

Plagiarism

Definition: The act of taking words or ideas from someone else and not properly acknowledging the source. Unintentional plagiarism is considered equivalent to intentional plagiarism in an academic environment.

Types of Plagiarism:

- Copying a passage (be it a paragraph, sentence, or phrase) word for word and not using quotation marks.
- Putting a passage in your own words but not properly acknowledging the source of the information.
- Using visual material such as charts, graphs, illustrations and not properly acknowledging the source.
- Submitting someone else's work as your own.

Proper Citation: You do not need to cite (or acknowledge) information that may be considered common knowledge. For example, if you read in a text that World War One ran from 1914 – 1918, you would not need to cite that information. Many people know this to be true and no one would disagree with it.

However, if you are expressing someone else's opinion you must acknowledge the source of that information. Note the following example:

Original Passage: "This, it would appear, is the way of Hamlet's tragedy. His supreme gift for philosophic thought allows him to know the universe better than the little world of which he is bodily a part" (Charlton, 102).

The above example uses MLA format. The information is from the following source:

Charlton, H.B. Shakespearian Tragedy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948.

Plagiarized Work: Hamlet's tragedy is that he is so philosophic in nature that he knows the universe at large better than he knows the world of Denmark.

Notice that even though the above passage is not taken word for word, the fact that the idea is someone else's **must** be acknowledged. If it is not, the student is presenting someone else's ideas as his own and committing plagiarism.