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The purpose of this presentation is to provide a case study illustrating good and bad academic practice in the preparation of written scientific papers, dissertations and theses.
Teaching Aims
Teaching Aims

• To provide a case study highlighting some specific common errors that students make when preparing written materials such as a paper, a dissertation and a thesis.

• To underline the importance of avoiding plagiarism when preparing written materials.
Key Points

This case study will focus on the following key areas:

- Planning
- Document layout
- Contents of sections
- Referencing
- Plagiarism
Key Points

- Further information and detailed tuition on the preparation of papers, dissertations and theses can be found on the Engage in Research website; www.engageinresearch.ac.uk

- Alternatively, study guides are available on the University of Reading website (or your own institution website). www.reading.ac.uk/internal/studyadvice/sta-home.aspx
## Good & Bad

Good and bad practice will be indicated in the examples by a traffic-light system:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traffic Light</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="traffic-red.png" alt="Red Light" /></td>
<td>Bad academic practice either through deliberate action or lack of understanding of correct procedures (e.g. plagiarism).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="traffic-red.png" alt="Red Light" /></td>
<td>Poor academic practice with one feature corrected (for example correct use of reference but still copying whole paragraphs of text).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="traffic-green.png" alt="Green Light" /></td>
<td>Average academic practice (e.g. using reference correctly but heavy use of quotes).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="traffic-yellow.png" alt="Yellow Light" /></td>
<td>Fair academic practice (e.g. using reference correctly but still paraphrasing).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="traffic-green.png" alt="Green Light" /></td>
<td>Good academic practice (e.g. correct referencing and text completely original, only quoting where necessary).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why do it?

- You might ask why it is important to follow good academic practice when preparing a paper, dissertation or thesis?
- There are several reasons why good academic practice is useful.
Good Practice

• **Standardised systems:**
  Scientific papers and other documents are written according to standardised systems to make them easier to read and to reference.

• **Demonstration of understanding:**
  Following good academic practice allows the reader to see that you have understood the subject and have put effort behind the document’s presentation.

• **Original effort:**
  In an academic situation it is vital that you demonstrate that the work is your own and that you have credited other people where necessary.
Bad Practice

• **No standardised systems:**
  Scientific papers and other documents are written in different formats and styles making them very difficult to mark, catalogue and cross reference.

• **No demonstration of understanding:**
  Poor academic practice can imply that the student does not fundamentally understand the subject if they have not discussed it in their own words.

• **No original effort:**
  Copying other people’s work is unethical and against university policy. Marks are only given where original effort is evident in the quality of the work.
The Penalty

- For a paper if you do not follow good academic practice it will simply be rejected and your efforts will have been wasted.

- In an academic environment you will be marked down for poor practice and failed if it is demonstrated that you have copied other people’s work.
Case Study

• In the following case studies we will explore examples from simple pieces of scientific writing that will reference real scientific papers.

• The case studies will illustrate both bad and good academic practice to show some of the common errors that students make.
Case Study

• Imagine that you have been asked to prepare a short report on the subject of:

  ‘The use of pigs in developmental study models.’

• The following slides show the abstracts of three papers that will be used to illustrate this case study (Note: all copyright acknowledged).
The relationship between growth performance, feed intake, endocrine profile and carcass quality of different maternal and paternal lines of pigs

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Received 24 February 2010; received in revised form 3 December 2010; accepted 15 December 2010

Abstract
This study aimed to improve our understanding of the relationship between growth performance, feed intake, endocrine profile and carcass quality of different maternal and paternal lines of pigs. Two hundred pigs, either Cornwall ME (63% Malton, 12.5% Large White, 12.5% Landrace) and the paternal line, or Cornwall Large White and the maternal line, were assigned to four groups: low (L) and high (H) feed intake and low (L) and high (H) carcass quality. Body weight and longissimus dorsi depth were assessed at 20 weeks of age. At 24 weeks of age, pigs were slaughtered and carcass quality was assessed. Results showed that pigs from the high feed intake group had higher body weights and greater longissimus dorsi depth than pigs from the low feed intake group. Carcass quality was significantly higher in pigs from the high feed intake group than in pigs from the low feed intake group. The relationship between growth performance, feed intake, endocrine profile and carcass quality was complex and influenced by the interaction between maternal and paternal lines. Further studies are needed to improve our understanding of the relationship between growth performance, feed intake, endocrine profile and carcass quality.

