be discussed with and approved by your instructor before the interview occurs.

Conduct in-person interviews

Students should conduct face-to-face interviews for all reporting assignments. Use of the phone, Facetime or Skype interviews is strictly a back-up. Professors must approve the use of email interviews in advance, and some do not permit them at all.

Meet your deadlines

Journalism is a profession of crushing deadlines. Not meeting deadlines is a serious infraction and the same is true in journalism school. So meet your deadlines – no excuses!

Make sure that you understand how your instructor wants you to turn in your assignments. Some professors also ask you to bring a printout to class and to file into the D2L course site, where TurnItIn software is capable of identifying any potential instances of plagiarism. Other professors permit you to turn in assignments by email, and some may prefer this. Use only your official university account to send them. If an assignment should go astray, the university system is capable of tracing the message. In some classes, you will create a website for multimedia

portfolios, and some production classes use Google Docs so students can share editing tasks.

Don't recycle assignments

There is no double-dipping in the School of Journalism. You cannot use an assignment prepared for one class and submit it into another class without prior permission of both instructors. This is a violation of the academic integrity policy and could result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion, depending on the circumstances. This prohibition also covers any work performed for the Wildcat, an internship or any other employment or extracurricular activity. If in doubt, ask.

Come to class

Attendance in journalism classes is mandatory. Unexcused absences will have a major impact on your grade, because in most cases, you will not be permitted to make up missed assignments. Each professor determines their attendance policy, so please always refer to the course syllabus.

Excused absences are granted only for valid, documented reasons (such as serious illness, jury duty, religious observance or military reserve obligation), and only if the reason makes your presence at the scheduled class time impossible. Arrangements for any make ups must be made in advance.

Note that Wildcat assignments, such as covering out-of-town Board of Regents meetings or basketball away games, are not valid reasons for missing class. These will count as one of your unexcused absences.

Any student who is not in class within 10 minutes after the start of class on the first day it meets will be dropped to make room for a student on the waiting list.

Avoid editorializing

Coloring or slanting news stories with the reporter's own point of view is called editorializing. Even when writers have opinions or experience related to an issue, they should, in most situations, keep them out of the story.

Opinion is permissible on editorial/opinion pages and in personal opinion columns. Even in columns that are very one-sided, most editors are careful to see that opinions do not distort the basic facts.

Because much of television news is broadcast from the scene of an event, first-person reporting is common. Even so, field reporters still should describe only what they see, and usually not how they feel about it.

The growth of social media and sponsored news sites that present only one viewpoint have blurred the line between what has been thought of as legitimate news and highly opinionated “citizen journalism.” Responsible journalists, however, subscribe to the same quality standards no matter what the platform.

Reporters sometimes editorialize unintentionally through their well-meaning but misguided choice of adjectives: the beloved minister, the successful meeting, the fading movie star. The best advice is to avoid adjectives and just state the facts, using nouns and verbs. Show with facts; don’t tell with opinion.

Sources

Use multiple sources

Every story has at least two sides and often many more. Except for stories written from instructor-supplied fact sheets in Jour 205, no story should be based on only one source of information. The minimum number of sources for a relatively simple story is two. Complex stories written in upper-division courses require more, and sometimes many more. Check with your professor.

Identifying news sources

All sources must be identified. Rules of identification include:

- Every person you interview must be fully identified in your story. No source can remain confidential unless you get advance approval from your instructor.

- The type of interview (personal interview, phone, e-mail) should be specified: The guest lecturer said in an interview after his remarks; the governor said, speaking by phone from Phoenix.
- Announcements and statements distributed broadly rather than obtained in an interview must be labeled as such: *according to a news release from the university.*
- All published sources (newspapers, magazines, books) need to be identified: The mayor demanded more funding for pothole repairs last September, The Arizona Daily Star reported at the time.
- Most professors discourage the use of such secondary sources unless the news outlet has an exclusive, or the story refers to a historical event. Your responsibility for your classes is to do original reporting.
- All Internet information must be sourced according to the site operator. *The no-kill shelter released 87 percent of its animals to homes in the last six months, according to the Humane Society's website.*

You must provide contact information for interview sources to instructors on request. Instructors periodically will contact sources to check for accuracy.

