

## Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using others' ideas and words without clearly acknowledging the source of that information

1. Not giving proper credit for ideas, words, or "specific substance of another's work.
2. Claiming authorship on a group project without actually doing the work.
3. Claiming someone else's artistic or scholarly work as your own.

Any form of information requires acknowledgement. A common perception is that only the exact copying of words from a printed publication constitutes plagiarism. The requirement to acknowledge sources is much broader. In particular, it is important to understand that the source of ideas — opinions, theories, facts, etc. — as well as words must be credited.

## Forms

Sources of words and ideas come in many forms, all of which require proper attribution to avoid plagiarism.

- spoken words such as conversations and interviews,
- written words including email and web pages as well as published and print materials,
- multimedia such as movies, music and photographs, and
- any other way to express an idea including statistics, drawings, graphs, maps,

## Different types of plagiarism

Exact Copy

Paraphrase

Common Knowledge

**There are two types of exact copy plagiarism — whole source and partial copy.**

Whole source plagiarism is claiming an entire work as your own. The most common example is when a student puts his or her name on a paper written by another person. Whole source plagiarism also includes claiming to be the creator of such things as a work of art, an entire song, or a scientific theorem. Examples of plagiarizing an entire paper include turning in as your own work:

- a friend's paper
- a purchased paper
- a paper published in another source such as a journal or the Internet

**Partial copy** plagiarism occurs when the exact words or content from a source are inserted as part of your paper *without giving proper attribution*. Examples include

- cutting and pasting from an electronic source
- copying from a printed source

- repeating a conversation, interview remarks, etc. exact
- inserting a photo, audio clip, or other multimedia element
- Paraphrase

## **Paraphrase**

Express the meaning of (something written or spoken) using different words, especially to achieve greater clarity. Or a rewording of something written or spoken. or There is a formal term for putting text or ideas into ‘your own words’ — it is called paraphrasing.

**The purpose** of paraphrase is often to summarize or simplify the author’s ideas, making them easier to understand, more approachable. You might also use paraphrase to emphasize a particular idea or train of thought from the original author’s text. Paraphrasing is acceptable but it is important to acknowledge the original author’s ideas, even if it has been substantially re-expressed.

How do you paraphrase a source?

- Read the original two or three times or until you are sure you understand it.
- Put the original aside and try to write the main ideas in your own words. Say what the source says, but no more, and try to reproduce the source's order of ideas and emphasis.
- Look closely at unfamiliar words, observing carefully the exact sense in which the writer uses the words.
- Check your paraphrase, as often as needed, against the original for accurate tone and meaning, changing any words or phrases that match the original too closely. If the wording of the paraphrase is too close to the wording of the original, then it is plagiarism.
- Include a citation for the source of the information (including the page numbers) so that you can cite the source accurately. Even when you paraphrase, you must still give credit to the original author.

## **Common Knowledge**

Not all ideas require attribution, specifically, facts that are common knowledge. Common knowledge exists when a fact can be found in numerous places or is likely to be known by a lot of people. For example, you do not need to document the fact that Abraham Lincoln was the 16th President of the United States since this information is widely known. On the other hand, you must credit your source for facts that are not generally known or ideas that interpret facts. For example, Lincoln’s tall and gangly stature is consistent with symptoms of Marfan syndrome (Davidson, 2004).

### **Information from the Internet:**

A common mistake is thinking that, because Internet information is free and often appears to have no ‘owner,’ it can be used without giving credit. However, our definition of plagiarism — “... using others’ ideas and words without clearly acknowledging the source of that

information” (Writing Tutorial Services, 2004) — makes no mention that those ideas and words must be in a published source or a professional source or a well-known source or a valuable source. In fact, the source makes no difference what-so-ever. The important point is that when you use ideas or words that are not your own, no matter what the source, you must give credit.

### **Self plagiarism**

Self plagiarism refers to the use of your own work, or a substantial portion of it, in another course than the one for which it was originally written. While you are not stealing an idea from someone else, it is still considered dishonest unless you have obtained permission from your instructor to reuse the material.

### **No author**

Sometimes people assume credit only needs to be given when there is someone, an identifiable author, to credit. However, giving credit simply acknowledging that the source of the ideas, words, etc. that you used came from somewhere outside your own thoughts. It is the source of the idea, words, etc. that receives the credit, not an individual. You need to cite even if the source doesn't have an author you can identify.

### **How to avoid Plagiarism**

We often assume that all people who plagiarize are deliberately dishonest. In fact intentionally planned plagiarism is fairly rare. Much of plagiarism due to carelessness, or not understanding what plagiarism means.

- give yourself enough time to do a good job. Students who procrastinate are more likely to plagiarize because rushing makes them sloppy. (Being out of time is also the primary incentive for deliberate dishonesty.)
- Revise your paper. re-writing can eliminate plagiarized passages.
- proofread for errors. Proofreading can help you find missing citations and quotation marks, as well as other errors.
- Always include information about your source with the notes from that source.
- You can also use a highlight color or some other code that identifies exact copy material.

