

Common Forms of Plagiarism

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Someone's words, ideas or images are often called their intellectual property. Using someone's intellectual property so that it appears to be your own is called plagiarism. It is a serious offense and should always be avoided. Some source abuses are very obvious and some are less evident. Most institutions have their own guidelines and policies regarding plagiarism. You should become familiar with those policies so that you do not unknowingly violate them. There are five common forms of plagiarism.

Submitting another Writer's Paper

The most blatant form of plagiarism is taking an entire piece of writing and claiming it as your own work. Some examples include downloading an article, reformatting it and submitting it as your own, buying an essay from a paper writing service, taking a free paper off the Internet and turning in another student's work as your own.

Using Copy-and-Paste

It is unethical to take chunks of material from another source and splice them into your paper without acknowledgment. Even if you change some words, it would still be plagiarism. By taking a statement out of its original context and forcing it into yours, you make a source seem to say something that it really did not.

Failing to Cite a Source

Borrowed material must be documented. Even if you use information accurately and fairly, do not neglect to cite the source. Correctly summarizing a passage and not citing it is still plagiarism.

Neglecting Necessary Quotation Marks

Use the exact wording of a source and failing to enclose it in quotation marks is considered plagiarism. Whether it is a paragraph or a phrase, enclose the wording from the source in quotation marks. When you get a quotation wrong or paraphrase a source poorly, you misrepresent the original text.

Confusing Borrowed Material with Your Own Ideas

Through carelessness, often in note-taking, you may confuse borrowed material with your own thinking. Failure to indicate that the material was borrowed, whether by mistake or otherwise, is still plagiarism.

References

Manual for Writers of Term Papers, 6th Ed.; Kate L. Turabian; 1996
The Elements of Style, 4th Ed.; William Strunk, Jr., E. B. White; 1999