Handling identification properly

The basic rule is that identification should enable the readers or viewers to understand the relationship of source to the story. The identification could be middle initial, age, address, job title or a combination of identifiers. In a story about a city council meeting, for example, city officials should be identified by full name and title, not, for example, by age or home address unless they are pertinent to the story.

On subsequent references, refer to men and women only by last name, or title and last name. Most publications and TV/radio newscasts do not use Mr., Mrs., Miss or Ms. On second reference to a person, use first names for anyone under the age of 15. With 16- and 17-year-olds, use the last name unless it is a light-hearted story. Use last name for anyone 18 and over.

Doctors and clergy are given titles on first reference; on subsequent reference use last name only. Professors and others with doctorates may be identified with

Dr. on the first reference, according to the AP Stylebook, but make sure to include their specializations to avoid implying they are physicians. For example: Dr. Jeannine Relly, a journalism professor, testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee.

University students on first reference should be identified by full name, major and year in school: Karen Aquino, a political science junior.

Take special care in crime stories to identify people as fully as possible. Use full name, age, occupation or any other identifier that would help differentiate the accused from other persons with similar names. Victims of a crime often are not identified. This is particularly true in sexual assault cases or when they are younger than 18.

Check spelling of names with sources. Don't assume that John is always J-O-H-N or Amy is always A-M-Y.

Identification is a highly sensitive issue. Use only what is pertinent to the story. Include a person's race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or similar characterization only when it is relevant to the story. If in doubt, ask your instructor.

Job titles

If a formal title is short and precedes the name, capitalize it: Mayor Barbara Smith.

Use no comma between the title and the name. Do not capitalize informal, descriptive titles, even if they come before the name. A formal title generally is one that denotes authority, professional activity or academic activity: Dean Humberto J. Romero, Police Chief Jason W. Saunders. Other titles serve primarily as occupational descriptions: team leader Jack L. Thompson; journalism major Bianca R. Rios, movie star John Wayne.

If the title follows the name, make it lowercase and enclose it with commas: Barbara Smith, mayor, issued a statement. Also, lowercase the title if no name is given: The mayor issued a statement.

A long and unwieldy title should be set off by a comma and often should follow the name: The president of the North American Society of Municipal Mayors, Barbara Smith; OR, Barbara Smith, president of the North American Society of Municipal Mayors.

Handling quotations properly

Quoting a news source word for word is important for accuracy, credibility and flavor. But not all comments are worth word-for-word repetition. Reducing an hours-long event to a few paragraphs requires a mix of summarizing and quoting, summarizing and quoting.

Use quotation marks to surround the exact words of a speaker: "I have no intention of running for another term," the mayor said.

One of the most troubling questions in journalism is when reporters should change quotes to protect sources from inadvertent misstatements, poor grammar and derogatory words. The faculty believes students should not change direct quotations. If a direct quote is problematic, the easiest solution is to paraphrase instead.

For example, instead of quoting exactly what he said: *"Thanks to my opponent's dirty campaign, I ain't never gonna run again," the mayor said*, you might write: *Citing his opponent's "dirty campaign," the mayor said he wouldn't run again.*

Make attribution as unobtrusive as possible. Generally avoid fancy synonyms for "said," such as "replied, responded, expostulated, suggested, indicated or remarked."

Also avoid words that suggest doubt, such as claimed, admitted or acknowledged.

The word "said" comes after the title and the name or pronoun, unless the title is very long: *she said; Lt. Gov. Edith Meta said*; but, *said William E. Parker, assistant superintendent for the Tucson Unified School District.*

When quotes end in a question mark, no comma is needed: *"Where is she going?" Williams asked.*

Partial quotes can be used as an integral part of a sentence and should be capitalized and punctuated accordingly: *He was feeling “much too sick” to attend class, according to the email.*

Contrary to most academic writing styles, in AP style all punctuation goes inside the quote: *“I have scheduled a current events quiz for next time,” the instructor said.*

You can use more than one sentence within a single set of quotation marks:

“What’s the use? I will never understand these style rules,” she said.

