

# writing a research paper

(Without plagiarizing!)

# types of writing

- for yourself (in a journal, diary or blog)
- a letter, email or facebook message
- an essay for a contest, scholarship or application
- a memo at work
- a report or research paper for school

# writing in an academic setting

- PART 1: the writing process
- PART 2: plagiarism

who likes to write?



# writing challenges

- "I can't start! Everything I write sounds dumb!"
- "My notes are so messy. I'll never be able to organize this stuff."
- "I can't think of the words in English."
- "I don't have time."
- "Revision? What's that?"

# Fast-write! 5 minutes

- The topic: Who was (or is) your favorite teacher and why?
- Directions: Take out a piece of paper. Write for five minutes. Don't stop writing. Keep your pen or pencil on the paper. Don't worry about writing perfect sentences. If you can't write in English, write in Vietnamese until the English words come to you. You will not have to share this writing.

# the writing process

- Pre-writing (fast-write, questions, lists, brainstorming, word webs, maps, clusters, notes, and/or research)
- Outline
- Rough Draft
- Revising (multiple drafts, peer review, notes from teachers, general, then specific)
- Final Draft

# pre-writing: questions

- what do I know?
- who is my audience?
- what is my purpose?
- what questions do I have?
- what do I want to find out?
- who is the expert on this topic?



research

# online sources:

- How do you know if you have a good source?
- from a government (.gov), educational institution (.edu), community organization (.org)
- from google scholar
- from the bibliography page of a book by an expert
- from a database like EBSCO, JSTOR or LEXUS NEXUS

# outline

- organize ideas
- make it very detailed or just include your main ideas
- you should have a thesis statement (a main point)

# the thesis: what's the point?

- A good thesis statement is specific, original and clear.
- Show what you know.
- Explain a theory.
- Express your opinion.
- Contribute to a great body of knowledge & teach others about a specific topic.

# Rough Draft

- spend more time than you would on a fast-write, but still pretty fast because you can fix it later

# REVISION

- Ask a friend to read your paper (if it's okay with your teacher)
- Ask your teacher to read your paper
- Read it aloud (and backwards)
- Put it away and then come back to it with "fresh eyes."

# CITE YOUR SOURCES!

- <http://www.easybib.com/>
- <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>
- <http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/>

# Final Draft

- Edit! Edit! Edit!
- Proper format
  - margins
  - heading
  - paper size

the writing process can  
be messy!



PART 2:  
what is plagiarism?

# plagiarism (n.)

- the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own.
- in other words: stealing ideas!

# Is plagiarism a big deal?

- books on the streets
- an essay for a university application to study in the United States as part of the Fulbright program
- intellectual property in the U.S.

# Is this plagiarism?

- My teacher asks me to look at a website and translate the information on the site into English. Since, I'm so smart I go to google translate, type in the info. and finish my homework in less than a minute!

# not really, but look what happens:

- In Vietnamese:

- Trung tâm Hoa Kỳ là nơi cung cấp miễn phí các chương trình và thông tin chuyên biệt, chính xác và đáng tin cậy về Hoa Kỳ cho công chúng Việt Nam. Mọi công dân Việt Nam có giấy tờ tùy thân đều có thể tiếp cận và sử dụng. Tất cả dịch vụ và chương trình của chúng tôi đều hoàn toàn miễn phí.

# google makes mistakes!

- After Google translate:
- American Center is offering free programs and specialized information, accurate and reliable to the United States to the public in Vietnam. Any Vietnamese citizen identification are able to access and use. All our services and programs are completely free.
- What's wrong with this sentence?

# Is this plagiarism?

- I have a test tomorrow, and I don't have time to study. I call my friend and borrow his test from last week, which has all the correct answers. I copy the answers onto a tiny piece of paper and bring the paper with me. I mark all the correct answers into the test booklet when the teacher isn't looking.

