Plagiarism: What You Need to Know

What is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is using someone else’s work without giving credit to that person.

Plagiarism is literary theft of a person’s work, whether it is a phrase from a sentence, a graphic, a chart, raw data, music—anything. Even a person’s original ideas are considered the person’s work.

The word “plagiarism” is, in fact, derived from the Latin plagiarus, meaning “kidnapper.”

How to Avoid Plagiarism: 6 Tips

1. **Use your words and your ideas in your writing.**
   Yes, you can quote someone or use other’s opinions and work in your writing, but ultimately you are writing to add your own perspective, your argument, and your research to the community. *Don't let your paper become just a repetition of what everyone else says.*

2. **Give credit where credit is due.**
   Whether you are quoting someone using quotation marks or just paraphrasing in your own words, you must cite the source.

3. **Always refer to your source—no matter what you are using from that source.**
   Cite your source not only when you quote someone, but also when you paraphrase someone’s thoughts, use an illustration from someone else, copy a graph or chart or picture, or take something from another source and adapt it to your context. *If it wasn’t yours to begin with, don’t give the impression that it is—cite your source.*

4. **Always refer to your source—no matter what your source is.**
   If you get the information from somewhere, that “somewhere” must be specified, whether it’s an article, a pamphlet, a book, an encyclopedia, an Internet site, a radio program, or any other source.

5. **If you are using information that you think “everybody just knows” . . .**
   First, make sure that everybody is right. Second, make sure that everybody knows. If you need to get dates, figures, or any other kind of data to make your statement, then everybody does not know. Cite your source.

6. **If in doubt, cite your source.**

For Ohio Dominican University’s policies regarding plagiarism and academic integrity, see the current ODU Student Handbook.

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Why Is Plagiarism Such an Important Issue?

1. **Plagiarizing is a form of dishonesty and cheating, whether intentional or unintentional.**
   Avoiding plagiarism is a matter of academic and personal integrity.

2. **As you learn to write, you learn to think; and thinking is what education is all about.**
   You may use others’ opinions and work in your writing, as long as you cite your sources, but ultimately you want to add your own perspective, thoughts, arguments, and research.

Citing Sources: What You Need to Have

(1) **Acknowledgement of source in a list of sources at the end of your paper**
   - List all of your sources, giving complete information for each source, in a list named typically Works Cited, Bibliography, or References, based on your style.
   - Check with your professor to find out if you should use MLA, APA, or another style.

(2) **Acknowledgement of source within your paper, every time you use it**
   - Typically cite the source directly in the same sentence you use the source.
   - Typically at least 2 pieces of information about the source
   - Always refer to your citation manual for the appropriate method and style to cite sources.

**Method #1: Within the body of your text**
Minimally, refer to the author’s last name in your text. One standard method is placing in parentheses the author’s last name with the page number of the cited material. This sentence is an example (Name 123). Check with your professor to find out if you should use MLA, APA, or another style; each style has a preferred method.

**Method #2: Using footnotes or endnotes**
Use just numbers in the body of your text and then brief citation information correspondingly numbered at the bottom of the page or at the end of the paper. This handout employs footnotes.
- Always refer to your citation manual for the appropriate method and style to cite sources.

(3) **Quotation marks if quoting – or proper indenting, depending on length of text**
- Always refer to your citation manual for the appropriate method and style to cite sources.

For detailed guides to citing, visit the library homepage. Click on Research Tools & Services > Research Help.

Are You Sure You Aren’t Plagiarizing?

Visit our online, interactive Plagiarism guide to make sure you know the essentials to avoiding plagiarism—the concepts, how to recognize it, & how to avoid it!

For personal assistance, visit The Write Place, part of the Academic Resource Center, located in Spangler 206B.