

Agenda
The Pitfalls of Plagiarism:
Writing at the Graduate Level and with Academic Integrity

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- Academic Integrity
 - Plagiarism: What is it and how to avoid it

- Preparing to Write
 - Planning & organization
 - Finding sources
 - Critical reading
 - Effective note-taking
 - Documenting sources
 - Quotations, paraphrases, summaries

- The Writing Process
 - Keys to effective writing style:
 - Organization – the outline
 - Summarizing your sources
 - Simplicity
 - Clarity
 - Effective word choices
 - Writing a great paper

- The Editing Process

Frequently Asked Questions About Plagiarism

What is Plagiarism? (n.d.) Retrieved August 31, 2011, from

http://www.plagiarism.org/learning_center/what_is_plagiarism.html

Plagiarism in the information age is not always a cut and dry issue. Read on to find answers for frequently asked questions about plagiarism and its consequences.

What is plagiarism?

Simply put, plagiarism is the use of another's original words or ideas as though they were your own. Any time you borrow from an original source and do not give proper credit, you have committed plagiarism and violated U.S. copyright laws. (See our [What is Plagiarism?](#) page for more detailed information on plagiarism.)

What are copyright laws?

Copyright laws exist to protect our intellectual property. They make it illegal to reproduce someone else's expression of ideas or information without permission. This can include music, images, written words, video, and a variety of other media.

At one time, a work was only protected by copyright if it included a copyright trademark (the © symbol). According to laws established in 1989, however, works are now copyright protected with or without the inclusion of this symbol.

Anyone who reproduces copyrighted material improperly can be prosecuted in a court of law. It does not matter if the form or content of the original has been altered -- as long as any material can be shown to be substantially similar to the original, it may be considered a violation of the Copyright Act.

For information on how long a copyright lasts, see the section below on the [public domain](#).

Are all published works copyrighted?

Actually, no. The Copyright Act only protects works that express original ideas or information. For example, you could borrow liberally from the following without fear of plagiarism:

1. Compilations of readily available information, such as the phone book
2. # Works published by the U.S. government
3. Facts that are not the result of original research (such as the fact that there are fifty U.S. states, or that carrots contain Vitamin A)
4. Works in the public domain (provided you cite properly)

Can facts be copyrighted?

Yes, in some situations. Any "facts" that have been published as the result of individual research are considered the intellectual property of the author.

Do I have to cite sources for every fact I use?

No. You do not have to cite sources for facts that are not the result of unique individual research. Facts that are readily available from numerous sources and generally known to the public are considered "common knowledge," and are not protected by copyright laws. You can use these facts liberally in your paper without citing authors. If you are unsure whether or not a fact is common knowledge, you should probably cite your source just to be safe. Please visit Purdue's guide, ["Deciding if Something is Common Knowledge."](#)

Does it matter how much was copied?

Not in determining whether or not plagiarism is a crime. If even a small part of a work is found to have been plagiarized, it is still considered a copyright violation. However, the amount that was copied probably will have a bearing on the severity of the punishment. A work that is almost entirely plagiarized will almost certainly incur greater penalties than a work that only includes a small amount of plagiarized material.

If I change the words, do I still have to cite the source?

Changing only the words of an original source is NOT sufficient to prevent plagiarism. You must cite a source whenever you borrow ideas as well as words.

If I cite the source, can I still be accused of plagiarism?

You are allowed to borrow ideas or phrases from other sources provided you [cite them properly](#) and your usage is consistent with the guidelines set by [fair use](#) laws. As a rule, however, you should be careful about borrowing too liberally -- if the case can be made that your work consists predominantly of someone else's words or ideas, you may still be susceptible to charges of plagiarism. Also, if you follow the words of a source too closely, and do not use quotation marks, it can be considered plagiarism even if you cite the source.

If I write something somebody else already wrote, but I didn't know they wrote it, is that still plagiarism?

While it is possible that you might write on the same topic as someone else, odds are that you will not have exactly the same ideas or express them in exactly the same way. It is highly unlikely that you would be accused of plagiarizing a source you have never read. Be careful, however, of "accidentally" plagiarizing from sources you have read and forgotten -- if your ideas turn out to have been influenced by a source that you read but failed to cite for any reason, you could be guilty of plagiarism.

What are the punishments for plagiarism?

As with any wrongdoing, the degree of intent (see below) and the nature of the offense determine its status. When plagiarism takes place in an academic setting, it is most often handled by the individual instructors and the academic institution involved. If, however, the plagiarism involves money, prizes, or job placement, it constitutes a crime punishable in court.

