



Preventing Plagiarism

What IS Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional theft of someone else's intellectual property (ideas). Intellectual property can be in the form of written or spoken words, music, film, websites, or inventions. If the student uses the ideas of others, and fails to credit the author, that constitutes plagiarism.

Intentional plagiarism is fairly obvious — turning in someone else's paper as one's own or cutting and pasting portions of someone else's work into a paper without citing it is widely recognized as plagiarism.

Unintentional plagiarism occurs when students fail to differentiate between common knowledge and something that needs to be cited. That the earth revolves around the sun is common knowledge; Galileo does not have to be cited.

- **Direct quotes** — A quote from Galileo's work does need to be cited because by quoting a student is incorporating the exact thoughts of Galileo into their paper.
- **Paraphrasing** — Paraphrasing is putting Galileo's quote into your own words. You may use different words and change the sentence around, but it is still Galileo's idea and a paraphrase still needs to be cited.

The bulk of a research paper should be the student's work. Cited sources are only part of a it. Instructors expect students to merge their own ideas with those of accepted authorities to create a new work.

How Does Plagiarism Happen?

1. Not taking accurate notes of sources when researching may lead to fudging the citation as best one can.
2. Waiting until the last minute to write a paper may lead to cutting and pasting off the web without citing.
3. Fear of the writing process causes students to use someone else's words rather than their own.
4. Misunderstanding when and how to cite leads to inaccurate, non-existent or over-cited research papers.

Instructors will inform students of the citation style needed for research papers in their subject area. The two most commonly used Style Manuals are MLA (Modern Language Association), for English and the Humanities and APA (American Psychological Association) for Social Sciences. Although the formats differ in detail, their purpose is the same — to lead the reader to the source of the writer's information. The key ingredients for a citation are the author's name, the title of the article or book, the publishing information (book publisher or journal title), the date of publication and page numbers.

No Citation Necessary

Common knowledge — if a fact or idea is well known, you do not need to cite a source unless you quote a source to establish that fact in your paper. For instance, citing would be necessary if you used a specific dictionary's definition of a well known word instead of defining it in your own terms.

Paraphrasing

Using your own words to summarize a source's ideas shows you understand the idea and are blending it into your own work.

- However, even if you change the words and the sentence structure, you are still using the idea - cite the source.

Manage the Research Process

- Research well in advance of writing the paper.
- Keep careful notes of citation information or make photocopies of the title pages of sources you plan to use. Note page numbers.
- Organize your notes for easy reference as you write. Note cards were invented for this!



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Managing the Research

Students need to know the citation format the instructor requires to gather the correct information and to avoid backtracking when creating the bibliography or works cited page.

Books: print the page from the library catalog that shows the author, title and publication date or photocopy the title page from the book itself. Note the page numbers you need to cite.

Articles: article databases offer a choice of citation formats when printing the article. You also need to cite the database. Write down the citation information on your photocopy of hard copy journals and newspaper articles. Double-check the database's citation form against your instructor's preferred form. When in doubt, match the instructor's form as best you can.

Websites: websites lack page numbers. Print out or copy the website URL of the exact page on the website that is used, for example:

<http://www.privacyrights.org/fs/fs29-education.htm>

Websites

Avoiding Plagiarism: The Owl at Purdue University

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/>

Owl has an excellent section devoted to understanding what plagiarism is and how to avoid it as well as the mechanics of writing, writing for different disciplines and using MLA and APA styles.

Plagiarism: What it is and How to Recognize & Avoid It

<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>

From Indiana University, this tutorial offers examples of various types of plagiarism and what to do to correct the problem. Special emphasis on how to paraphrase.

Copyright

<http://www.lib.utsystem.edu/copyright>

A related issue, copyright governs use of intellectual property without the express permission of the copyright owner. The Internet has made legal and illegal sharing of digital copies of music, video, software and text easier than ever. The pitfalls of unbridled file transfer.

Lakeland's Online Guides

From the Lakeland Library homepage click on the Guides & Help menu. Select Finding Sources, then Writing & Citing to find web pages and printable handouts for:

- **Picking a Topic**
<http://library.lakelandcc.edu/topic.html>
- **Evaluating Resources**
<http://library.lakelandcc.edu/sourceevaluation.html>
- **Using MLA** — online printable handouts for citing books, magazines, websites and making in-text citations.
<http://library.lakelandcc.edu/writeandcite.html>

See also:

- **Lakeland's Academic Honesty Policy from the Student Handbook**
<http://library.lakelandcc.edu/copyright.html>
- **Documenting Sources Policy from the Lakeland English Department's Handbook**
http://www.lakelandcc.edu/academic/faculty/mclaughlinp/eng_handbook/graduate.htm#doc

Plagiarism Court: You be the Judge

<http://www.fairfield.edu/documents/Library/plagicourt.swf>

Determining what really constitutes plagiarism can be difficult for students. This online game clears up many of those grey areas.

Synthesis: Using the Work of Others

<http://departments.umf.maine.edu/departments/library/plagiarism/>

From the University of Maine, website outlining all the issues around plagiarism and copyright issues. A useful list of DON'T's, two online games that clarify such things as self-plagiarism (using the same paper for two classes) and copyright infringement. How to cite sources on websites, for speeches and for class presentations.

Order books, find and read articles, read full-text journals and e-books 24/7 at

<http://library.lakelandcc.edu>