

Plagiarism

Frequently Asked Questions



1. What is it?

Plagiarism occurs when an individual uses another's ideas or words without giving due credit. Any information used from a source must be cited unless it is considered common knowledge. Plagiarism is dishonest and can result in disciplinary action. If you are confused about what is or isn't plagiarism, always ask rather than risk course failure.

2. How can I avoid it?

- Any words quoted directly from a source must be in quotation marks and cited.
- Any paraphrasing or rephrasing of the words and/or ideas of a source must be cited.
- Any ideas or examples derived from a source that is not general knowledge must be cited.
- All papers and presentations must be the individual's own work!

3. What should be cited?

Always cite direct quotations, borrowed ideas, artwork, music, paraphrases, summaries, and facts that are not common knowledge.

4. What is paraphrasing?

Expressing an author's works in your own words is called paraphrasing. It is a useful skill that allows you to incorporate sources into your writing without overusing direct quotes. Learning effective paraphrasing is essential to good writing. Get in the habit of reading and rereading the original passage until you thoroughly understand it and then setting it aside to write your paraphrase. You still must cite the source of the information.

5. What is common knowledge?

Information can be considered common knowledge if it can be found undocumented in at least five other sources, if it is information the readers will already know or if the information can easily be found in general reference sources.

6. When is there no need to document?

There is no need to document if you are writing about your own experiences or thoughts, if you are using common knowledge, if you are using generally accepted facts, or if you are reporting your own experimental results. When in doubt, cite. When in doubt, ask.

7. If I am suspected of plagiarism, what will happen?

Your instructor may search online to check your sources, require you to present them, and/or ask to meet with you. Remember—buying, or using papers from another person or a website and submitting them as your own is blatant plagiarism and will be dealt with severely.

8. What will happen to me if I plagiarize?

Plagiarism is considered a primary offense of student conduct and can be referred to the Student-Faculty Disciplinary Committee for a judgment. Judgments may range from a specific order to suspension. See the college catalog for details.

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