

Avert Inadvertent Plagiarism

"Because so many resources are now online, much of your note-taking will take place online using cut and paste techniques. It is important to be selective in what you choose to retain in your collection of notes. It is all too easy to become inundated with hundreds of pages of notes," says Leslie Stebbins in the *Student Guide to Research in the Digital Age: How to Locate and Evaluate Information Sources* (Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2006), 154.

In the chapter "[Citing Sources, Avoiding Plagiarism, and Organizing References](#)" she suggests "cutting and pasting and then weeding out what is not important or select(ing) only specific paragraphs to cut and paste from what you have read."

According to Stebbins, "Whatever system you devise, the following tactics should be employed:"

- As you cut and paste information from a source, *always* copy the full citation – author, title, date, and publishing information – at the same time. If citing a web page, note the date that you viewed the page. Though time-consuming, this process will save you an enormous amount of time at the end stage of your research.
- Either put all your notes in a separate Word document or change the font color of any text that is not your own so that you will not mix up your own words with (those) of another author when you are writing your paper.
- Use bold or brackets to indicate any comments or paraphrases that are in your own words rather than (those) of the source document. It is useful to try to summarize or put into your own words the gist of the content you may end up using in your research. This helps you digest or integrate the information into your own internal knowledge bank and will be helpful to use later when you incorporate ideas into your research paper.
- Incorporate any handwritten notes into your electronic collection of notes.