



## The Betty East Tutoring Center at Victoria College

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### Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using information from a source without giving it credit. This includes words, sentences, ideas, and how sentences and ideas are structured. While you may not intend to plagiarize, it is a serious offense that can lead to failing grades, being dropped from a class, or even being expelled from Victoria College. Be sure you understand plagiarism and how to properly cite your sources.

#### What You Need to Cite:

According to *Using Sources Effectively* by Robert Harris,

you must cite someone else's words you quote, words you summarize, words you paraphrase, ideas (interpretation, opinion, conclusion) data, graph, photograph, drawing, table of information, experiment, example, unique concept, apt phrase, expression of common knowledge, solution to a problem, speech, video source (film, TV program), and the structure or sequencing of facts, ideas, or arguments. (18)

#### Common Knowledge:

One of the items in the above list that we have to cite is an "expression of common knowledge." Common knowledge consists of:

- Commonly known dates and facts, such as the Alamo fell to Santa Anna on March 6, 1836
- The chemical composition of water, H<sub>2</sub>O
- Proverbs and clichés, such as "strike while the iron is hot"
- When you and your readers share perspective, such as if you are writing on a topic in Victoria College or about the city of Victoria. Then, you would not need to cite information on the town's location, etc.

What you have to cite:

- Opinions related to facts, even if the facts are well-known
- When a source contains factual information that is still part of an opinion, cite the source
- When in doubt, *cite the source*.

#### Avoiding Plagiarism:

Be very attentive to the details of your paper:

- ✓ Take notes as you research and mark where you quote, paraphrase, or summarize the material
- ✓ Keep copies of each source so you can easily double-check what information comes from each source
- ✓ Credit the source of any ideas with proper in-text citations as well as a reference listing in your Works Cited page
- ✓ Signal the reader that you are using someone else's words:
  - Introduce your sources. For example: Austen says, "It is commonly known..."
  - Instead of "says" you can also use: addresses, analyzes, contributes, critiques, defines, discovers, disproves, establishes, evaluates, examines, formulates, identifies, proposes, questions, recommends, reiterates, reports, suggests, thinks, urges, etc.
  - You can also use phrases such as "according to," "based upon," etc.
- ✓ Review your paper and use of documentation carefully.