

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is using someone else's ideas and words without giving them proper credit.

Plagiarism can be intentional:

- Copying an entire post or article
- Hiring someone to write your paper
- Copying a large section of text without citing it
- Claiming ideas as your own when they are not
- Repurposing your own paper for another class without instructor permission

Plagiarism can be unintentional:

- Not understanding the citation system and missing key elements of source attribution
- Not understanding paraphrasing fully and accidentally directly quoting words or phrases
- Misattributing a quote or idea to wrong source
- Not verifying the citations provided by a digital resource

When should I cite to avoid plagiarizing?

Always give credit where it is due. If you have any questions regarding whether someone else should have credit, ask your teacher or check out the Purdue OWL's "Should I Cite This?" poster.

You should credit:

- Words or ideas in any medium including, books, newspapers, songs, websites, TV programs, movies, letters, advertisements.
- Information through interviewing or conversing in any form.
- When you copy exact words or unique phrases.
- When you use someone else's visual aids including diagrams, charts, illustrations, and pictures.
- When you reuse digital media including audio and videos.

You do not need to credit:

- Your own lived experiences.
- Your own results from labs or experiments.
- Your own artwork and media such as images, video, and audio.
- "Common knowledge" such as folklore, common sense observations, myths, urban legends, and historical events.
- Generally accepted facts.
- A work or author mentioned in passing.
- A quick allusion to a cultural touchstone.
- An epigraph.

What could I happen if I plagiarize?

Every classroom will have its own list of procedures. You should reference the syllabus for more information.

If you plagiarize your instructor may

- Set a meeting with you and use it as a learning opportunity.
- Begin disciplinary proceedings.
- Automatically fail your paper.
- Automatically fail you in the class.
- Create a note in your Official Transcript, needed to apply to jobs and colleges.
- Give you detention, suspension, or expulsion.

Some of these consequences may seem extreme, but it is a crime and ethical dilemma. Remember – you are in school to learn and produce original work. You are doing yourself a disservice by plagiarizing.

If you find yourself running out of time for a project, one of the main reasons students may plagiarize, it is always better to communicate with your teacher. Your teacher wants you to succeed, but they cannot help you unless you let them know you need more resources or time.

How can I avoid being accused of plagiarism?

- As you research, take note of every source you use as you go. Have a running reference page that you add to as you work. You can also number these and write numbers next to your notes, so you know which reference corresponds to that information for in-text citations.
- Keep notes and previous drafts of papers in case someone else steals your paper.
- Do not save your paper in the same file, but instead use a numbering system and the Save As function. If you are using online files, save them as multiple versions.
- Password protect your computer whenever you leave your paper unattended, even for short periods of time.
- Password protect your files.