The Influence of Piglet Birth Weight on Physical and Behavioural Development in Early Life

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Received 24 September 2008; revised 23 December 2009; accepted 21 February 2010

Abstract
The objective of this study was to determine whether piglet birth weight (BW) influences physical and behavioural development. Piglets were divided into two groups based on BW: (1) low BW (60% of BW) and (2) normal BW (60% of BW). At 7, 14 and 21 days of age, piglets were subjected to a 24-hour period of restraint, and their body weight and body length were measured. Results showed that piglets with lower BW had lower body weight and body length at 7, 14 and 21 days of age. The relationship between BW and physical and behavioural development was complex and influenced by the interaction between BW and age. Piglets with lower BW had lower body weight and body length at 7, 14 and 21 days of age. The relationship between BW and physical and behavioural development was complex and influenced by the interaction between BW and age.
Planning

• The first BIG mistake that a lot of students make is to leave things to the last minute & simply go out partying.

• It is only when it is too late that they realise just what is required in the preparation of the piece of work.

• With too little time left, the quality of the work suffers and the temptation to cut corners becomes great.
Planning

• The trick is to plan the work as soon as you receive it.

• By understanding what is involved you can allot the appropriate time to complete the work and ensure that its quality reflects your abilities.

• Careful planning also allows time for checking the work but also means you know when you can fit in recreation.
Planning

- Remember, for any piece of work you will probably need to do some or all of the following:
  - Planning of work
  - Literature review / research
  - Experimental work / data collection
  - Write-up
  - Checking for errors

- If you are uncertain as to how much time a piece of work will take, start it as soon as possible. You will always be given more than adequate time!
Document Layout

- A good indicator of bad academic practice is often obvious by the layout of a document.
- When preparing any form of written work you will often be given specific guidelines on font (type and size), paragraph layout, line spacing and the formatting of headings and sub-headings.
- If no such guidance is given then you should select a reasonable layout and stick to it throughout the document.
Cut and Paste

- Cutting and pasting of text from another source, for example a website, is a clear indicator of bad academic practice.

- Students often leave such sections unformatted so that they are obvious as they differ from the surrounding text.

- Cut and paste text will often raise the alert that the section has been plagiarised.
Cut and Paste

• In the following mock report, a section of text has been cut and paste from an internet site to illustrate the effect it has on the rest of the document.

• There will then follow a correctly-formatted version of the document to show the difference. Note, while this is correctly formatted the report is still incorrect in that it does not at this time reference the paper.
Example 1
Cut and Paste
Cut and Paste

• In this version there are no spaces between lines and the text is aligned to the left of the page.
• Note where the font and size suddenly changes indicating where the cut and paste text starts:

**The Use of Pigs in Developmental Study Models.**

**Introduction:**

Pigs are used in a number of scientific models. Domestic pigs and minipigs are the main categories of pigs used as biomedical models. One drawback of minipigs is that they are in short supply and expensive compared with domestic pigs, which in contrast cost more to house, feed and medicate. Different porcine breeds show different responses to the induction of specific diseases. For example, ossabaw minipigs provide a better model than Yucatan for the metabolic syndrome as they exhibit obesity, insulin resistance and hypertension, all of which are absent in the Yucatan. Similar metabolic/physiological differences exist between domestic breeds (e.g. Meishan v. Pietrain). The modern commercial (e.g. Large White) domestic pig has been the preferred model for developmental programming due to the 2- to 3-fold variation in body weight among littermates providing a natural form of foetal growth retardation not observed in ancient (e.g. Meishan) domestic breeds.
Correct Formatting

- Correctly formatted text has spaces between lines and is justified with the same font and size throughout.

