Plagiarism Facts for Translators and Other Freelancers
by Sarah Alys Lindholm in consultation with Irina Greenman
Adapted from the paper "Preventing Plagiarism," written for A.D. Vision by Sarah Alys Lindholm in April, 2007.

In various recent conversations both within and outside of the anime and translation industries, I've realized that many people have questions about how and why plagiarism matters in the context of their everyday jobs and lives. And many people who have a good grasp on the issue in general can become confused or uncertain when more than one language is involved.

Plagiarism is a very serious and very real issue for translators—and for everyone!—and I'd like to walk through the major issues here to help clarify what it is, why you should avoid it, and how you can make that happen. I'll start with the general issues, and then move on to issues that apply to employees and independent contractors, and finally to issues that apply to translators and other people working with multiple languages.

The sections of this paper are as follows:

1. What is plagiarism?
2. Why is plagiarism bad?
3. How do I write something free of plagiarism?
4. What are the special concerns of people writing on behalf of a client or employer instead of themselves?
5. What are the special concerns of translators?
6. What about "free source" places like Wikipedia?
7. Are there times when citing my sources isn't enough?
8. I can't remember all this. Give me the executive summary!

1. What is plagiarism?
According to the *American Heritage Dictionary*, to **plagiarize** something means "to use and pass off as one's own (the ideas or writings of another)," or "to appropriate for use as one's own passages or ideas from (another)."

Concretely what this means is: when you use an idea, a story, a quote, or a piece of written, video, audio, verbal, or intellectual content (be it a sentence, a paragraph, a photograph or art image, a special piece of terminology coined by someone else, etc.) that **someone else produced** and include it in content of your own **without making it explicit that you are not the original author**, you are plagiarizing.

This is true whether your original source is a book, a webpage, something you heard Alton Brown say while you were watching the Food Network at 2 a.m., something said in an interview, or anything else. Additionally, it is true for information **in any language**. In

other words, if you are asked to write a paragraph about French wine, you find a nice website about that in French, and you translate text from the website into English but pass off that English text as your own, you are still plagiarizing.

Finally, sometimes people may know that directly taking text from someone else is plagiarism, but think that if they paraphrase or reword it slightly, it becomes okay. **In many cases, if you do not cite your source, paraphrasing or slightly rewording someone else's text is still plagiarism.** (There are some guidelines for how to tell if what you're doing is okay. I'll cover those later.)

2. Why is plagiarism bad?
There are several reasons, ranging from ethical to practical to legal.

- o **Plagiarism is unethical.** It's a form of lying, because you're representing that something belongs to you and was created by you, but it actually belongs to and was created by someone else. It's also a form of theft, because something written by someone else is their intellectual property. If I write a paper about the effects of caffeine on subtitle timers, it becomes my intellectual property—**whether or not I publish it**. If you then take something from that paper and include it in something *you* write without giving *me* proper credit, you are in effect stealing my property. (And telling everyone else it's your property!) Not honest, and not nice.
- o **Plagiarism makes people mad.** Just as properly crediting people can make you friends and be great for networking, if you plagiarize and get caught, you're going to piss *someone* off. Making enemies is not as strategically advantageous as making friends. And the people pissed off at you may not be limited to the people you actually plagiarized. If you're doing work for a client/employer and they find out you opened them up to possible bad PR or legal liability by plagiarizing, they will be pissed off at you too. In a setting where you are providing goods or services, if something you write/produce is found out by consumers at large to be plagiarized, you may well piss off a large number of people who are your core market. And morally outraging the people who pay your salary, directly or indirectly, is strategically VERY disadvantageous to you.
- o **Plagiarism harms your reputation and makes you less trustworthy in the eyes of those who know.** That doesn't really need much explaining.
- o **Plagiarism can destroy your career or have other negative consequences.** Plagiarism may not be against the law in all cases (see my comments on copyright infringement, etc.). However, that does not mean it is without strong negative consequences. You or the client/employer you produced the plagiarized content for may have to spend money contesting civil suits and/or marketing money rebuilding a good reputation, causing real loss to you/the client/the employer. Also, in some industries, such as journalism, academics, etc., successful accusations of plagiarism can cost you not only your job but your career. Finally, not only can students be suspended or expelled from most colleges for plagiarism, but in some cases if it is discovered *even after you graduate* that you plagiarized a major work such as your thesis, your degree can be taken away from you. (You

may also then be vulnerable legally if licensure for your profession was contingent on your degree, since not having earned that degree means you have been in effect practicing without a valid license.)

