**Dos and Don’ts**

**Dos**

* **Do** set up a good system for note-taking. Make sure that you won’t have to repeat your work later and that you can easily add to your bibliography and your notes on the search as you go.
* **Do** use other scholars’ bibliographies.
* **Do** browse the nearby library shelves when you go to retrieve a book.
* **Do** take time to evaluate websites. Be sure look for **who** wrote the information and **when**, and remember to look for any noticeable **bias** or **intent** on the part of the author.
* **Do** be deliberate when trying to get information out of academic journal articles.
* **Do** use the advanced search screen and options when searching in academic journal databases.
* **Do** search for academic subject review articles when you are beginning your search.
* **Do** keep track of the full reference information of your sources as you find them.
* **Do** be wary of public Web sources and evaluate their credibility.
* **Do** search for primary documents.

**Don’ts**

* **Don’t** cite Wikipedia nor use a site if you cannot verify its trustworthiness. You are only harming your scholarship if you do.
* **Don’t** try to complete each step exhaustively before moving on to the next one. The best researchers circle back to earlier parts of the research process as they go.
* **Don’t** assume that you can find all the useful books in the library with just one catalog search.
* **Don’t** search the library’s catalog or article databases the same way you search the Web—remember that the library requires more precise search methods.
* **Don’t** read all (or even most) academic journal articles you find all the way through.
* **Don’t** read or dismiss *any source* without scanning its bibliography and scouring it for important sources.
* **Don’t** overuse public Web sources of information.

**Avoid Plagiarism!**

According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, to "plagiarize" means

•to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own

•to use (another's production) without crediting the source

•to commit literary theft

•to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source

In other words, plagiarism is an act of fraud. It involves both stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterward.