



Dear Reader,

Plagiarism has made news headlines recently. A chick-lit novel published by Kaavya Viswanathan, a Harvard undergraduate, was found to contain substantial similarities to two novels by best-selling author Megan McCafferty. The result: Ms. Viswanathan lost a \$500,000 two-book contract and a movie option.

Of course, it is often necessary to draw on other published material for legitimate research. By following the paraphrasing tips in this month's issue of *EC Buzz*, you'll keep your reputation clean.



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Three Simple Ways to Paraphrase Text

1. **Simplify it:**
 - Delete irrelevant or repetitive text.
 - Exchange ten-dollar words for simpler synonyms that offer better value.
 - Split long, involved sentences into two shorter ones.
 - Condense two short sentences into one longer sentence if the overall result is shorter and simpler.
2. **Rearrange it:**
 - Switch passive voice to active voice.
 - Move an introductory dependent clause to the end of a sentence, or move one from the end to the beginning.
 - Change singular nouns to plural nouns, and vice versa.
 - Shuffle the order of items in lists.
3. **Understand it:**
 - Read the source text until you think you understand it thoroughly.
 - Set aside your source text for a while before proceeding. This allows you to reflect subconsciously on the meaning of the source material.
 - Write out the central idea in the simplest, most precise language you can muster.
 - Remember, when in doubt, *always* cite your sources.

Buzz Off : *Best of class*

In the last issue, we looked at "best of breed". This expression is often confused with "best of class" – another good reason for avoiding both. A "best of breed" product is the top-of-the-line example of its kind. A "best of class" product isn't necessarily as good – it's just the best within its particular sub-category. A Rolls-Royce Phantom might be considered a "best of breed" car, but if you're in the market for a hatchback costing less than \$20,000, the Acura RSX might be considered "best of class". Like "best of breed", "best of class" migrated from the high-tech world and is now standard (and tedious) marketing fluff.

Instead of using "best of class", test-drive one of the following:

- "the best value"
- "the top performer in its category"
- "the smartest way to spend your money"

Even better, add proof to your claim by showing that your product has the best value. Include testimonials from your clients, or explain how your product outshines the competition.

Is there a buzzword you would like to banish? Send your suggestion to writer@ecwriting.com, then look for your buzzword and name in an upcoming issue.

Parting Words

"Writing is the best way to talk without being interrupted."

– Jules Renard, author