

PLAGIARISM EXERCISES

Plagiarism—the use of information, ideas, or visual material created by others without giving the original author(s) credit—is unacceptable in academic writing. However, recognizing plagiarism isn't always easy and takes a bit of practice. These exercises offer a chance to do just that!

Original Source

Entry for “Water Rights” in the *Encyclopedia of North American Indians*, by Williams, Gover, Stetson & Williams:

Because Indian reservations were established before most water uses began in the West, tribes often hold the oldest, and thus most valuable, water rights. In both the West and the East, Indians have occupied land since time immemorial and thus have strong ancient priority claims to water for tribal uses in these areas. The state and federal courts examine what water was reserved for use on the Indian reservations, how tribal water rights are quantified and used, and how these water rights are regulated and enforced. Because of the great value of federal Indian water rights in times of increasing water scarcity, Indian water rights are under attack in the courts and in political arenas. The core doctrines of Indian water law, however, will likely remain undisturbed.

Writing Examples

The following writing examples each use information from this encyclopedia entry. Which ones avoid plagiarism by applying the source correctly?

Example 1:

- *American Indian tribes often have the most valuable water rights because their reservations were established before many water uses started in the West.*

Example 2:

- *Federal and state courts have analyzed what water was reserved for use on reservations, how tribes' water rights are applied, and how these water rights are enforced (Williams, Gover, Stetson, & Williams, 1996).*

Example 3:

- *Although Indian water rights have been challenged, Williams, Gover, Stetson, & Williams (1996) state that the main aspects of the law in this area “will likely remain undisturbed.”*

Example 4:

A student wants to use an image in her paper and finds an image of Two Medicine River on the Bureau of Indian Affairs website. She adds the photo to her paper and writes:

- *The Bureau of Indian Affairs seeks to protect the water rights for rivers such as the Two Medicine River (Figure 1).*



Figure 1

Answers: (1) Incorrect! There is no citation whatsoever, and it appears that the author is taking full credit for these ideas which are not their own. (2) Incorrect. While there is a citation, the paraphrasing is poor; the author omits and distorts some of the meaning while also retaining phrases that are almost verbatim without using quotations. (3) Almost correct! The paraphrasing is both accurate and creatively unique, quotations are used properly, and the citation is present. However, no page number is given for the exact quotation, so the reader has no idea where to find it. (4) Incorrect! Neither the photographer nor the authors of the encyclopedia entry are credited.

Credit: Robert Cochran, Brandeis University Library, and Brandeis University Writing Center, 2020.

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