

## Self-Plagiarism

When writing a paper, you can take another author's words and not credit them correctly, but did you know that you can also plagiarize yourself?

This can happen when you:

- Reuse your own paper ideas for another assignment.
- Turn the same paper in for more than one class.
- Cite an idea that you originally voiced on social media.

### Can you use your old ideas?

Say, for example, that you write a paper at the beginning of the semester for your English class about *The Great Gatsby*. You're now at finals week, and the final paper is meant to tie together more than one work in your class. You had great ideas in your *Gatsby* paper, and you did well on the assignment, not to mention that it has similar themes to other great works of American literature!

Yes, you can, but ask your teacher first. You may be able to simply refer back to your previous paper in the text with a signal phrase like "as I discussed in my previous paper." You may need to create a full citation for your paper if you use direct quotes or paraphrase large sections.

What should you know about how to cite?

You may need to cite your own paper for a class. Let's pretend your name is Sam Student, and you go to a school called Best College.

Here's what your citation would look like in the three major academic styles:

- **APA:** Student, S. (year). *The Great Gatsby Paper* [Unpublished paper]. Best College.
  - **In-text:** (Student, year)
- **MLA:** Student, S. "The Great Gatsby Paper." Day MMM. Year. English 101, Best College, student paper.
  - **In-text:** (Student, page number)
- **Chicago:** Student, S. "The Great Gatsby Paper." Essay, Best College, year.
  - **Footnote:** Sam Student, "The Great Gatsby Paper." (essay, Best College, year), page number.

You may need to cite your own social media, depending on your assignment topic. For more information, check out our resource on citing social media, and treat yourself as the author.

Don't forget that when writing papers in your academic life, you are a scholar, and your ideas deserve proper credit, even from you!