- o **Plagiarism may be copyright infringement.** Now, while plagiarism itself is not illegal, **copyright infringement is illegal** (and often comes up in civil suits as well). Many cases of plagiarism are also cases of copyright infringement—i.e., the unauthorized use of copyrighted material. I don't know a whole lot about the finer points of copyright law, but I'd bet the legal department of your client/employer sure does. If you're in doubt about something related to copyright, you should either consult your client's legal counsel or another expert in the matter—or just don't do the questionable activity in the first place.
- o **Plagiarism may be fraud.** If used to prove any kind of personal qualification, whether it be qualification for graduation from an institution, or for licensure in a job, or in representation of a company's charter, goals, or status, plagiarism can constitute fraud. At the risk of sounding obvious, **fraud is illegal**.
- o **Plagiarism may be libel.** As an example, if an article says something nasty about Person X or Company Y which that article represents as fact, and you quote or reproduce the nasty fact without citing your source, you or your client/employer can be sued for libel if the "fact" turns out to be untrue. **Libel is illegal.** However, if you cite your source, the original source is the one liable for libel, not you.

3. How do I write something free of plagiarism?

Obviously, the simplest way to avoid plagiarism is to create things on your own completely from scratch whenever you can. In other words, the surest path is to write in your own words from your own knowledge. If you need to write an explanation of a physics concept that you already understand, write it yourself, and don't look up sites on Google trying to find good wording, etc. If you need to write a summary of a novel you don't know about, read—or at least skim—the novel so that you know about it, and then write in your own words from your new knowledge. Or if you're a translator writing an explanatory note about the Bon Festival, and you already *know* enough about the Bon Festival to make a sufficient note, write that, and don't copy something from About.com, etc. That's the **simple** way.

However, none of us knows everything already, and there are times when each of us needs to gather information or confirm facts before we can write what we need to write. And sometimes even if we **do** know things, well, we just plain don't know how to say them well. It happens to everyone! So, how do you work with information from other sources without plagiarizing?

Basically, you have to **cite** those sources—whether you use only a few words from them or a whole paragraph. In other words, if you are going to use or refer to someone else's work, you have to make it clear to the audience (1) that the material is not original to you, and (2) where they can find your source if they want to look for it. (The latter is important not only to give the source credit, but to prevent others from misusing the source or quoting it out of context. It also allows the cited information to be fact-checked.

As Irina Greenman, consultant on this paper and a teacher by profession, points out: "It can be very dangerous to use someone else's research if you haven't first fact-checked it, particularly in an academic setting.")

So how do you do this?

- **NEVER quote any source directly without putting the quote in quotation marks and making it clear where the quote is from.** In other words, if I want to use this sentence from an Anime News Network article:

    > If you were of gaming age between 1998 and today, you have no excuse for not knowing what Pokémon is.

    I have to put it in quotes and explain where it came from, like this:

    > According to Anime News Network's Adam Pawlus in his 4/24/07 issue of "Super Plastic," "If you were of gaming age between 1998 and today, you have no excuse for not knowing what Pokémon is."

    Tip #1: If something is in quotation marks, it's assumed to be a direct quote. Never change any part of the quote if you cite it as a direct quote, even if it doesn't "sound nice"—unless you're in an interview context and you and the interviewee agree ahead of time that some editing is okay. Be careful about that kind of thing, though. Particularly because you are held accountable for what you attribute to other people—misattributing a quote in a printed or published document can be a form of **libel,** which is illegal.

    Tip #2: If you need to clarify some part of a quote, like what a pronoun is referring to, you can edit the quote for clarity, but the edit has to go in brackets. For example, if you want to quote my opinion of *The Family Guy*, which is "I hate that fucking show," you can do this for clarity and a G-rating:

    > "I hate [*The Family Guy*]," said viewer Sarah Alys Lindholm in a fit of rage.

    > or

    > "I hate [it]," said viewer Sarah Alys Lindholm in a fit of rage.

    Tip #3: If the quote is long and you don't need/want the middle part, as in the sentence "*The Family Guy* is one of the stupidest freaking shows ever created and is not something I ever want to see again," you can abbreviate it like this:

    > "*The Family Guy* [...] is not something I ever want to see again," said a disgruntled viewer who asked not to be named.