For a quote within a quote, use a single quotation mark: *“He told me he was feeling ‘just lousy,’” Del Rios said.*

Remember that quotation marks come in sets of two. If you use an opening quotation mark, also include the closing one.

Innocent vs. not guilty

The AP Stylebook says, “In court cases, plea situations and trials, not guilty is preferable to innocent, because it is more precise legally. (However, special care must be taken to prevent omission of the word not.) When possible, say a defendant was acquitted of criminal charges.”

Be sure all statements about charges are attributed to an official source. Use the word *allege* with great care to avoid making an accusation. It is a word that frequently is overused. *Allege* means to declare or accuse: The district attorney *alleged* that she took a bribe. A better phrase is often: *arrested on the charge of bribery* or *charged with accepting a bribe*. See the AP Stylebook for additional guidance.

You may be legally required to protect the identities of jurors in some states. The law forbids their identification so that no outside influences can affect the outcome of jury deliberations. During a trial, they should not be interviewed or photographed if the law forbids it.

The names of sexual assault victims and juveniles (as long as they are not charged as adults) are generally not reported. Sometimes the names of witnesses are withheld if there is a risk of retaliation. Check with your instructor or relevant experts/authorities on these difficult and tricky rules.

Fact-checking

Three important points need to be made regarding fact-checking:

1. Fact-checking goes beyond “cqing” names and titles, although those are important elements of the process. Fact-checking means checking the reporting and the journalistic, legal, and ethical context of every word in every sentence. Fact-checking, like other elements of reporting, should be done using primary sources, not secondary material. Fact-checking requires a very high level of critical thinking and constant application of the highest journalistic standards.
2. Fact-checking is the responsibility of everyone who sees a story, caption, photo or graphic. It starts with reporters, photographers or graphics designers, who should build into their own schedules the time to fact-check their own work before it goes to the next stage of production. Fact-checking then becomes the responsibility of every editor who handles the story, photo/video, or graphics, including the copy editor. Copy editing goes way beyond line editing for style and grammar; copy editors are the last line of defense in terms of journalistic standards and legal and ethical issues.
3. Fact-checking should be thought of as the last stage of reporting, as well as one of the stages of the editing process. Fact-checking is a reflective process that starts with the journalist going back and looking at her or his work as objectively as possible, to catch factual, contextual, legal and ethical issues, including problems with the original reporting. To think of fact-checking as some secondary process that is not part of both reporting and editing, or is not as important as other components of reporting and editing, is a fundamental mistake, which can easily lead to others.

School of Journalism Academic Integrity Policy

Honesty Matters

The School of Journalism has a zero-tolerance policy for violations of academic integrity. We have produced this handbook as a supplement to the university's [Code of Academic Integrity](#) so that students will understand what constitutes plagiarism, fabrication and falsification and how to avoid them in their reporting, producing, editing and writing. Without exception, instructors will impose sanctions for academic integrity violations.

You should be aware, if you are not already, that any student found violating the rules will face consequences ranging from a reduced grade or failing grade on the assignment to failing the course and suspension or expulsion from the School of Journalism, or even the University of Arizona. Ignorance of the rules is not an acceptable excuse.

Prohibited conduct covers all forms of academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, and facilitating academic dishonesty by others. The Arizona Board of Regents also prohibits this as [academic misconduct](#). Complete details of the [university policy and procedures](#) can be found at the Dean of Students' website.

Generative Artificial Intelligence

The School of Journalism does not allow the use of generative artificial intelligence to complete SOJ assignments. Students who do so are in violation of our academic integrity policy and will face sanctions. The only exception to this policy is instructor permission.

