

# Student Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism



## WHAT IS PLAGIARISM?

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's words or ideas as your own. The following are *all* examples of plagiarism:

- Quoting or paraphrasing material without citing the source of that material. Sources can include Web sites, magazines, newspapers, textbooks, journals, TV and radio programs, movies and videos, photographs and drawings, charts and graphs; any information or ideas that are not your own.
- Quoting a source without using quotation marks -- even if you do cite it.
- Buying a paper online or downloading a paper from a free site.
- Copying or using work done by another student.
- Citing sources you didn't use.
- Turning in the same paper for more than one class without the permission of both teachers.

## NOTE TAKING

The best way to avoid plagiarism is to take careful notes. When taking notes, always do the following:

- First, read the entire text and summarize it in your own words. Then paraphrase important points and copy usable quotes. Enclose quotes in quotation marks.
- Carefully distinguish between material that is quoted, material that is paraphrased, material that is summarized, and your own words and ideas. Consider using different colored ink for each type of source.
- Include in your notes all the information you will need to cite your sources.
- Copy all source information into your working bibliography using the format your teacher has provided.
- Print any Web pages you use. Write the URL and the date on the Web page if it isn't included on the printout.
- Save all your notes and printouts until you receive your final grade.

## CITING SOURCES

You must cite the source of every quote, every paraphrased passage, and every summarized idea you use in a research paper. Commonly known facts, such as dates or definitions, do not need to be cited unless you take those facts directly from a specific reference source, such as an encyclopedia. If you're not sure whether a source should be cited, include it just in case.

Sources must be cited both in the body of the paper and in the bibliography. In the body of the paper, you must do the following:

- Copy quoted material exactly, enclose it in quotations marks, and name the author immediately before or after the quote. Use the same procedure for summarized or paraphrased material, but omit the quotation marks.
- Cite the source information (title, publisher, date, and so on) for the quote or paraphrased or summarized information either in parentheses within the text or in a footnote.

The bibliography is a list of all the sources you used -- both those you cited and those you used for research, but did not cite directly. The bibliography should follow the format your teacher has provided.

## WRITING THE PAPER

The following tips on the writing process also will help you avoid plagiarism.

- Read your notes carefully and make sure you understand the material before you begin to write.
- Write a preliminary draft without looking at your notes. Leave spaces where you think you'll want to include quotes or supporting material.
- Use your own words as much as possible. No one expects you to write like an expert or a professional writer. You should, however, write like a serious, intelligent student.
- Cite all sources as you write your rough draft.
- Read through your final draft and make sure all uncited ideas are your own.