Note above how you can deal with situations where the person you quote doesn't want to be cited by name. You describe their position ("government official," "Halliburton employee," "professional clown," "disgruntled viewer," etc.) and then specifically state that they requested anonymity.

- **Always cite sources you've used in any significant way, even if you've paraphrased—and even if you used only "structure" or "phrasing" rather than ideas or facts themselves.** A distinctive way of organizing, phrasing, or presenting information can be just as open to plagiarism as a direct quote. Also, just rephrasing someone else's work a little does not mean you've avoided plagiarism—especially if you're paraphrasing an **idea** of theirs. Without citing, you make it sound like the idea was yours, and that's plagiarism. For those who would like more detailed information on paraphrasing and when to cite, there is a really great, short explanation of when to cite sources and when not to in the book *Writing with Sources: A Guide for Students* by Gordon Harvey (Hackett Publishing Company, 1998). While Harvey is directing himself to a student audience about how to write papers, the *principles* are the same ones that should be applied everywhere. I've referred to it to answer questions I or others have had in the past.
  - This brings up an important side point—say that you want a few pages of a book or other published work that's owned by someone else to be available for reference by your company/colleagues/students, so you photocopy or make a PDF of just those pages and distribute them to that group. Maybe you want to do that with the Gordon Harvey book I just mentioned, for example. This type of thing is okay **if done appropriately.** First, be aware that some books specifically prohibit the distribution of photocopies in their copyright, so check the copyright page for any legal restrictions mentioned there. Also see an example in my copyright at the end of this document. Second, if photocopying for private/educational use is okay for that book, you still need to specify to the people you distribute it to that it is for internal reference only and should not be otherwise used or distributed, because you and your group do not have the right to publish it in any form. And you need to make sure the citation information is **printed on each page of the photocopy** (e.g. you scrawl "Harvey, Gordon. *Writing With Sources: A Guide for Students.* Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1998." at the top of the page of a master photocopy, from which you photocopy all the other copies so that they all have this info printed on them).

- **Facts are not protected by copyright, but the presentation of those facts is protected.** Facts that are **not** common knowledge should be cited, but general facts like "bananas are yellow," "Arnold Schwarzenegger played the title character of *The Terminator*," and "the Japanese word *korosu* means 'kill'" don't require a citation, because they're just commonly-known facts; nobody owns them or has discovered them. However, a factual statement can still be plagiarized

if you take the *presentation* (for example, the phrasing) as your own when you actually got it from someone else.

- o **Facts are not protected, but opinions, anecdotes, and conclusions are protected.** Sometimes it's not immediately obvious whether a statement is a fact, an opinion, or somebody's conclusion based on a set of facts or opinions. You might have to sit and think about it for a minute. A person may even have *stated* like a fact something that is actually an opinion or conclusion. If I say "Japanese translators are bad-ass people," I make it sound like a fact, but it's actually just a claim I'm making. You should cite it and lay the blame at my door.
- o **Not-yet-published or unpublished works are usually protected.** If you take something from an unpublished paper/source without citing or obtaining written permission, the fact that your source wasn't published doesn't mean you didn't plagiarize.
- o **If you received permission from the rights owner of your source to use material without citation, or collaborated on something with a co-author who gave you permission not to credit him/her as co-author, that permission needs to be in writing.** If you have the permission in writing, it's much easier to prove that you got permission!
- o **If I plagiarize accidentally, is it still plagiarism?** Yes. This is a danger to creative writers in particular: perhaps you read something a long time ago, but don't really remember it clearly, and accidentally think that it's your own idea instead of someone else's. In those cases you are not deliberately plagiarizing and the god of your choice is not going to smite you dead, but **it is still plagiarism and you are still responsible**. When in doubt about whether something is original to you, write the line a different way. The greatest danger of something like this happening in the context of translation is probably if the translator reads/watches a preexisting translation of the content.

Okay, sure, it's easy to say you have to cite sources, but **how should sources be cited?**

There are all kinds of rules for how to cite sources in an article or an academic paper. Usually you cite them within your writing, and often you list a set of sources at the end. There are various different ways to do it. The bottom line is, **citing them in the first place** is way more important than how you do it, as long as you convey enough information that somebody else could retrace your steps and find your source. Whether the source is online or offline, the **title** of the source, the **name** of the person or entity who created it, and if possible the **date** of publication (for internet sources, sometimes this is the date you accessed the website) are key. If the source is a website, give the website's URL. If it's a person, give the name of the person and some context (is this a speech they gave at the 2004 Democratic Convention? or a conversation you had with them? If it's a speech, were you present or are you quoting a book quoting the speech?).

