

Statement of Plagiarism

Plagiarism

Whenever anyone, whether student or professional scholar, submits any piece of writing bearing his name as author, he is understood to claim that all of the ideas, opinions, facts, figures, conclusions, revisions, and words are his own original work unless he has specifically indicated otherwise. To fail to acknowledge any of one's sources of information or help is considered to be plagiarism. Whether those sources are published or unpublished, written or oral, is irrelevant. In simpler terms, plagiarism is a matter of dishonesty, of stealing.

In a university one of the fundamental duties of a teacher is to evaluate the abilities and achievements of his students. The teacher's judgment must, in large part, be based upon the evidence of various pieces of the student's writing, which may include exercises, quizzes, examinations, reports, essays, and research papers. Therefore, any student who submits someone else's work as his own is guilty of a deception and deprives the teacher of a reliable basis on which to judge ability.

The Result of Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the most serious academic offense at a university. Instructors who discover students cheating in this way on written work may fail them in the course. It is the student's responsibility to ask the instructor what his or her policy is for dealing with cases of plagiarism; it is the duty of each instructor to specify clearly to students what penalty they will impose in cases of plagiarism.

How to Avoid Plagiarism

Sometimes students, even those with good intentions, find it difficult to apply the general definition of plagiarism to specific circumstances. The following statements spell out what is generally understood to come under the heading of plagiarism.

There are basically two ways in which you may use sources in a paper:

- (1) you may use the exact words of the original source (direct quotation) or
- (2) you may use the ideas from the source but put them in your own words (paraphrase). In any case, adhere strictly to the following standards:

- (1) Direct Quotations: If you decide to quote a long or short passage or even a phrase of only three or four words, remember the following:
 - (a) You must copy the material you are quoting exactly as it appears in the original, down to the smallest detail of punctuation.
 - (b) You must set off all quoted material, regardless of length, with quotation marks. (The exception is indented quotations. In this case the indentation itself takes the place of quotation marks.)
 - (c) You must identify the source of every direct quotation, regardless of length, in a footnote.
- (2) Paraphrases: If you wish to use the facts, opinions, or ideas, from a source, but to express them in your own words, remember the following:
 - (a) You must be absolutely faithful to the sense of the source. That is, you must not distort the meaning of the original.

- (b) You must restate the author's ideas in your own words. A few isolated key words of an author will necessarily appear in a summary, but merely verbal changes constitute plagiarism. That is, a few omissions, a few substitutions of synonyms, a few verb changes, a few rearrangements of word groups found in a source do not constitute "your own words."
- (c) You must identify the source of every paraphrase in a footnote, even though the paraphrase is in your own words.

An author's discovery of fact of his original interpretation of fact is as much his property as his exact words. You must give credit in footnote form for any statistics, facts, theories, interpretations, ideas, arguments, or opinions which you take from any sources even though you present the material entirely in your own words.

NOTE: Material which can be considered general or common knowledge need not be footnoted. In most cases, for example, a reference to the fact that Franklin D. Roosevelt was President of the United States during World War II or that the United States entered the war after Pearl Harbor was attacked on December 7, 1941, would be considered general knowledge. In some cases, what is and what is not general knowledge is determined by the audience for whom you are writing. If you have any questions about what should or should not be footnoted in your particular case, you should ask the instructor.

The development of intellectual honesty and integrity is a primary goal of a university education. Plagiarism - besides being dishonest in itself - defeats this purpose.

Plagiarism and Documentation: Examples

Below are illustrations of both correct and incorrect handling of source material.

Original Source

"The emergence in widespread practice of the Baconian creed that scientific knowledge means technological power over nature can scarcely be dated before about 1850, save in the chemical industries, where it is anticipated in the eighteenth century. Its acceptance as a normal pattern of action may mark the greatest event in human history since the invention of agriculture, and perhaps in nonhuman terrestrial history as well. <5>

<5>Lynn White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis," Science (March 10, 1967), p. 1203.

Paraphrase: Plagiarized

The widespread use of the Baconian creed that scientific understanding means technological power can hardly be dated before 1850, except for chemical

industries, where it is anticipated in the 1700's, this being accepted as a usual pattern of action may be the most important event in history since agriculture was invented, and in nonhuman earthly history, too. <5>

Paraphrase: Correct

One of the most important events, in either human or natural history, occurred with the general application of the principle that mankind can exercise control over nature by applying what is learned through science, a notion of Bacon's first applied in the 1700s in the chemical industries but more generally only after about 1805. <5>

The phrasing of the plagiarized example is much too close to the original.

In summary: you have cheated

- if you quote without using quotation marks or a proper footnote;
- if you quote without using quotation marks even with a proper footnote;
- if you paraphrase improperly or too closely even with a footnote;
- if you paraphrase properly but do not use a proper footnote;
- If you use a fact, idea, etc., that is not common knowledge without footnoting, or;
- if you fabricate sources and quotations or either one to make it appear you have based your work on research when you have not in fact done so.

***Questions about any of these matters should be directed to your instructor.

The statement of academic dishonesty adopted by the Board of Regents of Murray State University on February 14, 1975 reads as follows:

Cheating, plagiarism (submitting another person's material as one's own, or doing work for another person which will receive academic credit) are all impermissible. This includes the use of unauthorized books, notebooks, or other sources in order to secure or give help during an examination, the unauthorized copying of examinations, assignments, reports, or term papers, or the presentation of unacknowledged material as if it were the student's own work. Disciplinary action will be taken beyond the academic discipline administered by the faculty member who teaches the course in which the cheating took place.