- Note: this version is still not academically correct as it does not credit the paper’s authors.

The Use of Pigs in Developmental Study Models.

Introduction:

Pigs are used in a number of scientific models. Domestic pigs and minipigs are the main categories of pigs used as biomedical models. One drawback of minipigs is that they are in short supply and expensive compared with domestic pigs, which in contrast cost more to house, feed and medicate. Different porcine breeds show different responses to the induction of specific diseases. For example, ossabaw minipigs provide a better model than Yucatan for the metabolic syndrome as they exhibit obesity, insulin resistance and hypertension, all of which are absent in the Yucatan. Similar metabolic/physiological differences exist between domestic breeds (e.g. Meishan v. Pietrain). The modern commercial (e.g. Large White) domestic pig has been the preferred model for developmental programming due to the 2- to 3-fold variation in body weight among littermates providing a natural form of foetal growth retardation not observed in ancient (e.g. Meishan) domestic breeds.
Almost all scientific writing will be performed on a computer so there is no excuse for not ensuring that the document has:

- The correct font (type and size)
- The correct title, headings and sub-headings
- The text broken into paragraphs for easy reading
- Paragraphs and margins indented correctly
- Line spacing in the correct format
- Basic spelling and grammar corrected (the computer will do this for you so not correcting spelling will indicate the work was done in haste and not checked).

Remember, you will be marked on layout so these are easy marks to gain (or lose!).
Another common mistake that students make is putting the wrong information in the wrong section of a piece of work.

While different types of writing will have different sections, we will for the purpose of this discussion focus on some key areas which will be shown on the following slide.
Key Sections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abstract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction / literature review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials and methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We will now discuss these in turn.
Abstract

• This is most common when writing a scientific paper or report.

• The abstract is a short statement of the method, results and conclusions of the work and is always written:
  – In the past tense
  – In the third person

• Different papers will allow for different lengths of abstracts and may also ask for keywords to aid searching.
Introduction

• The introduction usually contains a literature review and is designed to set the scene & give the background to the research or the topic being discussed.

• Relevant sources are discussed in a way that builds up a clear picture with enough information to underline the purpose of the rest of the text.

• In the introduction, the study to be undertaken and the hypothesis to be tested are discussed.
Materials & Methods

• In this section, you should write in the third person and past tense and describe in as precise terms as possible (i.e. so someone else could replicate the work) exactly what was done, including:
  
  – Apparatus, equipment & reagents used.
  – Sample area selection & information.
  – Sample size, number, method of sampling.
  – Timings of sample and any other controls.
  – Describe the statistical methods you will use to analyse the results.
Results

- The results section should only contain results in the form of data with statistical calculations to generate p-values, no discussion.
- This section should include a summary of the results and statistics in a paragraph which directs the reader to the correct tables of data.
- Usually, the results will be in tabulated or graphical form but in the case of large amounts of data then sometimes the summary of the data is included and the raw data attached as an appendix (or not at all).
Discussion

• The discussion section is where the results are interpreted and linked to previously published work (e.g. ‘compared to x..’ or ‘in agreement with y..’).

• Normally, when setting up an experiment, a hypothesis will be generated as to the anticipated result and in the discussion this hypothesis will be tested using the statistical analysis.
Conclusions

• The conclusions will summarise the data and the results, drawing the conclusions as to whether the original hypothesis was rejected or accepted.

• It is often the case that the conclusions will suggest further work and this will be discussed here as well.

• The conclusions should be brief i.e. only a paragraph or two.
Acknowledgements

It is important to acknowledge any contribution to the work made by other people. In this section they should be listed and their contribution recognised, whether it was financial, physical (helping with the fieldwork) or mental (assisting with the statistics, for example).
References

References usually appear at the end of the document and more will be said about referencing in the following slides.
Referencing

• There is no single universal system of referencing used so you will need to check to see which system your own institution uses.