However, in many contexts, you're not going to have room for the long full-on citations and reference lists an academic paper would use. If you're writing marketing copy or short blurbs for a website, for example, there's just not much space. In these cases by far

the best thing is to find out about the topic, internalize a lot of knowledge, and write a completely original blurb out of your own knowledge (or the knowledge of someone whose intellectual property you own). Or better yet, get someone who already has the knowledge to write it and bestow permission for you to use it! When that's not possible, even a succinct "According to Harvard physicist Joe Blow, [Joe Blow's theory or explanation of physics]" will do it.

If you're writing original text to be printed in some form (see for example my translator's notes on *This Ugly Yet Beautiful World*, which are actually paged DVD menus), you have a lot more room and can basically do it like you would do in an academic paper. As a particular example, if you grab Volume 3 of *This Ugly Yet Beautiful World* and look at the Translator's Notes, you'll see that I don't cite any sources WITHIN the text because I'm not really taking any quotes, paraphrasing, or other people's direct ideas in the body of the text itself (other than definitions of words, which are not protected). But it'll probably be obvious to you that all that stuff about the finer points of Christian interpretation of New Testament Greek did NOT come from my own everyday knowledge, even if it is now in my words. In order to gain the knowledge to write those notes, I had to consult sources. And so I have a short list of "credits" at the end of Volume 3 to describe sources, and I credit my father John Lindholm (a Presbyterian minister) with assisting me with the Greek & Christianity stuff. Would I have done this much more formalistically and rigorously if it were an academic paper? Yes. For the purposes of this DVD extra, have I made a good faith effort to cite my major sources **and** made sure that none of my sources' phrasing or other exclusive property is present in the text I claim to be mine? Yes. So in this case, I feel I have adequately protected myself against the suspicion of plagiarism.

- o **What about crediting or citing people who provided help and background knowledge, but whose contributions were more "overall" than "specific paragraph"?** Crediting or acknowledging people who helped you in general, even if it's not the type of thing where you've got a quote or idea that you're specifically citing, is a good and important practice. It also applies if you collaborated with someone on a project. Or if maybe you *are* quoting them, but they've given you written permission to do so without citing formally. After all, even if you've obtained written permission to use someone's ideas or words without citing, and therefore **avoided plagiarism**, it's still classy to give credit where credit is due. So how do you do it? I think this example with my father's Greek help is a good one. There are also a few different types of examples below in Section 4. And the classic example is the "Acknowledgements" section you see in the beginning of many books, where the author names the people who have provided the most help in putting together or editing the book. The most important thing about crediting people who help you isn't really *how* you do it; it's making sure that you do it—and that you do it in a way that the person you're crediting feels comfortable with. In the case of collaborators or people who consult with you on the work as a whole, crediting them by name at the beginning is pretty standard, but what if listing those collaborators as co-authors doesn't make sense? Well, Irina Greenman provided consultation and guidance throughout the project of writing both this document and the original 2007

document it's adapted from. So she's not a "co-writer," but she certainly did more than enough to merit her own named credit! Therefore, I came up with the credit of "by Sarah Alys Lindholm in consultation with Irina Greenman," and **asked her if she felt that was appropriate and comfortable.** We both agreed on it, and there it is on Page 1.

In something that's reference material for clients or colleagues—a summary of a product, or a translator's note in a translation, for example—you've got basically an infinite amount of space to cite your sources and should do so fully. If you or someone else needs to whittle down the space later to fit it into another piece of writing (press release, liner notes, etc.), that can happen at that point. Up until that point, the risks of under-citing resulting in accidental plagiarism FAR outweigh any time or space benefit in a document not intended for consumption by public audiences anyway.

4. What are the special concerns of people writing on behalf of a client or employer instead of themselves?
There are several things about writing for others that are different than writing on solely your own behalf.

