

Understanding Plagiarism

Simply put, **plagiarism is the use of another writer's ideas, thoughts or words without proper acknowledgment.** Plagiarism is a serious offense in the academia, and can result in serious consequences for you, the student. It is another form of cheating. Below are some instances of plagiarism, all of which can be easily avoided:

- **Having someone else** do your work for you.
- **Copying information directly out of a book** and not indicating that the work is not your own.
- You must always use quotation marks (“ ”) to indicate when you have lifted words directly from a text. **Not properly citing** is plagiarism.
- **Copying and pasting something** directly from an internet page such as Wikipedia or Spark Notes is also plagiarism. Simply because much of this information is not directly attributed to an author does not mean you can simply use it without acknowledging where it is from.
- **Paraphrasing**—the taking of another's ideas or words and putting them in your own language—**can also result in plagiarism** if you do not properly cite where you lifted the ideas from.

In all these instances, and many others like them, **plagiarism can simply be avoided by properly citing your sources.** You must get in the habit of using research in your papers, and properly citing your sources.