• Two common systems used are:
  • The Number system
  • The Harvard system

• While we will look briefly at the number system the example will focus on the Harvard system.
Number System

- References are organised numerically in the order they are referenced in the text.
- Alternatively, they are listed in the references in alphabetical order and then assigned a number which is reflected in the text.
- In the text, the reference is given by a number only.
- The following slide shows an example:
There are a number of porcine models that have been used for the study of the metabolic syndrome (1). More specifically, there has been shown that piglet development and meat quality can be correlated to birth weight (2) and maternal and paternal lines (3).

References:
Harvard System

- References are organised alphabetically using the author’s name.
- In the text, the reference is given by the author and year of publication.
- For multiple authors you should check your local guidelines but for 1-3 authors they are normally all listed but >3 you would say ‘Author 1 et al.’
- The following slide shows an example:
There are a number of porcine models that have been used for the study of the metabolic syndrome (Litten-Brown, Corson & Clarke, 2010). More specifically, there has been shown that piglet development and meat quality can be correlated to birth weight (Litten et al., 2003a) and maternal and paternal lines (Litten et al., 2003b).

References:
Harvard System

• If more than one reference is given for a particular fact, in the text they are ordered chronologically.

• Different conventions apply when referencing such things as:
  • Book chapters / pages
  • Websites
  • Newspaper articles
  • Personal communications
  • Dissertations / theses
Example

- In the following slides example text will be used to illustrate the correct use of referencing and also to point out some common mistakes:
  - Not differentiating multiple papers from the same year
  - Incorrect use of number of authors in text
  - Referencing a paper referenced in another
  - Missing information
  - Referencing websites

- This is by no means an exhaustive list but careful following of study guides should avoid errors.
Example 2
Referencing
There are a number of porcine models that have been used for the study of the metabolic syndrome (Litten-Brown, Corson & Clarke, 2010). More specifically, it has been shown that piglet development and meat quality can be correlated to birth weight (Litten et al., 2003a) and maternal and paternal lines (Litten et al., 2003b).

References:


Common Mistakes

1. Not differentiating multiple papers from the same year – you cannot tell from the text which paper refers to which piece of information:

More specifically, it has been shown that piglet development and meat quality can be correlated to birth weight (Litten et al, 2003) and maternal and paternal lines (Litten et al, 2003).

References:


2. Incorrect use of number of authors in text:

More specifically, it has been shown that piglet development and meat quality can be correlated to birth weight (Litten, J.C., Drury, P.C., Corson, A.M., Lean, I.M. & Clarke, L., 2003a) and maternal and paternal lines (Litten J.C., Corson, A.M., Hall, A.D. & Clarke, L., 2003b).

References:


Too many names used and should not include initials!

References are correct!
3. Referencing a paper referenced in another:

It is becoming increasingly apparent that pigs are a valuable translational model to bridge the gap between classical rodent models and humans in developing new therapies to aid human health (Schnieke and Wolf, 2008).

References:

You should always reference a primary source where possible unless it is a paper in a book or other larger publication. In this case, the original Schnieke & Wolf paper should have been referenced directly as this makes it clear you have not actually read it & understood what it is really saying.
4. Missing information:

It is becoming increasingly apparent that pigs are a valuable translational model to bridge the gap between classical rodent models and humans in developing new therapies to aid human health (Schnieke and Wolf, date unknown).

If you reference a primary source you should always have the correct author, publication year, title and publisher information. If you are unable to provide parts of the information it will most likely indicate that you have not actually read the primary source but found it as a secondary reference in another paper.

Missing information commonly occurs when referencing websites.
5. Referencing websites:

It is becoming increasingly apparent that pigs are a valuable translational model to bridge the gap between classical rodent models and humans in developing new therapies to aid human health (www.esf.org, date unknown).