- o **Intellectual property rights are different in a relationship with an employer or client.** When you began work for that employer or client, you probably signed a contract waiving the rights to any intellectual property you produce at or for that institution. In other words, my translations of *Yugo the Negotiator* are not my property; they are the A.D. Vision's property, even though I produced them. The same is true for any programming, marketing copy, press releases, articles, translations, liner notes, box text, DVD extras, standards & guidelines: pretty much anything anyone employed by or contracted to a company produces while working for the company. Likewise, teaching or academic materials created when employed by a school or university typically become the property of that institution. There are several implications of this:
  - ▪ **You do not have to cite certain types of in-company sources.** For example, if you're writing box text for Company X, but you incorporate a paragraph that I previously wrote for the company in some other file or email, you probably don't need to cite me (though you should check my original file to make sure I wasn't citing someone else at the time). We both work for the company and both my original text and your box text are owned by the company, not by either of us. Another true example: When worked as a Media Coordinator at A.D. Vision and I needed an A.D. Vid-Note™ on a technique in an old-school video game, I went and got colleague Brendan Frayne to write up something for me about the technique. But I didn't have to preface the Vid-Note with "Brendan Frayne from ADV's translation department says." This is because both Brendan's content and my content were ADV's content, since that's who we produced it for. But, since I specifically was credited by name with

writing the Vid-Notes, common courtesy dictated that I credit Brendan for his contribution in some form at some point. (Which I did, a special credit scroll.) So sometimes even if ethics and legality are not factors, etiquette can be a factor. ☺

- **It is possible to plagiarize yourself.** This is actually true in general, but in the practical sense you probably only need to worry about it within the scope of your own profession. Because of that clause where you waived intellectual rights to your work, your employer or client owns content you produce for it. This generally includes **all content produced on the employer's computers, regardless of the purpose you created it for**. If you reuse that content for purposes the client hasn't approved, **you are plagiarizing the employer/client, even though you originally wrote it in the first place**. In fact, since the overall structure and a good deal of the content of this document you're reading are reworked from a document I originally wrote while working for A.D. Vision, in order to make sure this essay about plagiarism was not itself plagiarized, I had to **contact ADV and receive written permission to rework and reuse the content.** If they had said no, I would not have been able to use the structure or content. You'll notice that right below my name at the top of the page is "*Adapted from the paper "Preventing Plagiarism," written for A.D. Vision by Sarah Alys Lindholm in April, 2007.*" This is the credit agreed on between myself and the company, which is another important thing to establish when you obtain this type of permission—whether, where, and how the client/company wishes to be credited.

- Don't forget that in some cases, **your client/employer isn't the owner of the intellectual rights either**. The owner of the rights might be your client's client, or someone who licensed to/contracted with your employer. In this case, it doesn't matter whether you have your employer's permission—you still can't use the content without plagiarism, because your client/employer cannot consent on behalf of the actual rights owner.

o **When you're writing a document for a client or company, you don't know where that text will end up.** You can't assume that you know how far content in a file you create will be distributed inside AND outside the company you create it for, and you can't assume you know how it will be used. That content could end up anywhere. True example: several years ago, a paragraph from a file I thought I was writing for a certain client's internal reference turned out to actually be something they were planning to excerpt and publish on a third-party website. I only ever found this out because I accidentally stumbled across the website after the fact and saw my writing there. But clients are perfectly within their rights using content in unexpected ways like this, because they own the content. This means you need to be very careful to avoid plagiarism in **all files you write for anyone in any capacity, even if you think they are "internal files."** In the example I mentioned, if I had used content from somewhere else instead of writing that file myself, plagiarized content could have been passed on to the

third-party website and who knows where else. This could have exposed the client to bad PR and potential liability. (And landed me in hot water!)

- If at any point you're creating a document or other content and you're discovering that almost all of it is you quoting or paraphrasing outside sources, something is probably wrong. Yes, there are cases where this is appropriate, but it shouldn't be happening all the time and may be a sign that you are not doing enough original work. (Perhaps in this case you are being asked to do something you are not really prepared for or that is inappropriate for you. You may need to talk to your client or supervisor about the situation.)