Generative AI creates original, high-quality texts, images, audio and additional works. According to IBM, "Generative AI refers to deep-learning models that can take raw data — say, all of Wikipedia or the collected works of Rembrandt — and 'learn' to generate statistically probable outputs when prompted. At a high level, generative models encode a simplified representation of their training data and draw from it to create a new work that's similar, but not identical, to the original data."

The SOJ does not deny that generative AI may have great potential in many fields, including journalism. That's why instructors have the authority to make exceptions. Our policy may evolve as generative AI technology and detection systems continue to develop and improve. If that happens, the SOJ will revise this handbook and share it widely with students, staff and faculty.

Journalism: Writing Without Footnotes

National headlines about Jayson Blair, Stephen Glass and Jonah Lehrer have amply demonstrated that the journalism profession has a significant problem with plagiarism and fabrication. So does higher education. Educators are dismayed at the number of students who plagiarize, especially from internet sources. According to the UA Dean of Students' office, 75% of college students admit to some form of cheating.

Proper attribution in journalistic writing is different and often more difficult than in other types of writing. For one thing, we don't use footnotes or endnotes. For another, we frequently write on deadline and under difficult conditions. That makes it all the more important that journalists keep track of their notes, sources, inspirations and ideas.

Plagiarism

The word means intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own. This is a serious problem in journalism. Public attention has been focused on several high-profile incidents recently, and public confidence in the reliability of news reports has eroded.

In a 2013 national study commissioned by the American Copy Editors Society, the authors of "The Truth and Nothing But" cited research showing that nearly all the plagiarists of the last two decades said their plagiarism was "inadvertent."

This is no excuse. Good journalists – and good journalism students – must understand how to protect themselves and the public by using correct attribution.

In photography and multimedia, the presence of digital editing software has made the manipulation of images easier than ever. In 2015, the World Press

Photo Contest, a prestigious international event, had to disqualify up to 20% of entries because of improper manipulation, including adding or removing content from images.

World Press Photo issued [a new code of ethics](#) requiring that entrants “must ensure their pictures provide an accurate and fair representation of the scene they witnessed so the audience is not misled.” Some editing of images is permitted under professional standards to enhance balance and quality, but the addition or removal of content from an image constitutes a form of fabrication. Plagiarism and fabrication betray the public trust in journalists’ independent pursuit of the truth. They destroy credibility not only with the public, but also with the faculty, students, fellow reporters and editors – to say nothing of your own self-worth.

Finally, they carry severe consequences in the profession. A veteran reporter for the St. Petersburg Times, when forced to resign over her plagiarism, posted this on the newsroom bulletin board:

Twelve years of dedicated journalism down the drain because of a stupid mistake. It will be easier for me to live with myself knowing that the truth is known. But I hope my mistake will serve as a lesson to others. I have let the Times down. I have let myself down. But most of all, I have let the profession down. And for that, I am truly sorry.

– Quoted from “The Unoriginal Sin,” by Roy Peter Clark, *Washington Journalism Review*, March 1983, reprinted by the Poynter Institute, July 28, 2000.

Journalism Examples

In addition to the university’s academic integrity policy, journalism has unique ethical standards and practices. We consider the following violations of academic integrity:

- Using Chat GPT to write your assignments or news stories
- Using generative AI to create “original” content for class assignments
- Failing to quote accurately, word for word, what a news source writes or says

- Failing to credit a news source when using an exact quotation
- Copying sentences or paragraphs from a publication or source without putting them in quotation marks and attributing them to that publication
- Using the source's own words too closely when paraphrasing
- Using a source's ideas or thoughts without attribution
- Making up sources
- Making up quotes
- Making up other information
- Staging video scenes
- Using other people's video, images or audio without permission, or any other copyright violation
- Turning in other's video, images or audio as if it were your own work
- Excessive digital manipulation of photos, video or audio that changes the content or meaning
- Quoting friends, family, roommates or other acquaintances you know, rather than finding independent sources, and failing to disclose that you know sources. This constitutes a conflict of interest and improper cutting of corners
- Collaborating with other students without specific permission and guidance from your instructor
- Cheating on tests and quizzes
- Submitting the same story, report or research paper to fulfill assignments for two different classes, without prior permission from both instructors
- Turning in as a new assignment all or part of a story you have written for a previous class or any other news media without prior permission from the instructor. This includes text, visual, audio or graphic platforms. This also includes work performed as an intern
- Submitting a story written for a class to any other news media as fulfillment of an internship without prior permission from the instructor
- Any violation of journalistic norms and codes of ethics

How to Avoid Plagiarism

The UA's academic integrity policy defines plagiarism as representing the words or ideas of another as one's own.