Academic Punishments

Most colleges and universities have zero tolerance for plagiarists. In fact, academic standards of intellectual honesty are often more demanding than governmental copyright laws. If you have plagiarized a paper whose copyright has run out, for example, you are no less likely to be disciplined than if you had plagiarized copyrighted material.

A plagiarized paper almost always results in failure for the assignment, frequently in failure for the course, and sometimes in expulsion.

Legal Punishments

Most cases of plagiarism are considered misdemeanors, punishable by fines of anywhere between \$100 and \$50,000 -- and up to one year in jail.

Plagiarism can also be considered a felony under certain state and federal laws. For example, if a plagiarist copies and earns more than \$2,500 from copyrighted material, he or she may face up to \$250,000 in fines and up to ten years in jail.

Institutional Punishments

Most corporations and institutions will not tolerate any form of plagiarism. There have been a significant number of cases around the world where people have lost their jobs or been denied positions as a result of plagiarism.

Does intention matter?

Ignorance of the law is never an excuse. So even if you did not realize you were plagiarizing, you may still be found guilty. However, there are different punishments for willful infringement, or deliberate plagiarism, and innocent infringement, or accidental plagiarism. To distinguish between these, courts recognize what is called the good faith defense. If you can demonstrate, based on the amount you borrowed and the way you have incorporated it in your own work, that reasonably believed what you did was fair use, chances are that your sentence will be lessened substantially.

What is "fair use," anyway?

The United States government has established rough guidelines for determining the nature and amount of work that may be "borrowed" without explicit written consent. These are called "fair use" laws, because they try to establish whether certain uses of original material are reasonable. The laws themselves are vague and complicated. Below we have condensed them into some rubrics you can apply to help determine the fairness of any given usage.

The nature of your use. If you have merely copied something, it is unlikely to be considered fair use. But if the material has been transformed in an original way through interpretation, analysis, etc., it is more likely to be considered "fair use."

The amount you've used. The more you've "borrowed," the less likely it is to be considered fair use. What percentage of your work is "borrowed" material? What percentage of the original did you use? The lower the better.

The effect of your use on the original. If you are creating a work that competes with the original in its own market, and may do the original author economic harm, any substantial borrowing is unlikely to be considered fair use. The more the content of your work or its target audience differs from that of the original, the better.

We recommend the following site for more information on "fair use" and Copyright laws:
[University of Maryland - Copyright Laws](http://www.umaryland.edu/~copyright/)

What is the "public domain?"

Works that are no longer protected by copyright, or never have been, are considered "public domain." This means that you may freely borrow material from these works without fear of plagiarism, provided you make proper attributions.

How do I know if something is public domain or not?

The terms and conditions under which works enter the public domain are a bit complicated. In general, anything published more than 75 years ago is now in the public domain. Works published after 1978 are protected for the lifetime of the author plus 70 years. The laws governing works published fewer than 75 years ago but before 1978 are more complicated, although generally copyright protection extended 28 years after publication plus 47 more years if the copyright was renewed, totaling 75 years from the publication date. If you are uncertain about whether or not a work is in the public domain, it is probably best to contact a lawyer or act under the assumption that it is still protected by copyright laws.

What is Plagiarism? (n.d.) Retrieved August 31, 2011, from
<http://www.plagiarism.org/learning_center/what_is_plagiarism.html>

Academic Dishonesty and its Consequences: Excerpts from the MSU Code of Conduct

Montclair State University Code of Conduct (n.d.). Retrieved August 30, 2011 from
<http://www.montclair.edu/deanstudents/regulations1.html>

VIOLATIONS

Academic Dishonesty

Minimum sanction: Probation; Maximum sanction: Expulsion

Academic dishonesty is any attempt by a student to submit as his/her own work that which has not been completed by him/her or to give improper aid to another student in the completion of an assignment, i.e., plagiarism. No student may intentionally or knowingly give or receive aid on any test or examination, or on any academic exercise, that requires independent work. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of technology (i.e., instant messaging, text messaging, or using a camera phone) or any other unauthorized materials, of any sort, to give or receive aid on a test or examination without the express permission of the instructor. The following are examples of academic dishonesty:

