



# Touchstones: Academic Integrity Guidelines

by Sophia



## WHAT'S COVERED

Now that you are ready to work on your Touchstone assignment, it is important that you review this document to fully understand the following:

1. [Sophia Student Honor Code](#)
2. [What Is Plagiarism?](#)
  - 2a. [Detecting Plagiarism](#)
  - 2b. [Consequences of Detected Plagiarism](#)
  - 2c. [Scanning Prior to Submission](#)
3. [Methods for Avoiding Plagiarism](#)
  - 3a. [Summarizing, Paraphrasing, and Quoting](#)
  - 3b. [In-Text and Reference Page Citations](#)
4. [APA Citation Resources](#)

## 1. Sophia Student Honor Code

As stated in the Student Guide, students taking a Sophia course must abide by the following Student Honor Code:

- Each individual is permitted to register only one account. Maintaining multiple accounts is considered a violation of this Honor Code.
- You will agree to abide by the [Academic Integrity Policy as outlined here](#). Sophia Learning reserves the right to update the Academic Integrity Policy at any time.
- You will agree to abide by the [Sophia Code of Conduct as outlined here](#) in all your interactions with Sophia Learning, staff of Sophia Learning, and Sophia Learning social media accounts. Sophia Learning reserves the right to update the Code of Conduct at any time.

- You will not engage in any other activities that are not outlined in the above policies that could dishonestly improve your results, improve or hinder the results of others or their experience at Sophia Learning, or bring Sophia Learning, students and staff of Sophia Learning, or Sophia Learning's partner universities into disrepute.

As outlined in the Academic Integrity Policy and the Sophia Code of Conduct, failure to comply with the Sophia Honor Code could result in removal from the course, removal of courses from your transcript, and/or disqualification to enroll in future courses. Full policies and procedures can be found in the attached documents.

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## 2. What Is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is the act of presenting someone else's ideas or writing as your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally.

Even if you don't intend to plagiarize, this behavior is considered unethical, and sometimes even illegal. Unintentional plagiarism occurs when a writer fails to give credit to a source, while intentional plagiarism involves the deliberate use of another's ideas under the guise of original work.

### 2a. Detecting Plagiarism

Plagiarism is most often detected from intentional or unintentional presentation of ideas and writing without proper citation from outside sources such as homework websites, previous learner submissions, or any online content.

All Sophia Touchstones are scanned upon submission through a detection integration built directly into the grading interface. Graders are trained to interpret these results based on the instructions and type of Touchstone. This includes identical matches, matches with minor changes, paraphrased matches, and Artificial Intelligence alerts.

Recycled work, or essays written and graded for previous courses, are also considered a form of plagiarism for Sophia courses and will not be acceptable for grading.

### 2b. Consequences of Detected Plagiarism

In all academic settings, plagiarism of any kind has consequences. In this course, detected plagiarism will result in the Touchstone being placed in a Plagiarism Detected state with an explanation from the grader describing the type of plagiarism presented. Learners will then have a single opportunity to resubmit.

Additional attempts at plagiarism will be addressed through escalation to the Student Affairs Team as per the [Academic Integrity Policy outlined here](#). The Student Affairs Team may issue sanctions consistent with that policy if plagiarism is detected.

### 2c. Scanning Prior to Submission

Scanning your own work through a plagiarism detection application or website before submitting your Touchstone may result in a high percentage of detected plagiarism. If you choose to scan your Touchstone through any plagiarism detector before submitting, it is recommended that you include your name, date, and Sophia course information to confirm your identity and the course assignment to rule out intentional or unintentional plagiarism concerns.

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## 3. Methods for Avoiding Plagiarism

When presenting others' ideas in the context of your writing, there are a few key ways to appropriately indicate where the ideas came from:

- Summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting
- In-text and reference page citations

### 3a. Summarizing, Paraphrasing, and Quoting

Summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting are three different ways to incorporate evidence from other sources into an essay or presentation.