The Modern Language Association says plagiarism is:

- Failure to attribute quotations or another person's ideas
- Failure to enclose borrowed language in quotation marks
- Failure to put summaries and paraphrases in your own words

Roy Peter Clark of the Poynter Institute identifies common opportunities for journalistic plagiarism. It can occur when reporters:

- Lift background information verbatim from previously published clips
- Include wire service copy in their stories without attribution
- Borrow information from other publications or the Internet
- Copy information from other reporters without permission

It is worth noting that all plagiarism/fabrication/falsification is not intentional. Journalists (including student journalists) work under conditions that are generally far from ideal. But even when it isn't intentional, it still is wrong and can get you a failing grade or fired. One way to think about plagiarism goes back to the word's origins: Plagiarism derives from the Latin verb *plagiare*, which means "to kidnap or abduct."

Preventing Plagiarism

Avoid generative AI

Do not use generative AI to complete SOJ assignments unless you have the permission of your instructor

Take good notes

In the rush to meet deadlines, it is easy to lose track of who said what or which words are direct quotes. Make it easy on yourself: clearly and fully identify the source and the quote.

Put your notes away

To keep from inadvertently copying your source information too closely, write your first draft without using notes. Then double check your accuracy before writing the next draft.

Treat the Internet like any other source

Information that you Google is not in the public domain, as students commonly assume. When using quotes, ideas or visuals from a site, use the same attribution standards that apply to print or broadcast sources or personal interviews.

When in doubt

If you are not sure whether attribution is necessary, it is.

Rewrite, rewrite

Regardless of the source – past stories from the library, the wires, other publications or news releases – get in the habit of putting everything in your own words.

Watch the clock

Leave yourself ample time to fact-check, proofread and polish your work.

Be honorable

Plagiarizing is being dishonest with the public. It is stealing intellectual property from someone. It is also stealing from yourself – your opportunity to learn, your reputation among your peers and your own self-respect.

Attribution

Attribution serves two purposes: It identifies the source of information and it gives the story credibility: *Mayor John Jacobs said*; OR, *according to the Arizona Constitution*.

Attribution is not needed for all the information in a story. There are two, and only two, instances where you never need it:

- You do not need it for well-known facts: The sun rises in the east.
- You do not need it for information that you yourself have witnessed as a reporter: The crowd gathered in front of Gentle Ben's after the game.

So what, exactly, should be attributed?

- Facts not previously established or well known
- Expert background on a subject

- Matters of opinion or judgment
- Anything controversial or likely to be disputed
- All quotes, partial quotes and paraphrased statements

You must attribute even if you are not quoting the exact words of a source.

How much attribution is enough? Provide enough to inform the public about who is saying what. In simple weather stories, attributing information once may be enough. In stories that are more complex or cover controversial topics, attribution could be necessary in every paragraph. Be particularly thorough in crime and court stories, because the facts of a case are generally disputed.

The bottom line: When in doubt, attribute.

Attribution usually is found at the end of the sentence and is set off by a comma:
He failed another style quiz, the student said.

Attribution is used at the beginning of a sentence that introduces a new speaker:
"I'm glad I won the election," she said.

What Needs Attribution

Here are the primary types of information that need attribution:

- Another person's actual spoken or written words
- A paraphrase of another person's spoken or written words
- Another person's ideas, opinions or theories
- The source of any facts that you didn't personally witness
- The source of any statistics, graphs or drawings
- Accusatory, opinionated, unsubstantiated or controversial information, especially in crime or accident stories. You don't need to attribute:
- Facts that are on record or are general knowledge: The Tucson City Council meets Monday nights.
- Information you observe: The protesters paraded through campus.