1. Copying from another student's paper.
2. Using materials not authorized by the instructor on a test or examination.
3. Collaborating with any other person during a test or examination without authorization from the instructor.
4. Knowingly obtaining, using, buying, selling, transporting or soliciting, in whole or in part, the contents of a non-administered test or examination.
5. Coercing any other person to obtain a non-administered test or examination, or to obtain information about such an examination or test.
6. Substituting for another student, or permitting any other person to substitute for oneself to take a test or examination.
7. Altering test answers and then claiming the instructor improperly graded the test or examination.
8. Collusion or purchased term papers:

Collusion, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing work offered for credit, is academically dishonest. Montclair State University prohibits the preparation for sale and/or subsequent sale of any term paper, thesis, dissertation, essay or other assignment with the knowledge that the assignment will be submitted in whole or in part for academic credit.

9. Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is defined as using another person's words as if they were your own, and the unacknowledged incorporation of those words in one's own work for academic credit. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, submitting, as one's own a project, paper, report, test, program, design, or speech copied from, partially copied, or partially paraphrased work of another (whether the source is printed, under copyright in manuscript form or electronic media) without proper citation. Source citations must be given for works quoted or paraphrased. The above rules apply to any academic dishonesty, whether the work is graded or ungraded, group or individual, written or oral. The following guidelines for written work will assist students in avoiding plagiarism:

- (a) General indebtedness for background information and data must be acknowledged by inclusion of a bibliography of all works consulted;
- (b) Specific indebtedness for a particular idea, or for a quotation of four or more consecutive words from another text, must be acknowledged by footnote or endnote reference to the actual source. Quotations of four words or more from a text must also be indicated by the use of quotation marks;
- (c) Project work shall be considered plagiarism if it duplicates in completely or in part, without citation, the work of another person to an extent that is greater than is commonly accepted. The degree to which imitation without citation is permissible varies from discipline to discipline. Students must consult their instructors before copying another person's work.

ADJUDICATION OF DISCIPLINARY CASES

Academic Dishonesty Procedure

Students are subject to disciplinary action for reasons of academic dishonesty. The faculty plays an integral role in the process for resolving academic dishonesty complaints.

- 1) The faculty member having the suspicion or information of dishonesty should first discuss the matter with the student(s) involved.
- 2) The faculty member should then discuss the situation with the chairperson of the department.
- 3) The chairperson or the faculty member will contact the Dean of Students Office to request information on whether there has been any instance of prior academic dishonesty on the part of the individual(s). If a prior record exists, the case will be referred to the Dean of Students for adjudication. The Dean or his/her designee will follow the procedures for adjudication of non-academic cases. If not, one of the following decisions will be made:

(a) For a student who seems mistaken in practice rather than guilty of intention, or in the case that seems to warrant leniency, the faculty member, consulting with the chairperson, may do any of the following which they deem appropriate:

- (i) Grade the work under question "zero" or "failing"

(ii) Allow the student to demonstrate that s/he can fulfill the assignment through her/his own honest effort if doing this would give her/him beneficial experience and (1) give a full grade for the assignment or (2) average the second grade with the zero in determining the student's final grade.

(iii) Request that the student's name be added to the official listing of students who have committed academic dishonesty with no other conduct proceeding.

(iv) Request that the student's name be added to the official listing of students who have committed academic dishonesty and refer the case to the Dean of Students for adjudication. The Dean or his/her designee will follow the procedures for adjudication of non-academic cases.

(b) For an offense which seems to be a clear case of cheating or which does not seem to warrant leniency, the faculty member, after consulting with the chairperson, may do either or both of the following:

(i) Assign a grade of "F" for the course, pending the results of any or all appeals.

If the semester concludes before adjudication is complete, a grade of "F" will be recorded. (Students should have the right to remain in a class during the term of any course until or unless suspension from the class or the University is imposed.) A grade of "F" so assigned shall not be deemed an academic judgment; rather, it will reflect a sanction imposed for academic dishonesty.

(ii) Request that the student's name be added to the official listing of students who have committed academic dishonesty and refer the case to the Dean of Students for adjudication. The Dean or his/her designee will follow the procedures for adjudication of non-academic cases.

Montclair State University Code of Conduct (n.d.). Retrieved August 30, 2011 from <http://www.montclair.edu/deanstudents/regulations1.html>

HIT PARADE OF ERRORS IN GRAMMAR, PUNCTUATION, & STYLE

Taylor, D., & Procter, M. (n.d.) University of Toronto Writing Center. Retrieved September 1, 2011 from <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/images/stories/Documents/hit-parade-of-errors.pdf>

1. lack of agreement
2. sentence fragments
3. overly-long sentences
4. overuse of passive voice
5. faulty parallelism
6. vague pronouns
7. dangling modifiers
8. squinting modifiers
9. mixed or dead metaphors
10. faulty word choice / faulty diction
11. wordiness
12. comma splices
13. misuse of comma, semicolon, colon

1. FAULTY AGREEMENT

a. Subjects and verbs must agree in number.

