

Tips for Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism

Academic institutions care about proper citation because: it reflects a student's integrity, ability to give others due credit for their work, and ability to demonstrate that a student can understand, interpret, analyze, and integrate the work of others into their own developing ideas. Please read the University of Michigan-Flint's [Statement on Academic Integrity](#) for a detailed description of plagiarism and academic misconduct in writing. It also provides a clear explanation of what needs to be cited and why in your paper. Furthermore, there are many forms and causes of plagiarism. Becoming aware of the pitfalls and not waiting to get help are keys to avoiding plagiarism.

Consequences of plagiarism: Whether plagiarism is accidental or intentional, there are levels of consequences. Determining the level of seriousness and/or consequences is up to the individual instructor to decide. Typical consequences could include, but are not limited to the following:

- Individual conferences with an instructor to discuss the issue
- Re-doing a paper
- Required visits for tutoring or support
- Lower your grade on a paper
- Failing your paper
- Failure from your class
- Your plagiarism reported to the Dean and Academic Standards Committee
- Expulsion from school
- Jeopardize future educational or job opportunities as a result of poor performance; adversely affecting faculty recommendations on your behalf

Steps to avoid plagiarism:

- Talk to the instructor early to clarify instructor expectations and get help
- Use citation manuals and guides effectively
- Use online citation support services like Purdue OWL
- Make an appointment with a tutor in the Writing Center
- Take the Library's How to Avoid Plagiarism workshop
- Seek help and support through CAPS: The Counseling and Disability support services on campus if there is a need



Caution: Instructors know that paraphrasing and citing are challenging skills and take time and practice to learn to do them well. The examples of plagiarism below are provided to help you understand what plagiarism is, how it could happen, where to get help to avoid it, and to understand that whether it was intentional or not, if you plagiarize, you are still responsible and may incur consequences. However, this is not an exhaustive list of examples of plagiarism.

 Accidental Plagiarism Even if unintentional, accidental plagiarism could still have consequences.	
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Not understanding how to use citation methods and/or misusing them ● Forgetting to cite something meant to be cited
Reasons it might occur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unfamiliar with citation styles and methods ● Feeling frustrated with the complexity of those methods ● Waiting until the end to put in citations; only using placeholders and forgetting which source it came from
Resources for prevention and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use the UM-Flint English Department's, Citing Sources ● Use a citation manual or Purdue OWL for correct ways to cite ● Go to the Writing Center for help understanding how to use a particular citation style if it feels overwhelming, Marian E. Wright Writing Center: 810-766-6602 ● In-text citations are short—add them every time something is quoted or paraphrased to save time, frustration, and risk later ● Learn more about what Plagiarism is

 Patchwork Plagiarism Even if you tried to paraphrase, but still plagiarized, it could still have consequences.	
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Splicing different sources together, but only giving partial credit to one or more of them, while others are left out ● Using pieces of an author's exact words or phrases intermingled with your own ideas or paraphrases of the text, but not using quotes for author's exact words or a citation indicating what came from the author
Reasons it might occur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Not sure how to weave sources together effectively, or wanting to sound knowledgeable. Taking information as common knowledge, when it's not. ● Not sure how to cite and weave information from a source with your own ideas
Resources for prevention and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ask for help or clarification from your instructor ● Go to the Writing Center for help understanding how to paraphrase Marian E. Wright Writing Center: 810-766-6602 ● Be aware of the dangers of assuming "common knowledge." Here is a link to OWL that explains common knowledge: "Is It Plagiarism Yet?" from Purdue OWL ● Purdue OWL: Paraphrasing has great resources on how to cite, paraphrase, and integrate ideas with a source

 Summarizing Without Credit Plagiarism You cannot adopt another's work to sound academic. It is plagiarism and can have consequences.	
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Summarizing the work of an author, but passing it off as your own idea
Reasons it might occur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Trying to practice one's academic voice and knowledge about a topic, and assuming the information is part of a field's common knowledge ● Knowingly using too much of someone else's ideas, as a way to boost one's own control or authority in the paper without crediting the source
Resources for prevention and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use the citation manual or Purdue OWL for correct ways to cite ● Ask for help and clarification from your instructor ● Go to the Writing Center for help understanding how to use a particular citation style if it feels overwhelming. Marian E. Wright Writing Center: 810-766-6602 ● Attend one of the Library Plagiarism Workshops ● Ask a librarian: Ask Us ● In-text citations are short. Use them every time you add a direct quote or paraphrase so you save time and frustration later trying to remember them ● Use Purdue OWL's sample papers to see what a summary, direct quote, and paraphrase look like <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MLA Sample Paper ● APA Sample Paper

 Over Using a Source is Plagiarism Relying too much on someone else's work is plagiarism and could have consequences.	
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Using too much of a source either through direct quotes or paraphrasing that has little of your own thoughts or contributions ● Using too many block/long quotes from a text
Reasons it might occur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Feeling unsure about how to paraphrase or weave one's own voice into the paper ● Procrastination/rushing to get a paper done
Resources for prevention and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Could ask professor for help if unsure ● Use the Writing Center for help understanding how to paraphrase Marian E. Wright Writing Center: 810-766-6602 ● Use Writing Center appointments as a time management tool to keep on task so you'll have time to research, write and cite, revise, and edit

 Self-Plagiarism Even if you wrote it, but turned it in somewhere else first, it's still plagiarism. It can have serious consequences.	
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Turning in a paper you wrote for one class and passing it off as an original work for another class without instructor's knowledge and consent
Reasons it might occur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Did realize self-plagiarism was unethical and/or not allowed ● Didn't think the professor would know or find out ● Feeling stressed about time and used a shortcut
Resources for prevention and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ask about instructor's preferences about building on previous work ● Self-plagiarism is wrong and does not contribute to one's learning and growth

 Blatant Plagiarism The most serious offenses of plagiarism and could incur the most serious consequences.	
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Buying papers and passing them off as one's own work ● Using a classmate's, friend's, or someone else's work and passing it off as one's own ● Copying and pasting text without citations and passing it off as one's own ● Fabricating sources to fill in information in your paper
Reasons it might occur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Didn't think the professor would know or find out ● Feeling stressed about time and using a shortcut
Resources for prevention and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Professors can and do figure this out. A student's voice and a source's voice are distinct. Choices like this can and are discovered. It's better to accept a failing grade for the paper than risk expulsion or failure from the course for turning in a paper that isn't your own. ● If you are stressed and tempted to buy or use someone else's work, talk to your professor, instead. Ask about possible extensions, tutoring, or support ● If life/school is overwhelming, contact CAPS, the Campus Counseling and Psychological Services center for support. They may also be able to act as a potential advocate for other classes too. ● CAPS: 810-762-3456 "CAPS provides services to enrolled students that help to maximize their academic and personal potential. Students are provided with counseling, and therapy. Workshops are available on topics such as stress management, time management, and healthy relationships. All services are provided at no charge to students" (CAPS, 2019).

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