5. What are the special concerns of translators?
Translation can become a pretty murky area for this kind of stuff. A few FAQ:

o **Can the dictionary be plagiarized?** Actual meanings of words are not protected, so if you look up *shiranu ga hotoke* in a dictionary and see that it's "Ignorance is bliss," you can translate it as "Ignorance is bliss" with no worries and no citations. I would only worry about that kind of thing if you find the definition in someone's highly idiosyncratic and personal online dictionary, and even then it's probably a gray area enough that you'd want to think it through on a case-by-case basis. However, if instead of just using the translation of a word in your work, you're specifically writing out the dictionary definition of a word directly from a dictionary, like I was with "plagiarism" at the beginning of this document, you should cite *which* dictionary's definition you're using. The definition of the word is not protected, but **its presentation is**.

o **What do I need to know about translator's notes?** As I said above, the safest way with translator's notes is to write them in words original to you or someone else who has ceded intellectual rights to you or the client/company. If you do need to paraphrase, quote, or otherwise use a source, it needs to be properly cited. Remember that you *do not know and cannot control* what might be done with your translator's notes for any project you work on. They could end up published in some form. If at any point you're creating a document or other content and you're discovering that almost all of it is quoting or paraphrasing outside sources, something is probably wrong. Yes, there are cases where this is appropriate, such as translator's notes for a highly parodic/referential comedy, but it shouldn't be happening all the time and may be a sign that you are not doing enough original work. (Perhaps in this case you are being asked to do something you are not really prepared for or that is inappropriate for you. You may need to talk to your client or supervisor about the situation.)

o **What about sources in Japanese or another non-English language?** Even if you are translating from these sources into English, you still need to cite them as you would an English-language source. So for example, let's say I'm doing research on some esoteric topic and I find a great explanation in Japanese on a website. Maybe I don't think I could ever phrase it better, so I want to just translate that explanation into English and use that translation in the work that I'm

doing. **I have to cite that Japanese website as my source.** Translating something without citing its source is plagiarism. It's the same as quoting something without citing. The same goes for esoteric facts that you learn from sources in other languages, or paraphrasing you do from sources in other languages—you cite them just like you would cite sources in English. You'll notice that when you translate something such as a TV show, video game, book, etc., the source is actually cited in the translated release: it includes the copyright of the original Japanese-language version along with the translation's own copyright.

- Please note that in some cases, if a translation of a different-language source is found by the rights owners of that source to be demonstrably inaccurate in a way that is damaging to them, they may have grounds to take legal action, depending on the situation. So be careful!
- Finally, a tangential point not applicable to most translators. I mention this only because it confuses people sometimes—there are instances where **not just a quote/excerpt, but the bulk or entirety of something**, may be translated from one language to another and properly cited so that **plagiarism is avoided**, but the publication of that translation **still results in copyright infringement.** In other words, just because you do the right thing in terms of not taking credit for someone else's work, that doesn't automatically mean you have the legal right to publish the translation of a large portion of that work. It all depends on the situation. I am not going to devote any more space to this issue here, since it's a complex one that many of us never face because we do our work on behalf of corporate clients who would be the ones liable if such a copyright violation occurred. I merely wish to clarify that just as **plagiarism is not always copyright infringement, copyright infringement is not always plagiarism.** If you have questions or concerns, consult a copyright expert.

o **Is it possible to plagiarize other translators?** It's possible and it's a danger. It is somewhat of a gray area though: if you've always translated *Uso!* as "You lie!" but you see me translating it as "No way!" and decide you like that better, is translating it as "No way!" in the future plagiarism? No, not really; "No way!" is a pretty common meaning equivalent of *Uso!*. But if you're reading a translation that has a much longer and more specific, idiosyncratic sentence, copying its translation into one of your own may be plagiarism. When in doubt, check with an expert or use a different translation. And lastly, though perhaps this goes without saying, if you're translating a work that was previously translated by someone else, and you incorporate portions of their translation into your own without permission from the rights holder, that is plagiarism (and probably copyright infringement).

o **What if the work I'm translating quotes something else?** That happens, and it does NOT automatically make you a plagiarist. You do need to be careful how you handle it, though. First of all, always put quotes in quotation marks and write a translator's note explaining exactly what is being quoted. (Among other things, this will alert those who work with your translation that the words within the quotation marks cannot be changed without consulting the source.) Exactly how

you want to handle the situation will vary by whether there's an official English translation of what's being quoted already in existence:

- **If an official English translation exists:** When an official translation exists, I personally feel it's always best to try to use it, since quotes are meant to evoke memories, and the English-speaking viewers can (probably) only have memories of things they've read in English. Obviously, though, this is a matter of personal choice. If you use an official translation, you must **cite** not only what's being quoted but which translation you're using and where you found it—enough information for someone later to understand how to find that translated source. Please note: if it's the Bible, the Koran, or a similarly large-scale religious text being quoted, you must select and use an official translation (not that I seriously think anybody is going to retranslate the Bible on their own...). As a final note, if the quotation is **not** of the Bible/Koran/etc. and it's a very long quote of a copyrighted work, you may run into a permissions issue with whether you can use the translation. So far this has never happened to me, but if you think it may be an issue, it's probably best to consult a copyright expert or your client/company's legal department.