- X Recent discoveries about the weather reveals that several cycles are involved.
- √ Recent discoveries about the weather reveal that several cycles are involved.
- X The media was biased in its reporting of the event.
- √ The media were biased in their reporting of the event.

b. Nouns and pronouns must agree in number.

- X A student is free to express their opinion.
- √ A student is free to express his or her opinion.
- √ Students are free to express their opinions.

c. Pronouns must agree with each other.

- X Once one has decided to take the course, you must keep certain policies in mind.
- √ Once you have decided to take the course, you must keep certain policies in mind.

2. SENTENCE FRAGMENTS

A sentence consists of an independent unit with at least a subject and a verb.

- X All of these rules and regulations should be made aware of.
- √ Athletes should be made aware of all these rules and regulations.
- X The liquid was poured into a glass beaker. Being a strong acid.
- √ Because it was a strong acid, the liquid was poured into a glass beaker.

3. OVERLY-LONG SENTENCES (see also #12, comma splices)

A sentence should express only one idea or a clearly connected set of ideas.

- X Home care has been expanding tremendously over the past few years partly due to recent technological advances that enable assessments and treatments to be a part of the home setting which at one time could only be performed within the hospital environment.
- √ Home care has expanded tremendously over the past few years. This increase is partly due to recent technological advances that now make more assessments and treatments possible in the home rather than only in the hospital.

4. OVERUSE OF PASSIVE VOICE

Prefer active verbs to passive verbs, and prefer persons over abstract ideas for the subjects of these verbs.

- X It is through this essay that the proposed benefits of active exercise for Chronic Lower Back Pain (CLBP) will be examined.
- √ This essay will examine the proposed benefits of active exercise for Chronic Lower Back Pain (CLBP).

5. FAULTY PARALLELISM

Building parallel elements into a sentence adds clarity and emphasis.

- X Eating huge meals, snacking between meals, and too little exercise can lead to obesity.
- √ Eating huge meals, snacking between meals, and exercising too little can lead to obesity.
- X Our coach is paid too much, obese, over forty, and a former champion wrestler.
- √ Our coach is a former champion wrestler, but now he is overpaid, overweight, and over forty.

6. VAGUE PRONOUNS

Make sure that pronouns such as it and this refer to something specific.

- X In the report it suggests that moderate exercise is better than no exercise at all.
- √ The report suggests that moderate exercise is better than no exercise at all.
- X The group wanted to meet in January, but this didn't happen until May.
- √ The group wanted to meet in January, but the conference didn't take place until May.

7. DANGLING MODIFIERS

Make sure that a modifying phrase or clause has something to modify.

- X By manipulating the lower back, the pain was greatly eased. (*--implies the pain was doing the manipulating*)
- √ By manipulating the lower back, the therapist greatly eased the pain.
- X When not going to school, my hobbies range from athletics to automobiles. (*--implies the hobbies go to school*)
- √ When I am not going to school, my hobbies range from athletics to automobiles.

8. SQUINTING MODIFIERS

Make sure the modifier clearly refers to the element you want it to modify.

- ✗ The council advises physicians at regular intervals to administer the drug.
- ✓ The council advises physicians to administer the drug at regular intervals.
- ✓ At regular intervals, the council advises physicians to administer the drug.

9. MIXED OR DEAD METAPHORS

Recognize the literal meanings of your metaphors; avoid clichés.

- ✗ Like a bolt from the blue the idea grabbed him, and it soon took its place as one of his hobby-horses.
- ✓ The idea excited him as soon as he heard of it, and it soon became an obsession.

10. FAULTY WORD CHOICE / FAULTY DICTION

Don't use "fancy" words for their own sake; use a dictionary to check words whose meaning you are not sure of.

- ✗ Explaining the rationale for treatment can help distil patients' fears.
- ✓ Explaining the rationale for treatment can help dispel patients' fears.

11. WORDINESS

Don't spin empty words; use the minimum number of words.