Summarizing means giving a brief overview of the main points or ideas of a piece of writing without relying on specific details or language. This would involve writing something very general about a whole piece of text; by summarizing, you're giving an overview of the whole piece without using any details or specifics.

Paraphrasing means restating a passage in your own words, keeping the author's original intent and meaning. This would involve rewriting something that another piece of writing has already said using different words entirely, usually to increase clarity. Paraphrases are therefore only of specific lines or sentences, and they must keep the author's original meaning intact.

Quoting is repeating the exact words from a piece of writing, with quotation marks surrounding the repeated words. Using quotation marks is essential to make it clear to the reader which words are yours and which come from somewhere else. When quoting, you can also use signal phrases to indicate that you are introducing ideas from another source. A signal phrase is a phrase preceding a quotation that identifies the author of the referenced text.

Whether you are summarizing, paraphrasing, or quoting, please remember to always cite any information that comes from an outside source and that is not considered common knowledge.

### 3b. In-Text and Reference Page Citations

An in-text citation is an important way to credit a source that is referenced through summarizing, paraphrasing, or quoting. It is called an in-text citation because it appears within the text of the essay, not in footnotes or on a reference page. A parenthetical reference is the bibliographic information that is contained within parentheses at the end of an in-text citation.

According to APA guidelines, in-text citations must include the following information:

- The author's last name
- The year when the source was published
- The page or paragraph number where the quoted or paraphrased material is located

Note that page numbers are the default location method, but paragraph numbers can be used for online sources (and other sources that don't have pages). The APA guidelines require the author's last name and the source publication year to prevent confusion when multiple sources from the same author are used. Requiring both the last name and publication year clearly indicates from which of the author's sources the quotation or paraphrase comes. If you use a signal phrase that makes note of the author prior to the quotation, include a parenthetical reference to the source's publication year following the author's name. Following the quotation, include another parenthetical reference with the page from which the quotation was taken.

APA formatting also requires the use of a reference page at the end of an essay to log the sources used. It is a list of all bibliographic data, properly formatted, for all sources cited in the essay. Sources that were consulted but not cited or used directly should not be listed on the reference page. It's important to document sources correctly, so that every in-text citation correlates to its source listed on the reference page. It should not be difficult for readers to match one to the other.

These are the basic formatting requirements for an APA-style reference page:

- The word "References" must appear at the top of the page, capitalized and centered.
- The second and subsequent lines of each reference entry must be indented one half-inch. This is called a "hanging indent." Most word processing programs (e.g., Microsoft Word) enable you to specify a hanging indent for selected text. This option can usually be applied through the paragraph- or text-formatting area.
- The author's name must be listed by last name and first initial. Author names must be listed in alphabetical order, according to the last name of the first author of each source.
- Multiple sources by the same author must be organized by date of publication, from oldest to newest.
- Titles of shorter works (e.g., essays, stories, webpages) should not be enclosed by quotation marks, italicized, or underlined. However, be sure to include the page span of essays and articles.
- Include the URLs of online sources.

Again, these are just the basic rules. More specific guidelines govern the formatting of sources with multiple authors, an anonymous author, etc. Because specific rules apply in specific situations, look up how to correctly format a source when you are unsure how to do so.

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## 4. APA Citation Resources

The following resources may be helpful to you as you work on your Touchstone assignment. These resources can also be found in the "Additional Resources" section of the Touchstone assignment page:

### 1. [Purdue Online Writing Lab's APA Formatting and Style Guide](#)

This site includes a comprehensive overview of APA style, as well as individual pages with guidelines for

specific citation types.

## 2. [Frequently Asked Questions About APA Style](#)

This page on the official APA website addresses common questions related to APA formatting. The "References," "Punctuation," and "Grammar and Writing Style" sections will be the most useful to your work in this course.

## 3. [APA Style: Quick Answers—References](#)

This page on the official APA Style website provides numerous examples of reference list formatting for various source types.

## 4. [Appropriate Level of Citation](#)

This page offers guidance on how to effectively avoid over or under citation.