**CATS:** Students were given the assignment below and the attached original news article and the plagiarized assignment. Twenty-one students completed the assignment; one student explained correctly, but failed to provide examples; two students explained correctly but made minor errors in how to format a citation for a direct quote. The remaining eighteen students explained and provided correct examples. All twenty-one provided an appropriately worded email. Anecdotally, the classroom conversation about the original email and student submission (which are the actual ones that I received, with names changed of course) was quite a rich experience. Students discussed not previously thinking about how their emails were received by faculty, the importance of correctly addressing and signing emails, and tone. It seemed as though that part of the assignment was as valuable as the practice of avoiding plagiarism.

**Scenario:** Imagine that students were given an assignment to find a current news article. Then, the students needed to write an explanation of the content of the news article, using summary, paraphrasing, and quotations as needed. The student was also asked to personally reflect on the issue.

One student, Em Strella, struggled with the assignment. When Em Strella’s instructor graded the assignment, the instructor saw that Em had copied and pasted portions of the original news article into the essay. The instructor responded to Em with the following email:

**Instructor Email:**

Dear Em,

Part of your submitted assignment matches an article from the NY Times word for word. As we discussed in class, this would be considered plagiarism. Please schedule an appointment with me. I want to explain to you how to properly summarize, paraphrase, and directly quote from a source so that you can avoid plagiarism in the future.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Instructor

**Em Strella responded with the following email:**

I did get most of the information from the news article but put it in my own words. How else would you be able to tell about a news article without using the information from the article. I did put in my own wording but there is no way of not sounding like the article if you are asking for us to tell you about the article. If you don’t want it to sound like the article, then we should be making up our own news story.

**YOUR ASSIGNMENT:**

1. Pretend that you are the student that had difficulty with the original assignment. How would you explain your confusion or ask your questions to the instructor? Re-compose the student’s email to the instructor using proper academic and online etiquette. Include how you would address and sign the email.
2. Compose a response to the student. In your response, explain the differences between summary, paraphrase, and direct quotation and why what the student submitted as an assignment would be considered plagiarism. Using the original text, provide examples of how to correctly summarize, paraphrase, and directly quote the source in order to avoid plagiarism. You may use MLA or APA formatting.

***Original News Article (excerpt)***



***U.S. to Extend Sign-Up Period for Insurance***

**By**[**ROBERT PEAR**](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/p/robert_pear/index.html)MARCH 25, 2014

With less than a week left for people to sign up for health insurance, the Obama administration said Tuesday that it would allow more time for those who had tried to apply but were blocked by technical problems with the federal exchange.

Several states running their own exchanges, including Maryland, Minnesota and Nevada, have taken similar steps in the last two weeks.

Open enrollment was scheduled to end on Monday for all Americans. The White House had previously insisted that the deadline was firm and would not be extended.

Under the move planned by the administration, some people will be given a special enrollment period, beyond the deadline, if they can show they were not able to enroll because of an error by the federal exchange or by the Department of Health and Human Services. Federal officials allowed a special enrollment period, on a case-by-case basis, for some people who were unable to meet the Dec. 24, 2013, enrollment deadline for coverage starting Jan. 1 of this year.

***Original Student submission—find instances of plagiarism***

My news article that I choose is regarding the news that Obama will give more health-care sign-up time. With less than a week left for people to sign up for health insurance, the Obama administration said Tuesday that it would allow more time for those who had tried to apply but had technical problems with the federal exchange.

I think this is a very good idea and is good for the consumer. I know from experience how hard it is to navigate through the web site. My son has been trying to get on the site and figure out how to sign up for Obama care.

Several states that are running their own exchanges, including Maryland, Minnesota and Nevada, have taken similar steps in the last few weeks.

Open enrollment was scheduled to end on Monday for all Americans. The White House had previously insisted that the deadline was firm and would not be extended.Some people will be given a special enrollment period, beyond the deadline, if they can show they were not able to enroll because of an error by the federal exchange or by the Department of Health and Human Services. This extension will help some people, but others, like my son who cannot afford the insurance, are going to take their chances with getting penalized when doing their taxes next year.