- **If no official English translation exists or you have no access to one:** If you have to translate the quote yourself because no official or common-knowledge English translation is available to you, still cite the Japanese-language source of the quote. It's also important not to **misuse** the source: if necessary, find a larger chunk of the source to obtain context before translating, so that your translation does not mislead the audience as to the content of the source. True example: for *This Ugly Yet Beautiful World* I had to translate some passages of the story *Ugetsu Monogatari* from Japanese. I did this in consultation with Jack Wiedrick, my go-to man when it comes to translations of older text. His first draft and my first draft were 100% different—I'd spent half an hour Googling background on the story, and he'd only had a chance to see the lines that were on the screen when I cruelly dragged him over to my cubicle with no warning. When I managed to find a full-text version of the story in Japanese and Jack read through it, he decided that the version he wrote without context was a misrepresentation of the story and discarded it; then he helped me create a new translation that was a better representation of the story than my own original. Because Jack is awesome. If I hadn't asked for a consult from an expert in the subject matter, my translation wouldn't have been up to snuff, but without context, neither of us would have been able to come up with the right thing. So as you can see, no matter how much of an expert you are on the language itself, context is of paramount importance to make sure you don't misrepresent your source. Misrepresenting a source is, in effect, lying about that source.

6. What about "free source" places like Wikipedia?

First of all, Wikipedia is not always a good source in the first place. Since it's not a professional encyclopedia and anyone can edit it, there are mistakes all over it. It's great for some kinds of research and terrible for others, so use it with caution. Second of all, **some people think that information from "free source" places can be used by anyone for any purpose, but this is not true.** The rules governing how information from sources like Wikipedia can be used are complex, but there are a couple of very important things you need to know:

- o **Wikipedia uses the GNU Free Documentation License, which specifies how its content can be used.** You can read the full text here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Text_of_the_GNU_Free_Documentation_ License . Among other things, the implications are that text taken directly from Wikipedia cannot have a more restrictive copyright than Wikipedia's copyright. **But chances are your client or employer claims copyright over all of its published content, putting you and your client/employer in direct violation of Wikipedia's copyright.** And you have no way of knowing what content you produce for them will eventually be published. This puts your client in a very delicate position in terms of exactly when and how it can use anything from Wikipedia. There may be some situations where content from Wikipedia can be used, and many more situations where it can't. If you have any questions or are unsure, consult your employer's legal department or a copyright expert. The surest way to avoid problems, of course, is to just stay the hell away from Wikipedia.
- o **ANY source you use has to be cited, even if it is something "free source" like Wikipedia.** If you are unsure how to cite a certain Wikipedia article, on the left-hand side of the screen there is a "toolbox" section that should have a link saying "Cite this article," or 「この項目を引用 」 in Japanese. Clicking on that link will take you to a page with all the information you need to cite the article. That page will also have a link to a more detailed page outlining more than you ever wanted to know about citing Wikipedia in general.

7. Are there times when citing my sources isn't enough?
Yes. In the case of copyrighted images, video, or audio material in particular, this material often cannot be used **at all** without permission from the copyright holder. In the case of copyrighted text, sometimes long passages or certain types of usages cannot be taken without the permission of the copyright holder, regardless of citation. If you're unsure whether something is okay for use, consult your client or employer's legal department.

8. I can't remember all this. Give me the executive summary!
In a conversation with Irina Greenman about plagiarism, she told me about a phrase she uses with her high school students in her talks about it: **"When in doubt, check it out."** It's a great catchphrase, and some brief Google searching tells me people have used it as a rule of thumb for everything from plagiarism to medical emergencies. Basically:

- o **If you don't know whether something is original to you, check it out.** Investigate to see if you could've gotten it from somewhere else, or rewrite it in a different way.
- o **If you don't know whether what you're doing is plagiarism, check it out.** Ask an expert, or use original content instead.
- o **If you don't know whether you can use content, check it out.** Ask your client/company's legal department or check the usage policy/copyright of the content itself.
- o **If you have any questions at all, check it out.** Find someone who has the answers.
- o **If you're not sure whether your source needs to be cited, just cite it.** It's better to be safe than sorry!