



PLAGIARISM

WHAT IT IS, WHY IT MATTERS, AND HOW TO STOP IT

WHAT IT IS

Plagiarism is the practice of taking another's work/ideas and claiming them as your own. Although some countries may see taking others' ideas as a form of respect, in countries like the United States plagiarism is a serious issue.



Recycling your previous content from old papers/courses may sound like a good idea, but it is still considered plagiarism because you are not adequately applying yourself to the assignment at hand by generating fresh, new work.

Even if you do not intend to copy your past work or another's work, it is still considered plagiarism when you take content that does not belong to you.



WHY IT IS A PROBLEM

When you plagiarize you essentially steal someone else's material that they worked hard to create. This theft of ideas is unethical. You also cheat yourself out of a genuine educational opportunity. Lastly, copying another's academic work is unlawful. Plagiarism is considered a Class 2 Misdemeanor in North Carolina and can result in jail time/community service and hefty legal fines.



According to the GC Student Handbook, any student suspected of plagiarizing will:

- be investigated by the Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs
- have a conference with the Vice President
- possibly have academic credit revoked for that particular assignment



While Gaston College does not have an extensive policy concerning plagiarism, four-year universities will expel students who plagiarize.

HOW PLAGIARISM HAPPENS

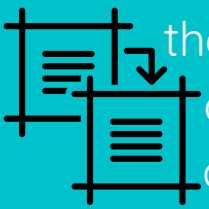
FORGETTING TO CITE

Sometimes we accidentally plagiarize by forgetting to cite a source or by only citing a source on the reference page. It is crucial that a source is cited both on the works cited page, as well as inside the text of the essay through the use of an in-text citation. Without an in-text citation your reader does not know what part of the essay contains outside information, and this uncertainty leads to plagiarism.



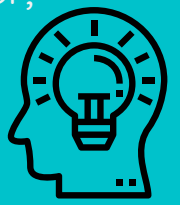
COPY/PASTING

The two methods used to incorporate outside source material are direct quotes and paraphrasing. Both of these methods require in-text citations. When you copy and paste a sentence word for word from a research article, you are directly quoting that author. You must use quotation marks around any wording that does not belong to you, followed by a parenthetical or in-text citation. Paraphrasing is the act of taking another person's ideas and putting what they wrote into your own words. Even when you switch up the wording, you still have to cite this because this information came from outside your own personal knowledge.



COMMON KNOWLEDGE

All research must be cited except for common knowledge. Common knowledge is any information that is widely accepted and acknowledged as being well known. For example, it is common knowledge that Abraham Lincoln was the 16th president of the U.S. This type of information does not need a citation. However, more specific research on Lincoln and his childhood upbringing would need to be cited. If you're ever unsure whether something is common knowledge or not, you should cite it to be safe.



WHY A STUDENT PLAGIARIZES

ON PURPOSE

Students who purposefully plagiarize a source are only hurting themselves by choosing not to actively learn anything from their assignments. They also run the risk of suffering legal consequences for the unlawful theft of another person's intellectual property.

ON ACCIDENT

By using both in-text and reference/works cited page citations consistently, you will learn to avoid accidentally plagiarizing. It is helpful to bookmark or keep a running list of all sources being used in the paper so that you can easily go back to them to gather the information for citing purposes.



UNKNOWINGLY

Knowing the difference between paraphrasing and directly quoting a source will keep you from accidentally plagiarizing content. Always be sure to cite all information that did not come from your own mind. Remember, it's better to over cite than under cite..

HOW NOT TO PLAGIARIZE

Both MLA and APA papers require you to cite your sources. The two different paper styles have differing citation formats, but they both contain pertinent information about the resource, such as the author's name, title of the article or book, date composed, and other publishing information. The information found in the citation helps your reader locate your source for further research.

MLA CITATION

Thoreau, Henry David, 1817-1862. *Walden; And, Civil Disobedience: Complete Texts with Introduction, Historical Contexts, Critical Essays*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000.

This tells your reader: the author's name, years of publication, title of anthology, publishing city, publishing company, and the year the anthology was published. Corresponding in-text citation: (Thoreau 358) The in-text citation lets your reader match up the information being presented to the works cited page citation by giving the author's last name and the anthology page number on which the author expresses his ideas.

QUOTATION MARKS

“We should be men first, and subjects afterward” (Thoreau 358).

“When directly quoting a source, it is vital that you utilize quotation marks around that source's content. This is exactly what the author wrote in his book.

PARAPHRASING

The author believes that people should not succumb to the will of the ruling government without first acknowledging any adverse policies that might take away their freedom to question authority (Thoreau 358). Sometimes you may want to address another's writing without directly quoting what they wrote. You can do this by paraphrasing their ideas.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

SHOWS CREDIBILITY

We cite in order to give credit to the author(s) of the original research material which helped us create our own essay content. Utilizing professional academic sources also helps give validity to the claims we make in our own writing.

EASIER FOR YOUR READER

Citing your sources is important so that the reader can readily find more information related to the topic(s) discussed in your essay. This helps them gain a well-rounded view of the argument being made..

SCHOLARLY CONVERSATION

Lastly, we cite sources so that we can be a part of the academic community that thrives on scholarly discussion and peer-reviewed content.