If you reference a website you must include as much information as possible. If there is no author then quote the website. The page will usually have a title but at the very least you should include the FULL URL and the date on which you accessed it. For example the reference above would be in the text (Schnieke & Wolf, 2008) and in the references:

Referencing

- Remember, the reason for correct referencing is so that anyone else reading your work can find the sources which you reference and read the referenced work for themselves.

- It is good practice in research where future development builds on the work you have done or references your results.
Plagiarism

• What is plagiarism?

• It is not simply the act of copying or borrowing someone else’s work. It is far more serious than that.

• Plagiarism is an act of fraud as not only are you stealing someone else’s work you are passing it off as your own.
Plagiarism

- A definition of the word to plagiarize is: [www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com)

- ‘to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own : use (another's production) without crediting the source’
Plagiarism

There are two forms of plagiarism:

- **Intentional**
  This is where, as mentioned in the previous slide, the student had deliberately copied a piece of work without crediting the original author.

- **Unintentional**
  This can happen where the student either forgets or does not know how to reference a piece of work correctly. This underlines the need to reference sources of information carefully! This is regarded as bad academic practice and the penalties are usually not as severe as for intentional plagiarism.
Plagiarism

• How will plagiarism be found out?

• All submitted work is checked using electronic methods such as those offered by ‘Turnitin’, a system that can check your work against hundreds of millions of websites, published works and past student coursework.

• Tutors get a report highlighting the sections suspected of being copied and will make their own judgement on the result.
Plagiarism

If you engage in plagiarism, you WILL be caught!
Example 3
Plagiarism
Example Text

Let’s take the section of text used in the cut and paste example.

The Use of Pigs in Developmental Study Models.

Introduction:

Pigs are used in a number of scientific models. Domestic pigs and minipigs are the main categories of pigs used as biomedical models. One drawback of minipigs is that they are in short supply and expensive compared with domestic pigs, which in contrast cost more to house, feed and medicate. Different porcine breeds show different responses to the induction of specific diseases. For example, ossabaw minipigs provide a better model than Yucatan for the metabolic syndrome as they exhibit obesity, insulin resistance and hypertension, all of which are absent in the Yucatan. Similar metabolic/physiological differences exist between domestic breeds (e.g. Meishan v. Pietrain). The modern commercial (e.g. Large White) domestic pig has been the preferred model for developmental programming due to the 2- to 3-fold variation in body weight among littermates providing a natural form of foetal growth retardation not observed in ancient (e.g. Meishan) domestic breeds.
This is a clear example of plagiarism – the text in the purple box has been directly copied from another source but not credited.

The Use of Pigs in Developmental Study Models.

Introduction:

Pigs are used in a number of scientific models. Domestic pigs and minipigs are the main categories of pigs used as biomedical models. One drawback of minipigs is that they are in short supply and expensive compared with domestic pigs, which in contrast cost more to house, feed and medicate. Different porcine breeds show different responses to the induction of specific diseases. For example, ossabaw minipigs provide a better model than Yucatan for the metabolic syndrome as they exhibit obesity, insulin resistance and hypertension, all of which are absent in the Yucatan. Similar metabolic/physiological differences exist between domestic breeds (e.g. Meishan v. Pietrain). The modern commercial (e.g. Large White) domestic pig has been the preferred model for developmental programming due to the 2- to 3-fold variation in body weight among littermates providing a natural form of foetal growth retardation not observed in ancient (e.g. Meishan) domestic breeds.
You should reference the work but it is still bad academic practice to simply copy large chunks of other works in this way.

