

# INTERPRETING

# iThenticate

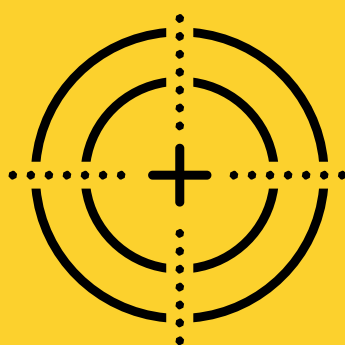
## Tips for analyzing algorithm-based plagiarism reports



### False positives

Plagiarism-detection algorithms flag language that is not truly problematic, such as proper names, common terms and phrases, and even properly attributed quotations.

**TIP: Examine each highlighted passage to determine if the language is truly problematic.**



### Source accuracy

Once the algorithm finds a match, it stops. Because the language may appear in many places, including untrustworthy ones, the matched source may not be the original.

**TIP: Check your source or with a subject matter expert about the origins of source material.**



### Language accuracy

Because of source accuracy issues, the words the algorithm highlights may not match the true source exactly.

**TIP: Never place quotation marks around a flagged passage without checking the writer's original source.**



### Common language

Some information and language is used so often across so many sources that, over time, it becomes accepted as common language that does not need to be cited or quoted.

**TIP: Quote or paraphrase (and cite!) only wording that is unique to a source.**



### Patchwriting

Patchwriting means making superficial changes to a sentence, such as substituting synonyms. This should be avoided in final documents.

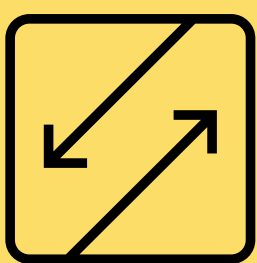
**TIP: To paraphrase properly, use your own descriptive language and sentence structure.**



### Pesky percentages

A report's similarity index or "percent plagiarized" includes copious false positives.

**TIP: Disregard this percentage; use human judgment.**



### Indirect sources

A writer may borrow language from one source that describes the work of another source. Both the original work and the source whose language is used must be credited.

**TIP: Consult the original work. Then use your own description of, or a quotation from, the original work.**



## The bottom line

Attribution has gray areas. Algorithms, while helpful, can't replace the good judgment and common sense of careful human review.

[nps.edu/web/gwc/tii-faq](https://nps.edu/web/gwc/tii-faq)