### **Citation:**

A citation is a reference to a published or unpublished source that you consulted and obtained information from while writing your research paper. The way in which you document your sources depends on the writing style manual your professor wants you to use for the class (e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago, Turabian, etc.).

Note that some disciplines have their own citation method (e.g., law).

### **Properly citing the works of others is important because:**

1. Proper citation allows readers to locate the materials you used. Citations to other sources helps readers expand their knowledge on a topic. In most social sciences

disciplines, one of the most effective strategies for locating authoritative, relevant sources about a topic is to follow footnotes or references from known sources "citation tracking".

2. Citing other people's words and ideas indicates that you have conducted a thorough review of the literature on your topic and, therefore, you are operating from an informed perspective. This increases your credibility as the author of the work.
3. Other researcher's ideas can be used to reinforce your arguments, or, if you disagree with them, can act as positions from which to argue an alternative viewpoint. In many cases, another researcher's arguments can act as the primary context from which you can emphasize a different viewpoint or to clarify the importance of what you are proposing. For example, Ranjit Singh was a unbiased ruler, to support my argument I will discuss different writers in support of my argument and even I will mention those who were against my argument and I will mention all those writers name in my work.
4. Outside academe, ideas are considered intellectual property and there can serious repercussions if you fail to cite where you got an idea from. In the professional world, failure to cite other people's intellectual property ruins careers and reputations and can result in legal action. Given this, it is important to get into the habit of citing sources.

**In any academic writing, you are required to identify for your reader which ideas, facts, theories, concepts, etc., are yours and which are derived from the research and thoughts of others.** Whether you summarize, paraphrase, or use direct quotes, if it's not your original idea, the source must be acknowledged. **The only exception** to this rule is information that is considered to be common knowledge [e.g., George Washington was the first president of the United States]. If you are in doubt about whether a fact is common knowledge or not, protect yourself from any allegations of plagiarism and cite it.

Procedures used to reference the sources you have relied upon vary among different fields of study. However, **always speak with your professor about what writing style for citing sources should be used for the class** because it is important to fully understand the citation style to be used in your paper, and to apply it consistently.

## **GENERAL GUIDELINES**

Referencing other people's work is never an indication that your work is poor or lacks originality if placed in the proper context. In fact, the opposite is true. If you write your paper with no references to previous research, you are indicating to the reader that you are not familiar with the research that has already been done, thereby, undermining your credibility as an author and the validity of your study. Including references in academic writing not only defends you against allegations of plagiarism, but it is a way of demonstrating your knowledge of pertinent literature about the research problem.

### **2. What should I do if I find that my idea has already been examined by another researcher?**

Do not ignore another author's work because doing so will lead your readers to believe that you have either taken the idea or information without properly referencing it [this is

plagiarism] and/or that you have failed to conduct a thorough review of the literature in your field. You can acknowledge the other research by writing in the text of your paper something like this: [see also Smith, 2002] then citing the complete source in your list of references. Use the discovery of prior research is an opportunity to demonstrate the importance of the problem being investigated and, if applicable, as a means of delineating your analysis from those of others. Reacting to prior research can include: stating how your study updates prior research, offering a new or different perspective, using a different method of data gathering, or describing a new set of recommendations, best practices, or working solutions.

### **3. What should I do if I want to use an adapted version of someone else's work?**

You still must cite the original work. For example, maybe you are using a table of statistics from a journal article published in 1996 by author Smith, but you have altered or added new data to it. Reference the revised chart as: [adapted from Smith, 1996] then citing the complete source in your list of references. You can also use other terms in order to specify the exact relationship between the source and the version you have presented, such as, "based on Smith [1996]," or "summarized from Smith [1996]" Citing the original source helps the reader locate the original information and evaluate how you adapted it.

### **4. What should I do if several authors have published very similar information or ideas?**

You can indicate that the idea or information can be found in the work of more than one author by stating something similar to the following example: "Though in fact many authors have applied this theory to understanding economic relations among nations [for example, see Smith, 1989; Jones, 19991; Johnson, 1994], little work has been done on applying it to understand the actions of non-governmental organizations in a globalized economy." If you only reference one author or only the most recent study, then your readers may assume that only one author has published on this topic, or, conclude that you have not reviewed the literature thoroughly. Referencing multiple authors gives your readers a clear idea of the breadth of analysis you conducted in preparing to study the research problem. If there has been a lot of prior research on the topic, cite the most comprehensive and recent works because they will presumably discuss and cite the older studies but note that there has been significant scholarship devoted to the topic so the reader knows that you are aware of this.

### **5. What if I find exactly what I want to say in the writing of another researcher?**

It depends on what it is; if someone else has thoroughly investigated precisely the same research problem as you, then you likely will have to change your topic, or at the very least, find something new to say about what you're researching. However, if it is someone else's particularly succinct expression, but it fits perfectly with what you are trying to say, then you can quote directly, referencing the page, the author, and year of publication. Don't see this as a setback, though. Discovering an author who has made the same point that you have is an opportunity to add legitimacy to, as well as reinforce the significance of, the research problem you are investigating.