**The Use of Pigs in Developmental Study Models.**

**Introduction:**

Pigs are used in a number of scientific models. Domestic pigs and minipigs are the main categories of pigs used as biomedical models. One drawback of minipigs is that they are in short supply and expensive compared with domestic pigs, which in contrast cost more to house, feed and medicate. Different porcine breeds show different responses to the induction of specific diseases. For example, osslaw minipigs provide a better model than Yucatan for the metabolic syndrome as they exhibit obesity, insulin resistance and hypertension, all of which are absent in the Yucatan. Similar metabolic/physiological differences exist between domestic breeds (e.g. Meishan v. Pietrain). The modern commercial (e.g. Large White) domestic pig has been the preferred model for developmental programming due to the 2- to 3-fold variation in body weight among littermates providing a natural form of foetal growth retardation not observed in ancient (e.g. Meishan) domestic breeds (Litten-Brown et al., 2010).
In this version the whole text is clearly credited to the author but it is still lazy and bad practice to quote so heavily and indeed it indicates lack of understanding.

The Use of Pigs in Developmental Study Models.

Introduction:

Pigs are used in a number of scientific models. According to Litten-Brown et al., (2010), “Domestic pigs and minipigs are the main categories of pigs used as biomedical models. One drawback of minipigs is that they are in short supply and expensive compared with domestic pigs, which in contrast cost more to house, feed and medicate. Different porcine breeds show different responses to the induction of specific diseases. For example, ossabaw minipigs provide a better model than Yucatan for the metabolic syndrome as they exhibit obesity, insulin resistance and hypertension, all of which are absent in the Yucatan. Similar metabolic/physiological differences exist between domestic breeds (e.g. Meishan vs. Pietrain). The modern commercial (e.g. Large White) domestic pig has been the preferred model for developmental programming due to the 2- to 3-fold variation in body weight among littermates providing a natural form of foetal growth retardation not observed in ancient (e.g. Meishan) domestic breeds.”
In this version the text is correctly referenced but has been re-thought and re-worded by the author and thus not simply copied word for word.

While the information in the referenced paper has been used, the text is now original.

The Use of Pigs in Developmental Study Models.

Introduction:

Pigs are used in a number of scientific models. Litten-Brown et al. (2010) discuss the fact that the most common categories of pigs to be used in scientific models are domestic pigs and minipigs. They go on to outline some of the main benefits and drawbacks of both breeds. For example, the supply of minipigs is low and they are comparatively more expensive than domestic pigs. Other breeds such as Meishan, Pietrain, Yukatan and Ossabaw minipigs have all been used in various models but as a result of their low cost, metabolic and physiological suitability and the natural form of foetal growth retardation provided by the 2-3 fold variation in bodyweight seen in littermates, the modern commercial domestic pig, such as the Large White is the preferred breed to be used.
Example 4
Plagiarism
In this example we will explore further the subtle differences between using different levels of quotes from the following section of text.

‘There is no convincing reason to suppose that the remains buried in the Folly Lane enclosure were not that of one, adult, individual; in view of the nature of the pyre goods this was probably a man.’

Unlike the ‘family’ burial enclosures at King Harry Lane, there is no convincing reason to suppose that the remains buried in the Folly Lane enclosure were not that of one adult individual, in view of the nature of the pyre goods this was probably a man. This difference suggests…
Unlike the ‘family’ burial enclosures at King Harry Lane, there is no clear reason to suppose that the remains buried in the Folly Lane enclosure were anything other than that of one adult individual, in view of the nature of the pyre goods the gender was probably a man. This difference suggests…
Family burial enclosures have been found at King Harry Lane. But at Folly Lane there is no convincing reason to suppose that the burial is of anything other than one individual. Probably a man in view of the nature of the pyre goods. This difference suggests...

Example 4

Unacceptable

‘There is no convincing reason to suppose that the remains buried in the Folly Lane enclosure were not that of one, adult, individual; in view of the nature of the pyre goods this was probably a man.’

Best not to use even relatively short phrases without marking them as quotations
Unlike the ‘family’ burial enclosures at King Harry Lane, there is no clear reason to suppose that the remains buried in the Folly Lane enclosure were anything other that that of one adult individual, in view of the nature of the pyre goods the gender was probably a male, in the view of Niblet. This difference suggests…

Example 4

Poor Practice

‘There is no convincing reason to suppose that the remains buried in the Folly Lane enclosure were not that of one, adult, individual; in view of the nature of the pyre goods this was probably a man.’

