Rewrite to Avoid Plagiarism

1. Focus

Explain Rewriting to Avoid Plagiarism

Say: When I’m collecting information for a report, I gather it from different sources. I might use a library book, an encyclopedia, and Internet sites to get material for my writing. But when I use my research to write my draft, I don’t want to just copy the information from these sources. That’s called plagiarism, and it’s something like copying a test answer from another student’s paper. It’s considered cheating or even stealing. So we want to make sure that we put information from our sources into our own words. Today I’m going to show you how to take text from a source and make it your own.

Model Rewriting to Avoid Plagiarism

Display the sample texts on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Read aloud the first modeling text.

The fact that the colonists had left Great Britain in search of new opportunities and freedoms showed the independent spirit of these courageous settlers. This independent spirit, along with the sheer distance between the colonies and Great Britain, made it difficult for the British to control their subjects in America.

Modeling Text

Say: This is the original information that I found while researching my question about the causes of the American Revolution. This information tells me that the Americans felt very independent and didn’t want the government in England telling them what to do. I can’t copy this information when I write my report. But I can read it, think about it, and then put ideas from it into my own words.

Read aloud the second modeling text.

The colonists had left Great Britain searching for freedom and a new way of life. They now lived thousands of miles away. These people were brave enough to colonize a new world and were very independent. They resented being told what to do by a government they felt they no longer had ties to.

Modeling Text

Say: To write about this in my report, I thought about the main points from the research information and what these points were actually saying. Then I rewrote the information, creating the same underlying meaning, but using words of my own.
2. Rehearse

Practice Rewriting to Avoid Plagiarism

Display the practice text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

Moose suffering from heat stress spend less time eating and more time looking for shady places to cool off. As a result, they put on less fat and have a harder time surviving over the winter. Eating less food may also weaken their immune systems. As a result, they are more likely to have health problems or problems with predators.

Practice Text

Invite students to work with partners to rewrite the information in the practice text in a different way to avoid plagiarism.

Share and Discuss

Ask volunteers to read aloud their new drafts using the practice text information. Discuss whether the new text is different enough to avoid plagiarism.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We just learned how to use information from a source and say it in a different way so we don’t plagiarize. As you draft your informational report, remember to take the information you get from your research and make it your own.

During independent writing time, encourage students to focus on expressing their research information in their own words. Reinforce students’ use of this and other skills during conferences, using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

4. Share

Bring the class together. Discuss the challenges of transforming researched facts into original text. Invite one or more students to share examples of how they avoided stating information from their research in a plagiaristic way.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning and Intermediate

Beginning and intermediate ELs are not ready to work on this skill. While other students collaborate on the partner activity or write independently, meet one on one with students to support developmentally appropriate skills based on their independent writing and language level.

Advanced

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers for the practice activity.

All Levels

If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates: copy/copiar; information/la información.