Identifying Sources

When you attribute information, sources need to be fully identified. See the school's Reporter's Handbook for more details. Rules of identification include:

- Every person you interview must be fully identified in your story, generally by first name, middle initial, last name and the relevance of the source to the story: Gov. Harold P. Jenkins defended hiring his brother-in-law for the position by saying, "He was the best person for the job."
- All published sources have to be identified: The Arizona Daily Star reported.
- All Internet sources must be identified by telling the public about the individual or group that operates the site: A website sponsored by the Humane Society said.

How to use Quotations for Attribution

Journalists continually need to combine direct quotations with paraphrasing. Quotes give the public accuracy and color. Summarizing is needed to help condense long meetings, detailed interviews or complex events, issues or ideas into a story of a few paragraphs.

The mechanics of using quotation marks and attribution (he said, etc.) are available in any grammar book or journalism text. For example, *A Pocket Style Manual* by Diana Hacker gives the following example of the right and wrong way to distinguish between your thoughts and those of the source, according to Modern Language Association rules.

Original

We see conflicting pictures of the mountain lion through the eyes of hunters, rangers, scientists, wildlife managers and preservationists. Each viewpoint, like a piece of glass in a kaleidoscope, is a shard, a fragment until it is combined with the other pieces to create a total image.

– Karen McCall and Jim Dutcher, *Cougar: Ghost of the Rockies*, p. 137

Plagiarized version

McCall and Dutcher observe that we see conflicting pictures of the mountain lion through the eyes of hunters, rangers, scientists, wildlife managers and preservationists. Each viewpoint, like a piece of glass in a

kaleidoscope, is a shard, a fragment until it is combined with the other pieces to create a total image (137).

Acceptable version

McCall and Dutcher observe that “hunters, rangers, scientists, wildlife managers, and preservationists” see the mountain lion quite differently: “Each viewpoint, like a piece of glass in a kaleidoscope, is a shard, a fragment until it is combined with the other pieces to create a total image” (137).

How to Paraphrase

To paraphrase properly, you have to be careful to remain faithful to the source’s viewpoint, but use your own words to do so. How much use of the source’s words is too much?

There is no legal standard, but notice in the plagiarized example below that the MLA considers even three words in a row (see underlined below) to be unacceptable. Other authorities specify eight words. Use your best judgment, but certainly your limit should be less than one sentence.

In the case below, Hacker said that the paraphrase “is plagiarized – even though the source is cited – because too much of its language is borrowed from the source.” Using some of the same sentence structure and simply substituting alternative words – children for minors, brutally for severely, and assault for attack – is not enough, Hacker said.

Original

The park [Caspers Wilderness Park] was closed to minors in 1992 after the family of a girl severely mauled there in 1986 won a suit against the county. The award of \$2.1 million for the mountain lion attack on Laura Small, who was 5 at the time, was later reduced to \$1.5 million.” – Reyes and Messina, “More Warning Signs,” p. B1

Plagiarized version

Reyes and Messina report that Caspers Wilderness Park was closed to children in 1992 after the family of a girl brutally mauled there in 1986 sued

the county. The family was ultimately awarded \$1.5 million for the mountain lion assault on Laura Small, who was 5 at the time (B1).

Acceptable version

In 1992, officials banned minors from Caspers Wilderness Park. Reyes and Messina explain that park officials took this measure after a mountain lion attack on a child led to a lawsuit. The child, 5-year-old Laura Small, had been severely mauled by a lion in 1986, and her parents sued the county. Eventually they received an award of \$1.5 million (B1). The Boston Globe reports that Judy Hunter, a teacher at Grinnell College in Iowa, tells her students: “In a bad paraphrase, you merely substitute words, borrowing the sentence structure of the organization directly from the source. In a good paraphrase you offer your reader a wholesale revision, a new way of seeing the text you are paraphrasing. You summarize, you reconstruct, you tell your reader about what the source has said, but you do so entirely in your own words, your own voice, your own sentence structure, your own organization.”

