HOW TO DOCUMENT YOUR SOURCES
AND AVOID PLAGIARISM

Original Passage from McEvedy (121):

“If the host animal dies, as it is likely to do, the flea moves to the next available live rodent. The disease spreads rapidly in this manner; as the number of live rats decreases, the fleas move to warm-blooded hosts on which they would not normally feed, such as human beings and their domesticated animals, and so an epidemic is launched.”

Each of the following is a plagiarism of the above passage, either by direct quotation or the use of the ideas without acknowledgement:

Example 1:
If the host animal dies, the flea moves to the next available live rodent. As more and more rats die, the fleas move to warm-blooded hosts on which they would not normally feed, such as human beings and their domesticated animals. Thus, an epidemic is launched.

Example 2:
If the host dies, the flea moves to the next available rodent. As more and more rats die, the fleas move to warm-blooded hosts on which they would not normally feed, such as human beings. Thus, an epidemic is launched.

Example 3:
If the host rat dies, the flea moves to another. As more and more rats die, the fleas hop to other, less preferable, warm-blooded hosts, such as humans and domesticated animals, and thus, the epidemic spreads.

Example 4:
If a lot of rats die from the disease, the fleas jump onto humans even though they are less preferable hosts. Thus the epidemic spreads.

Example 5:
The epidemic spreads to humans because as more and more rats die, the fleas seek out other warm-blooded, but less preferable, hosts, like humans.

Here’s how some of the examples above could be documented. Some ways of doing it are more elegant, and easier for the reader to read, than others. If a string of more than three or four words in a row is directly quoted, put quotation marks around the words and acknowledge the source. If only the idea is used but not a direct quotation, just acknowledge the source. In general, in a research paper, it is better to paraphrase the source rather than quote it, unless the source says something in a particularly concise and forceful way. We will be using MLA
style for acknowledging sources. That means all that goes in the text is the author’s name and the page number.

Example 1:

If the host dies, “the flea moves to the next available live rodent” (McEvedy 121). As more and more rats die, “the fleas move to warm-blooded hosts on which they would not normally feed, such as human beings and their domesticated animals” (McEvedy 121). Thus, “an epidemic is launched” (McEvedy 121).

As you can see, this example, though correctly quoted and acknowledged, is choppy and awkward because there are three separate quoted passages and the acknowledgement gets messy. Here is a smoother rewrite:

If the host dies, fleas move to other live rats; but as more and more rats die, “the fleas move to warm-blooded hosts on which they would not normally feed, such as human beings and their domesticated animals” (McEvedy 121).

Example 3:

If the host rat dies, the flea moves to another. As more and more rats die, the fleas hop to other, less preferable, warm-blooded hosts, such as humans and domesticated animals, and thus, the epidemic spreads (McEvedy 121).

There are no exact quotes in the above example, so the acknowledgement goes at the end. Other ways to acknowledge sources are illustrated below. But they are really the same basic idea; they provide a way for the reader to find where the information came from.

Example 5:

As McEvedy explains, the epidemic spreads to humans because as more and more rats die, the fleas seek out other warm-blooded, but less preferable, hosts, like humans (121).

In “The Bubonic Plague,” McEvedy argues that as more and more rats die, the fleas seek out other warm-blooded, but less preferable, hosts, like humans (121).

In a list of references at the end of your paper, you must give the entire reference information for each source you quoted or paraphrased in the paper. That way a reader who is interested in a particular quote or paraphrase can go find the original source. For example, for an article from a magazine or journal, use the following format.


**For a book, use this format:**


**For an interview:**

Caesar, Julius. Personal Interview. 27 April 1991.