- ✗ It is evident that this term is associated with much ambiguity. Many concepts and ideas come to mind upon first hearing this phrase; however, a true grasp of its meaning is quite difficult to establish. Despite this ambiguity . . . [not worth saying -- omit]
- ✗ A definition that can be employed usefully, according to LaPlante et al. (1993), states that "assistive technology. . ."
- ✓ LaPlante et al. (1993) state that "assistive technology . . ."

12. COMMA SPLICES

a. Use a period or semicolon to separate two independent clauses, or join them with a coordinating conjunction.

- ✗ We started to unpack our things, pretty soon clothes were strewn all over the place.
- ✓ We started to unpack our things; pretty soon clothes were strewn all over the place.
- ✓ We started to unpack our things, and pretty soon clothes were strewn all over the place.

b. Use a semicolon as well as a conjunctive adverb to join two independent clauses.

- ✗ Much of the literature advocates stretching preparatory to exercise, however, the mechanisms are not well understood.
- ✓ Much of the literature advocates stretching preparatory to exercise; however, the mechanisms are not well understood.

These are the most common conjunctive adverbs:

however therefore then
therefore nevertheless accordingly
as a result moreover even so
rather indeed for example

13. MISUSE OF COMMA, SEMICOLON, AND COLON

a. Use a comma after each item in a series of three or more.

✗ Many studies indicate favourable results in function, decreased pain and range of motion.

✓ Many studies indicate favourable results in function, decreased pain, and range of motion.

b. Use a comma when you join independent clauses with one of the seven coordinating conjunctions (and, or, nor, but, so, yet, for).

✗ Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

✓ Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

c. Use a semicolon when you join independent clauses without a coordinating conjunction.

✗ Power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely.

✓ Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely.

d. Do not use a comma to separate subject and verb.

✗ His enthusiasm for the subject and his desire to be of help, led him to volunteer.

✓ His enthusiasm for the subject and his desire to be of help led him to volunteer.

e. Use a colon to introduce a list or a long or formal quotation after a complete sentence.

Otherwise make the quotation part of the grammar of your sentence.

✗ Strunk (1995) asserts that: “Too many programmes are already underfinanced” (p. 87).

✓ Strunk (1995) asserts: “Too many programmes are already underfinanced” (p. 87).

✓ Strunk’s assertion (1995) that “Too many programmes are already underfinanced” (p. 87) is based on questionable assumptions.

*Prepared by Dena Taylor, Health Sciences Writing Centre, and Margaret Procter, Writing Support
Over 50 other files giving advice on university writing are available at www.writing.utoronto.ca*

USEFUL WEB SITES

- ✍ Basic writing: Strunk & White <http://www.bartleby.com/141/index.html>
- ✍ Writing assistance <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/index.html>
<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca>
- ✍ Merriam-Webster On-line Dictionary/Thesaurus <http://www.m-w.com/>
- ✍ Plagiarism & how to avoid it <http://www.plagiarism.org/>
- ✍ APA Style & electronic resources <http://www.apastyle.org/pubmanual.html>
<http://www.apastyle.org/index.aspx>

SUGGESTED READING

- ✍ American Psychological Association (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC. (ISBN: 978-1-4338-0559-2).
- ✍ American Psychological Association (2010). *Concise rules of APA style: The official pocket style guide from the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC. (ISBN: 978-1-4338-0560-8).
- ✍ Harvey, G. (2008). *Writing with sources: A guide for students* (2nd ed.). Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing. (ISBN: 978-0-87220-944-2).
- ✍ Harvey, M. (2003). *The nuts and bolts of college writing*. Cambridge, MA: Hackett Publishing. (ISBN: 0-87220-573-8).
- ✍ Mathews, J.R., & Matthews, R.W. (2008). *Successful scientific writing: A step-by-step guide for the biological and medical sciences* (3rd ed.). New York: Cambridge University Press. (ISBN: 978-0-521-69927-3).
- ✍ Rosnow, R. L., & Rosnow, M. (2006). *Writing papers in psychology* (7th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Learning. (ISBN: 0-534-53331-0)
- ✍ Strunk, W. Jr. & White, E.B. (2000). *The elements of style* (4th ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon. (ISBN: 0-205-30902-X).
- ✍ Szuchman, L. T. (2005). *Writing with style: APA style made easy* (3rd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning. (ISBN: 0-534-63432-X)
- ✍ Zinsser, W., (2001). *On writing well, 25th anniversary: The classic guide to writing nonfiction*. New York: Harper-Collins. (ISBN: 0060006641)