

Avoiding Plagiarism

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Don't be a word pirate!

Why is plagiarism wrong? Just like downloading music illegally robs musicians of payment for their work, plagiarism is copying someone's written work without giving them credit. It is a form of stealing because plagiarists take away the originality of someone's work and use something that they did not create.

Test Yourself: Is this plagiarism? Circle Yes / No

1. **Y / N** You use synonyms, reword, and interchange some sentences from a paragraph in a book.
2. **Y / N** You present facts without saying where you found them.
3. **Y/ N** You copy a quotation that is very long and mention the author who wrote it.
4. **Y/ N** You incorporate someone's unique phrase or expression without acknowledgement.
5. **Y/ N** You have your paper translated into English and hand it in with just your name.
6. **Y/ N** You copy and paste pictures, maps, and graphs from the Internet.
7. **Y/ N** Your whole paper refers to work and ideas written by other authors.
8. **Y/ N** You copy factual information such as the population of Canada without acknowledgement of where you found it.
9. **Y/ N** You present the results of your own thinking and experiments .

ANSWERS:

1 - 7 – YES . It's plagiarism
8 - 9 – Are NOT plagiarism

DETAILS:

1. **YES.** Changing a few words around is plagiarism, even if you cite it. If you want to use someone else's wording, do it verbatim.
3. **YES.** Besides mentioning the author, you must also mention the page number and its source in your list of works cited.
5. **YES.** If your paper is translated by someone else, then that person must be acknowledged.
6. **YES.** Consult an MLA style guide for the proper way to cite images, graphs, videos from the internet.
7. **YES.** Work turned in as your own must be original; it must be written by you and contain your understanding of your research material.
8. **NO.** Common knowledge, facts, that can be found in a variety of sources and which many people know does not need to be cited.

Tips on how to avoid plagiarism:

There are many ways to avoid plagiarism and here are a few that are helpful when you are doing research:

- ✓ Figure out exactly what you are researching (your Research Question) so you can filter out the relevant and irrelevant information.
- ✓ Make notes of just the main points in brief sentences or point form.
- ✓ Structure your research around **What Who When Where Why and How.**
- ✓ Use several sources of information .
- ✓ Approach your topic from a particular perspective. (ie. Activist, worker, entrepreneur , feminist)
- ✓ Identify advantages, disadvantages and / or implications of each option.
- ✓ Cite your sources in a list of works cited so you give credit to the original authors of the works you consulted and so you can share your research with others as well.

Source: Gibaldi, J. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 7th Ed. NY: MLA, 2009.