FIRST SEMESTER · WEEK 13 STUDY GUIDE · STUDY SKILLS

Academic Integrity and When to Cite

Integrity means the work you hand in is honestly yours and honestly credits others. Citing is how you show where ideas came from.

AFTER THIS GUIDE YOU CAN

- Name the common types of academic dishonesty.
- Decide when a citation is needed.
- Quote, paraphrase and summarize correctly.
- Follow each course's rules on AI and collaboration.

Key terms

Academic integrity	Honesty, fairness and responsibility in academic work.
Plagiarism	Presenting someone else's words, ideas, data or images as your own, on purpose or by accident.
Citation	A note that credits the source of words, ideas, data or images, in the style your course requires.
Direct quotation	Someone else's exact words, placed in quotation marks and cited.
Paraphrase	Someone else's idea in your own words and sentence structure, still cited.
Patchwriting	Swapping a few words in a source sentence but keeping its structure. Treated as plagiarism.
Common knowledge	Facts that are widely known, found in many sources and not disputed. Usually no citation needed.
Unauthorized collaboration	Working with others on work that was assigned to be done alone.
Self plagiarism	Reusing your own earlier work for a new assignment without permission.
Contract cheating	Having someone else, paid or not, do your work for you.

The big ideas

- If the words are not yours, use quotation marks and a citation.
- If the idea, data or image is not yours, cite it, even when you put it in your own words.
- When in doubt, cite. A citation you did not need costs nothing.

- AI rules differ by course. Read the policy, and when AI use is allowed, disclose it the way the course asks.
- Most integrity problems start with time pressure. Planning ahead is an integrity strategy.
- If you are unsure, ask the instructor or the writing center before you submit, not after.

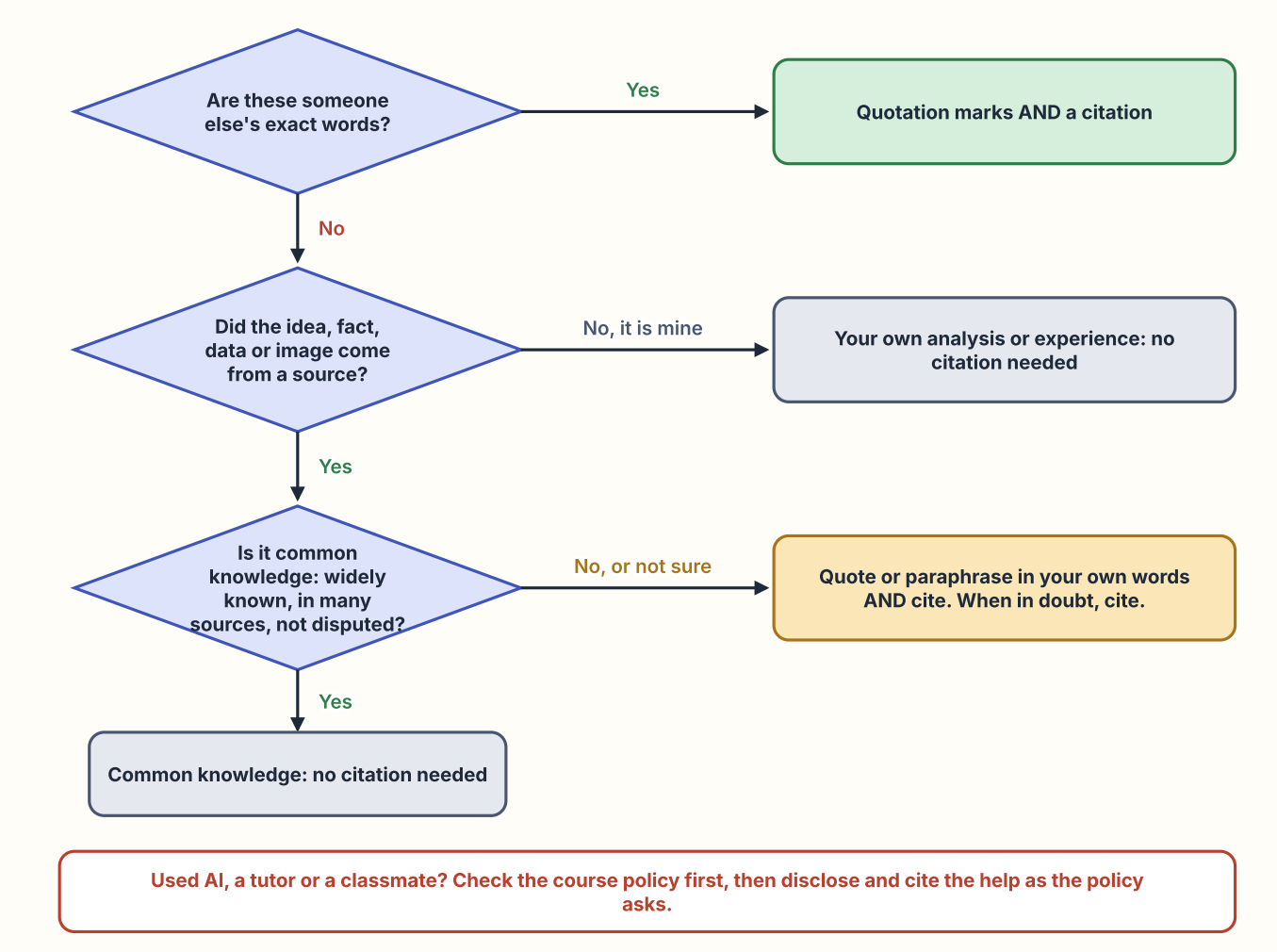

Figure. Cite or no cite: a decision flowchart.

Worked example

Week 13 at the Writing Center. Your English paper is due tomorrow at noon. Rowan offers his cousin's paper from last year "for ideas," and you have three sources open.

1. Decline Rowan's paper. Using it would be plagiarism, even with changes.
2. For a sentence you want word for word, use quotation marks and a citation.
3. For a statistic from a source, put it in your own sentence and cite the source.
4. For "water boils at 100 degrees Celsius at sea level," no citation is needed: it is common knowledge.
5. You used a grammar checker. The syllabus allows it with a note, so add the note. Then ask a Writing Center tutor to look at your citations.

Common mistakes

- Changing a few words in a sentence and calling it a paraphrase.
- Citing quotes but forgetting to cite borrowed ideas and data.
- Assuming AI rules are the same in every course.
- Sharing your finished work with a friend "just to look at."
- Reusing a paper from another course without asking.

Check yourself

1. You copy one sentence exactly. What two things do you need?
2. Does a paraphrase need a citation?
3. What is patchwriting?
4. Give the three tests for common knowledge.
5. You are not sure whether something needs a citation. What should you do?
6. Can you turn in a paper from last term in a new course?
7. Where do you find a course's rules on AI use?
8. What is one planning habit that prevents integrity problems?

Answer key

1. **Quotation marks and a citation.** Both, every time.
2. **Yes.** The idea still came from someone else.
3. **Swapping a few words while keeping the source's structure.** It counts as plagiarism.
4. **Widely known, found in many sources, not disputed.** If any test fails, cite.
5. **Cite it.** An extra citation does no harm.
6. **Only with the new instructor's permission.** Otherwise it is self plagiarism.
7. **The syllabus or the instructor.** Policies differ by course.
8. **Starting early and breaking work into steps.** Time pressure drives most shortcuts.

Help is real. If you or a friend are struggling, talk to your campus counseling center. In the United States you can call or text 988 (Suicide and Crisis Lifeline) any time. Outside the US, contact your local crisis line.

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