Fabrication

In its policy on academic integrity, Northwestern University’s Medill School of Journalism defines fabrication as “the intentional falsification or invention of information, data, quotations, or sources in an academic exercise or in a journalistic presentation. Fabrication also includes, but is not limited to, misattributing information or presenting information in an assignment that was not gathered in accordance with the course syllabus or other course outline.”

The UA journalism school’s (and all newsrooms’) policy is simple: It is never acceptable to make up a source, quote or a fact.

Preventing Fabrication

Proper planning often is all it takes to eliminate the need to fabricate a missing fact or quote.

Organize your thoughts

Understand what you were sent to cover. Anticipate the kind of information you will need before you begin. Clearly, you have to let the facts shape the story, but

if you have some idea of what you need, you can make the best use of your limited time.

Think like an editor

When you're interviewing, keep digging for hard facts, colorful details and illuminating quotes. Then evaluate not only what you have, but also what you don't have – and go get it.

Get contact information

Always ask sources for phone numbers and/or e-mail addresses, so you can contact them if you have additional questions.

Visual & Audio Editing Guidelines

Images, video and audio allow us to tell stories that can engage readers, but also pose risks for ethical breaches. In general, editing should be used to more accurately depict the reality of the scene at the time the image or video was taken. The content of the images and video should not be altered in any way that changes the overall content of the visual. Acceptable visual editing includes:

- Cropping that does not alter the overall story
- Dodging and burning
- White balancing
- Color correction that does not alter the scene

Copyright & Fair Use

The assumption for images, audio, video and writing is that the creator owns the copyright on the work, which gives the original creator legal protection to the work they created. Using their work without their permission is a violation of the law and journalism standards.

Copyright can be increasingly difficult to understand as social platforms allow for embedding of content. Just as you own the work you create, in most cases someone else owns the work you see on the internet.

It is always best to find the creator of the work you are hoping to use and get permission to use their work. Credit is not the same as permission. For more on copyright and fair use please see the [library's resources](#).

More Information

To learn more about plagiarism and fabrication, see the [university library website](#). The journalism faculty also can provide guidance.

Penalties

The School of Journalism has a zero-tolerance policy on plagiarism, fabrication and other ethical violations. In lower division courses, an academic integrity violation may, at the discretion of the professor, be treated as a “teachable moment,” not a professional felony. However, depending on the severity of the case, a violation may lead to failing the assignment, failing the class, or worse.

After lower division courses, any student who is caught violating the rules will face more severe consequences, based on the discretion of the professor. Sanctions may range from a failing grade on the assignment to failing the course, to suspension or expulsion from the School of Journalism, or even the University of Arizona. You should consult the course syllabus for additional guidance.

All violations that lead to sanctions will also be referred to the Dean of Students office, in order to provide due process for students. The referral to the Dean of Students may require the completion of an [academic integrity workshop and a plagiarism awareness workshop](#).

However, if after an informal examination, a professor determines that there is insufficient proof that a student's conduct violated the journalism school's academic integrity rules, but said conduct does merit a loss of points awarded for the assignment (short of awarding a failing grade for that assignment) the professor need not refer the student to the dean's office for formal disciplinary sanctions.

You should also be aware of the UA Student Code of Conduct, designed to promote self- discipline and respect for the rights of others in the university community. Students who violate the standards of conduct outlined in the code are subject to disciplinary sanctions. The code primarily, but not exclusively, covers non-academic issues. Following are some of the types of prohibited conduct:

- Threatening behavior
- Use of false identification or documents
- False fire alarms
- Unauthorized or improper use of university property
- Stalking or discrimination against individuals or groups

The [Student Code of Conduct](#) also includes a list of sanctions that can be imposed. They range from administrative holds on student records to warnings, administrative drops from courses, probation, suspension or expulsion.