

Inadvertent plagiarism

Here is an example of inadvertent plagiarism in an essay:

The rock 'n' roll sound changing dramatically and the number of female artist increasing. Rock music formed within the terms of very particular struggles for social and cultural agency (Wald, 1998).

Comment [P1]: The writer of this essay has acknowledged that s/he got the *general idea* from Wald (1998), but is claiming that this precise wording is her/his own. If you look at the Wald article, however, you will see that this is not true.

Here is the original Wald article:

Likewise, the various contemporary narratives of girlhood produced and disseminated within U.S. rock music cultures are formed within the terms of very particular struggles for social and cultural agency (Wald 1998: 591).

Comment [P2]: Now we can see that the essay writer has not just borrowed the *general idea*. She/he has taken *the exact wording* without using quotation marks. This is called plagiarism. It is when someone (deliberately or inadvertently) disguises someone else's words as their own. The problem can be easily fixed.

To fix the problem, here is what the essay writer should do:

The rock 'n' roll sound changing dramatically and the number of female artist increasing. Rock music... 'formed within the terms of very particular struggles for social and cultural agency' (Wald 1998: 591).

Comment [P3]: Whenever using someone else's exact words – even if you are using just three consecutive words – USE QUOTATION MARKS.

Comment [P4]: Whenever citing a source – even if it is not a direct quote – include a page reference as I have done here.

Here is an example of inadvertent plagiarism in an essay:

The first females to enter the rock industry that weren't overshadowed by the testosterone powered groups around them were such bands as The Ronettes, Dixie Cups and through to the 1970's- the substantial success of 'The Runaways'. This era marked the massive entry of women into rock from rock and roll, providing the world with their first taste of female youth culture (Rohlfing 1996).

Comment [P5]: The writer of this essay has acknowledged that s/he got the *general idea* from Rohlfing (1996), but is claiming that this precise wording is her/his own. Read on and check if this is true.

Here is the original Rohlfing article, with the 'borrowed' words highlighted in red:

The Brill Building era marked the massive entry of women into rock 'n' roll, providing anglo Americans with their first taste of a female youth culture focused on sexuality and their first exposure in popular rock 'n' roll to the voices and vernacular of young, African American women (Rohlfing 1996: 93).

Comment [P6]: The essay writer has made some attempt to paraphrase, but there are still several phrases that are directly lifted from Rohlfing's article. These direct quotes need to be acknowledged as QUOTES.

Here is what the essay writer should do:

During the Brill Building era, a large number of women became successful as performers or as songwriters. This was the first time that so many women had been so publicly successful in American rock 'n' roll (Rohlfing 1996: 93).

Comment [P7]: I rewrote this passage by *reading then putting aside* the Rohlfing article. Then I put the idea in my own words. Putting the article aside meant that it was harder to 'accidentally' include whole phrases from the article.