Mentioning the author’s name, but not marking quotations is still barely acceptable
Unlike the ‘family’ burial enclosures at King Harry Lane, there is no clear reason to suppose that the remains buried in the Folly Lane enclosure were anything other than that of one adult individual, in view of the nature of the pyre goods the gender was probably a male (Niblet 1999: 412).

This difference suggests…
Unlike the ‘family’ burial enclosures at King Harry Lane, ‘there is no convincing reason to suppose that the remains buried in the Folly Lane enclosure were not that of one adult individual; in view of the nature of the pyre goods this was probably a man’ (Niblet 1999: 412). This difference suggests...

Quotation clearly acknowledged and referenced. But use sparingly i.e., only where they succinctly sum up an argument, or are vital for the development of an argument. We are looking for your voice, your ideas, and your interpretations.
Unlike the ‘family’ burial enclosures at King Harry Lane (Stead & Rigby 1989), the burial at Folly Lane was probably that of a single male adult, or so the excavator argued from the pyre remains (Niblet 1999: 412). This difference suggests...

Paraphrasing other people’s ideas is better, it demonstrates you have read their ideas; your mind has worked through them and encapsulated them into words of your own.
Stead and Niblett came to very different interpretations of their own cemetery excavations at Verulamium. Stead’s excavation at King Harry Lane exemplified the group homogenizing aspect of burial of one tier of society, whereas Niblett’s Folly Lane enclosure evoked separate treatment and disposal of one individual male. Both argued this from the remains of the funerary pyre goods found buried with the cremated remains (Stead & Rigby 1989, Niblet 1999: 412).

An essay that just comprises paraphrasing of other people’s views can still result in a fairly derivative essay. The best practice overall is where you take other people’s ideas and you intermesh them, rather than sequentially paraphrasing them. This demonstrates your ability to think comparatively, to be able to directly compare and contrast the work of different academics, and to be able to vocalize your own point of view.

‘There is no convincing reason to suppose that the remains buried in the Folly Lane enclosure were not that of one, adult, individual; in view of the nature of the pyre goods this was probably a man.’

Example 4

Better Practice

‘There is no convincing reason to suppose that the remains buried in the Folly Lane enclosure were not that of one, adult, individual; in view of the nature of the pyre goods this was probably a man.’
### Plagiarism & Copying

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Copying or adapting text with no referencing</th>
<th>Copying or adapting text with incomplete or indirect referencing</th>
<th>Support your arguments by very careful selection of text - by using direct quotes or adapting text - with full referencing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plagiarism</td>
<td></td>
<td>Excellent academic work!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![X]</td>
<td></td>
<td>![✔️]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Very poor academic practice - low marks or failure]</td>
<td></td>
<td>![☆☆☆☆☆]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Plagiarism**: Copying or adapting text with no referencing.
- **Very poor academic practice – low marks or failure**: Copying or adapting text with incomplete or indirect referencing.
- **Excellent academic work!**: Support your arguments by very careful selection of text - by using direct quotes or adapting text - with full referencing.
The rule of thumb to avoid plagiarism is to remember:

1. If you use information from any other source – credit it properly by use of referencing.

2. While it can be appropriate to quote someone, if doing so the quote should be in speech marks and clearly indicated as a quote.

3. Unless quoting someone, even if referencing, never copy large blocks of text.

4. **IF IN DOUBT, ASK SOMEONE BEFORE SUBMITTING YOUR WORK!**
Summary

• Many students lose marks for written work due to simple mistakes such as poor formatting, bad planning, copying and laziness.

• The quality of your work and the mark you receive will directly reflect the effort you have put in.

• Your teachers and tutors are there to help you... USE THEM, they are there to help!