

Plagiarism Quiz – MLA Style

Plagiarism is the undocumented use in your work of someone else’s ideas and words. These can be plagiarized from books, magazines, recordings, speeches, newspapers, etc. Whether intentional or accidental, plagiarism is a problem because the reader cannot distinguish between original and referenced material. Chapter 32 in the QA Compact¹ defines plagiarism further and gives you tips for avoiding it. Common knowledge is not considered plagiarism. Basically, common knowledge covers “information that most educated people would know, although they might need to remind themselves of certain facts by checking information in a reference book” (Troyka and Hesse 374). Information that is widely known and easy to verify and look-up can also be common knowledge. An example of common knowledge would be information found in a standard reference book, such as a dictionary. However, since the standards for judging something common knowledge are not well-defined, the best practice is to consult your instructor.

In the Humanities, we use the Modern Language Association of America (MLA) style of documentation to credit words or ideas of other people we incorporate into our work. Documentation requires two components: parenthetical documentation and a works cited page. You will find details of these two components in chapter 33 of your writing handbook (pp. 389-429). An example of parenthetical documentation is in the second paragraph on this handout. After quoting the definition of common knowledge, I put the author’s name and the page number where the quotation came from in parentheses. At the end of this page, you will find an example of the second component, the works cited page, which lists the sources I refer to in this handout.

We incorporate outside sources into our papers by quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing. Your handbook covers quotations on pp. 296-304; 394-396. You will need to pay close attention to the format and rules concerning short, long, and indirect source quotations. Chapters 32 and 33 in our handbook discuss all three ways of incorporating sources. You will need to know the differences between them in order to answer the questions on this quiz. Correct documentation requires attention to details. Please take your time to read each question thoroughly.

Questions refer to the following excerpt from F. Richard Ciccone’s book Royko: A Life in Print, about legendary Chicago newspaper columnist Mike Royko:

Royko was able to convey for his generation the importance of being a fan, and being a fan of the most inept sports franchise of the century was something that only Chicagoans understood until Royko spread the mantra of Cub heartbreak all over America. Royko was in a great way responsible for the national popularity of a team that was the exact opposite of the Yankees, Cowboys, and Canadiens, dynasties built on success. The Cubs were the lovable losers. Their owners made them losers; Royko made them lovable. (351)

Works Cited

Ciccone, F. Richard. Royko: A Life in Print. New York: Public Affairs, 2001.

Troyka, Lynn Quitman, and Douglas Hesse. QA Compact. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2007.

¹ This is the writing handbook used in SSC’s ENG 1113 and 1213 classes. You can also find information online at http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/p04_c08_o.html and <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/>

1. **“Royko was a huge Cubs fan responsible for the national popularity of a team that was the exact opposite of many sports dynasties built on success.”**

If this quote appeared in an essay without mentioning Ciccone or the book, the result is

- a. Long/block quotation.
- b. Short quotation.
- c. Summary.
- d. Plagiarism.

2. **Royko was a huge Cubs fan responsible for the national popularity of a team that was the exact opposite of many sports dynasties built on success.**

If this sentence appears in an essay without mentioning Ciccone or the book, the result is

- a. Plagiarism.
- b. Short quotation.
- c. Summary.
- d. Long/block quotation.

3. **Mike Royko, a Chicago Cub fan, was central in showing America how a losing team can still inspire affection.**

If this sentence appears in an essay and cites Ciccone on the works cited page, the result is

- a. Short quotation.
- b. Long/block quotation.
- c. Plagiarism.
- d. Summary.

4. The Chicago Cubs is one of the oldest baseball teams in history and popular all over the world, even with its well-known reputation of losing. If a student mentions the team, and uses the popular phrase **lovable losers**, the result is:

- a. Plagiarism, using words or ideas without crediting the source.
- b. Plagiarism, unless the instructor has read Ciccone’s book.
- c. Plagiarism, unless the reader is a Cubs fan.
- d. Proper use of common knowledge, acceptable and appropriate.

5. **Richard Ciccone says that “Royko turned the Cubs into losers that fans could love” (351).**

If the quotation appears in a paper that also includes a works cited page that lists Ciccone’s book, the result is

- a. Long/block quotation.
- b. Improper use of quotation marks, saying the student’s words are Ciccone’s.
- c. Short quotation.
- d. Summary.

6. **Richard Ciccone credits Mike Royko with introducing the Cubs to a larger audience:**

[B]eing a fan of the most inept sports franchise of the century was something that only Chicagoans understood until Royko spread the mantra of Cub heartbreak all over America. Royko was in a great way responsible for the national popularity of a team that was the exact opposite of the Yankees, Cowboys, and Canadiens, dynasties built on success. The Cubs were the lovable losers. Their owners made them losers; Royko made them lovable. (351)

If the information above appears in an essay and includes a complete works cited page, the result is

- a. Indirect Source quotation.
- b. Short quotation.
- c. Incomplete MLA documentation, a technical form of plagiarism.
- d. Long/block quotation.

7. **Richard Ciccone says that Royko turned the Cubs into losers that fans could love (351).**

If the sentence appears in a paper that also includes a works cited page that lists Ciccone's book, the result is

- a. Summary.
- b. Short quotation.
- c. Improper use of quotation marks, saying the student's words are Ciccone's.
- d. Long/block quotation.

8. **"Royko was able to convey for his generation the importance of being a fan" (Ciccone 351).**

If the quotation appears in an essay that includes a complete works cited page, the result is

- a. Incomplete MLA documentation, a technical form of plagiarism.
- b. Long/block quotation.
- c. Short quotation.
- d. Improper use of quotation marks, saying the student's words are Ciccone's.

9. **"Royko was able to convey for his generation the importance of being a fan" (Ciccone 351).**

If the quotation appears in an essay that does not include a works cited page, the result is

- a. Improper use of quotation marks, saying the student's words are Ciccone's.
- b. Short quotation.
- c. Incomplete MLA documentation, a technical form of plagiarism.
- d. Long/block quotation.

10. **"Royko was able to convey for his generation the importance of being a fan."**

If the quotation appears in an essay that includes a complete works cited page but no mention of Ciccone in the essay text itself, the result is

- a. Short quotation.
- b. Incomplete MLA documentation, a technical form of plagiarism.
- c. Long/block quotation.
- d. Improper use of quotation marks, saying the student's words are Ciccone's.