

Plagiarism and How to Avoid It



Definition

To plagiarize is to present another person's words or ideas as if they were your own. It is a form of stealing and is an extremely serious offense which can result in failure of a course or loss of credit for an assignment. It can be intentional or unintentional, but either way, it is still considered an offense.

Guidelines to Avoid Plagiarism

1. Always give credit to the source of ideas and words that are not your own.
2. Document these sources accurately and completely (see "Documentation")
3. If you quote someone else, put the quoted material in quotation marks.
4. If you use someone else's ideas, tell whose ideas they are.
5. If you summarize or paraphrase someone else's words tell where you obtained the idea and the author of that idea.

Taking Notes and Avoiding Plagiarism

1. Record the correct documentation as you take the notes (see "Taking Notes").
2. Be sure to include the source and all necessary information as you take the notes. Having to go back after you have finished with a source will add a great deal of extra time and effort, perhaps causing you to plagiarize.
3. Be consistent in your style of note taking. Using the correct format in this procedure will help to avoid problems (see "Preparing Note Cards").