

Quick Tips



Plagiarism

Are you afraid of being accused of plagiarism? Plagiarism is seen as a very serious offence. Punishment can range from a zero for your essay to failure of your course, or even to expulsion from your school. "Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's ideas or words as your own. Whether deliberate or accidental, plagiarism is a serious and often punishable

Let's define plagiarism.

n 1: a piece of writing that has been copied from someone else and is presented as being your own work.

2: the act of plagiarizing; taking someone's words or ideas as if they were your own."

(Wordnet 2.0, Princeton University, 2003)

How do I avoid it?

- Use your own words and ideas.

Practice is essential to learning. Each time you choose your words, order your thoughts, and convey your ideas, you can improve your writing.

- Give credit for copied, adapted, or paraphrased material.

If you repeat another's exact words, you **MUST** use quotation marks and cite the source. If you adapt a chart or paraphrase a sentence, you must still cite. Paraphrase means that you restate the author's ideas, meaning, and information in your own words.

- Avoid using others' work with minor "cosmetic" changes.

Examples: using "less" for "fewer," reversing the order of a sentence, changing terms in a computer code, or altering a spread sheet layout. If the work is essentially the same, give credit.

- There are no "freebies."

ALWAYS cite words, information, and ideas you use if they are new to you (learned in your research). No matter where you find it -- even in an encyclopedia or on the Internet -- you cite it!

- Beware of "common knowledge."

You don't have to cite "common knowledge," **BUT** the fact must really **be** commonly known.

- When in doubt, cite.

Better to be safe than not to give credit when you should.