# Yes! Definitely.

- Cheating on a test or quiz is considered plagiarism. There are no excuses. In the United States if you get caught doing this, you can fail the class! If you do this on a formal standardized test, you can face serious consequences.
- Tests are to show what you know. How do you learn if someone else does the work for you?

# Is this plagiarism?

- Your teacher assigns a difficult assignment. You must write a report and give a presentation. You and your best friend decide that you will focus on the same subject. You go to the library together and spend hours doing research together. You read your friend's report and make some improvements. Your friend corrects you on your pronunciation.

# Maybe

- Sometimes teachers encourage students to work together, but you need to check with your teacher before you work with a friend. Unless your teacher says that it's okay for you to collaborate with others, you should do the work by yourself.

# Is this plagiarism?

- My teacher told us to prepare for a timed in-class essay on the environment. Because I always get nervous during tests, I decided to memorize three paragraphs from National Geographic magazine on this topic and then I just copied down what I remembered.

# Yup, still plagiarism.

- You can't memorize other people's words or ideas and pretend that they belong to you.

# Is this plagiarism?

- My teacher says I have to write a report about the Chinese Economy. I don't have much time and I have a lot to do, so I google "China" and find an article about it in English in an American newspaper. I cut and paste the article into a word document, add an introduction and conclusion, and email it to my teacher.

# YES!

- You can read about China, but you can't cut and paste the article (or part of the article) into your paper.

# Is this plagiarism?

- **Education in Vietnam** is divided into five levels: preschool, primary school, secondary school, high school and higher education. Formal education consists of twelve years of basic education. Basic education consists of five years of primary education, four years of intermediate education, and three years of secondary education. The majority of basic education students are enrolled on a half-day basis.

- from Wikipedia

- My version: **Education in Vietnam** can be sectioned off into five levels: preschool, primary school, secondary school, high school and higher education. Formal education consists of twelve years of basic education, which consists of five years of primary education, four years of intermediate education, and three years of secondary education. The majority of basic education students have a half-day schedule.

# yes!

- First, it's from wikipedia, so who knows if it's true!
- It's plagiarism because I only changed a few words/phrases, but the structure of the sentences looks almost identical to the original.
- What can I do if I want to use this information?

# acknowledge your source

- Use a direct quote
- Paraphrase
- Summarize
- Cite your sources (include a bibliography, a page at the end of your paper with a list of resources, so the reader can find out more)

# Direct quote

- from the Vietnamese Ministry of Education website (<http://en.moet.gov.vn>)
- According to the Vietnamese Ministry of Education, “Most primary students are registered in half-day classes. Just over 10% are entitled to whole-day classes. The implementation of whole-day classes are of great interest and popular in provinces such as Nam Dinh, Bac Ninh, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City.”

# Paraphrase

- from the Vietnamese Ministry of Education website (<http://en.moet.gov.vn>)
- According to the Vietnamese Ministry of Education, the majority of students attend half-day classes in primary school. Full-day classes are more prevalent in urban areas.

# Summarize

- from the Vietnamese Ministry of Education website (<http://en.moet.gov.vn>)
- In general, students in Vietnam only attend primary school for half of the day.

# your turn:

- From an article by Sam Dillon in *The New York Times*:
- “One of the world’s foremost experts on comparing national school systems told lawmakers on Tuesday that many other countries were surpassing the United States in educational attainment.”
- foremost (adj.) - best
- surpass (v.) - do better than
- attainment (n.) - achieving a goal

# many correct answers

- direct quote: According to Sam Dillon of *The New York Times*, “One of the world’s foremost experts on comparing national school systems told lawmakers on Tuesday that many other countries were surpassing the United States in educational attainment.”
- paraphrase
- summary

# Conclusion

- Writing is a process!
- Do pre-writing and revise.
- Don't plagiarize!

# thanks!

- This presentation was given by Lindsay Allen at the American Center in Hanoi on August 28th, 2012.