



Plagiarism on Campus

Resources to Help Detect & Prevent Plagiarism for Teachers & Students

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Take notes (bullet points OK).

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Plagiarism on Campus

Resources to Help Detect & Prevent Plagiarism for Teachers & Students

Plagiarism is not a new problem in academia, but it is a serious issue. According to a 2010 Texas Tech study, 68 percent of faculty participants reported observing students “paraphrasing or copying a few sentences of material from a written source without footnoting or referencing it in a paper” at least once during the previous three years. But what exactly is plagiarism and how can students and instructors recognize it when it occurs? Furthermore, why does it continue to be a problem? Because understanding plagiarism is the first step to avoiding it, the following guide examines the latest research and provides advice from experts who explore these questions. This guide also demonstrates the proper way to quote, paraphrase and cite from text sources and provides current resources that explain how to recognize plagiarism and prevent it.

MEET THE EXPERT



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Modern Plagiarism in College

What causes plagiarism on college campuses? Is it Internet access, academic competitiveness, or pressure to excel from sports teams, family, or advisers? A 2011 survey of college presidents by Pew Research Center (<http://www.pewinternet.org/2011/08/28/the-digital-revolution-and-higher-education/>) discovered a majority (55 percent) believed plagiarism in student papers had increased over the previous 10 years because of Internet websites, blogs and social media sites. In 2012, developers of Turnitin, a popular plagiarism-detection software, found more than 50 percent of college papers contained plagiarized material from the Internet. In 2013, the Pew Research Center published an updated report (<http://www.pewinternet.org/2013/07/16/the-impact-of-digital-tools-on-student-writing-and-how-writing-is-taught-in-schools-2/>) on student writing and research habits. Almost 70 percent of the teachers interviewed reported that technology increased the likelihood of students procrastinating, taking shortcuts, and intentionally or unintentionally plagiarizing source materials when writing papers.

What Media Can Be Plagiarized?

WORDS

Taking another person's words and using them as your own without quoting, citing or acknowledging them is plagiarism. The words may come from websites, books, emails, articles or any other written work.

IDEAS

Using another writer's ideas, opinions or theories without crediting the original source is plagiarism. It is not necessary, however, to attribute common knowledge, which refers to widely known facts found in numerous places.

IMAGES

Copying or relying too heavily on images belonging to another person is visual plagiarism. Images includes artwork, photography, advertising and logos.

SOUNDS

Using or closely imitating another person's sounds or music is plagiarism. The three most common examples are taking another author's musical idea (melody), lyrics, or reusing a portion of a sound recording (sampling).

COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT

While plagiarism is an ethical issue, copyright infringement is a legal construct. Copyright holders have the rights to any reproduction, distribution, creation of derivative works and public displays or performances of their materials.

Intentional versus Accidental Plagiarism

The foundation of academic culture relies on original, creative expression through words, images and other forms of media. Unfortunately, along with creative expression comes the risk of plagiarism. Students plagiarize for many reasons, according to the Council of Writing Program Administrators (<http://wpacouncil.org/positions/WPAplagiarism.pdf>), including poor time management, fear of failure, disregard for consequences and carelessness. Technology makes it possible for students to easily purchase assignments from paper mills and submit the work as their own. Even copy and paste functions may inadvertently lead to accidental plagiarism.

What is Intentional Plagiarism?

Intentional plagiarism is when a student either knowingly takes credit for someone else's work by copying and pasting content into a paper without attribution or buys a paper written by someone else, usually from an online "paper mill." Instructors often detect incidents of intentional plagiarism when a student's writing is inconsistent in style, vocabulary and content, or if the instructor remembers having read the same words before.

What is Accidental Plagiarism?

Accidental plagiarism occurs when a student does not know how to properly attribute work belonging to others. As a result of improper quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing or citing, the work is unintentionally attributed to the student.

Whether plagiarism is intentional or accidental, once students submit their finished papers, they assume responsibility for the content and accuracy of their citations. Instructors take several factors into consideration when judging plagiarism to be intentional or accidental:

- Is it a new student with little experience, or an upperclassman who should know better?
- Did the student copy and paste word for word, or merely do a poor job of paraphrasing?
- How much of the paper was plagiarized?
- Is the plagiarized content something the student should know about since it was covered in class, or were they reaching for information to fill out an argument?

Prevalent Forms of Plagiarism in College

In a 2016 study, Turnitin conducted a worldwide survey with approximately 900 college educators. With the information Turnitin acquired, the software company created a list called "The Plagiarism Spectrum." (<https://www.turnitin.com/static/plagiarism-spectrum/>) It contains the 10 most common types of plagiarism by college students. Turnitin assigned memorable names for each instance in the hopes that both students and instructors will be able to identify them in the future.

1. **The Clone:** A copy-and-paste, exact replica of someone else's words.
2. **CRTL+C:** Using most of a single text without changing content.
3. **Find-Replace:** Changing some key words and phrases and using occasional synonyms for variation but retaining the majority of the original source.
4. **Remix:** Piecing together significant portions of multiple sources and presenting it as one original idea.
5. **Recycle:** Reusing the majority of one's own previous work and presenting it as new content.

6. **Hybrid:** Combining well-cited sources with uncited content.
7. **Mashup:** A disjointed combination of content from multiple sources with little to no attempt to combine them.
8. **404 Error:** Using citations that do not exist or use of misleading information about sources.
9. **Aggregator:** Using proper citations throughout one's work but offering little to no original content, ideas, or arguments.
10. **Re-Tweet:** Includes the correct citation but relies heavily on another's wording or structure, showing a lack of original thought and engagement.

Source: Turnitin (<https://www.turnitin.com/static/plagiarism-spectrum/>)

Plagiarism Detection Tools Choose five (5) review and summarize on GDoc

Plagiarism results in serious consequences, including disciplinary action. Students can take a proactive approach, checking their work for issues before submitting it to their instructors. For their part, instructors can identify instances of plagiarism by checking student papers using one of the many websites and software programs available. Here are eight online services that check text for plagiarism:

PapersOwl (<https://papersowl.com/free-plagiarism-checker>)

This free site offers a convenient copy-and-paste section to check your content quickly. Users can also take advantage of the site's writing tools, 24/7 customer service and live chat features.

CheckForPlagiarism.net (<https://www.checkforplagiarism.net/>)

This tool checks submitted documents against billions of books, articles, magazines, Internet sources and academic journals to identify everything from subtle to very serious plagiarism. Monthly subscriptions start at \$20 for students and \$85 for educators. The website only requires a Web browser and the installation of Adobe Flash Player, which is free, to work. Users submit documents online, and a plagiarism report is sent to the user's mailbox after the review is complete.

Grammarly (<https://app.grammarly.com/>)

This free service uses an easy copy-and-paste window for your content. Grammarly gives you feedback on grammar and spelling along with plagiarism detection software. Buying a monthly membership unlocks additional features.

DupliChecker (<https://www.duplichecker.com/>)

This free site allows users to detect plagiarism in any document or file that is copy-pasted or uploaded. Within a few seconds, the site generates a report dissecting each sentence and displaying all of the source websites from where the content was copied. The site places limits on word counts and number of times per day a user can run a search.

Turnitin (<https://www.turnitin.com/>)

This comprehensive online plagiarism checker for educators scans papers against an enormous database of thousands of journals, millions of archived papers and billions of web pages. But Turnitin offers additional services that distinguish it from the competition, such as peer review, course management and online grading. Many high schools and colleges have subscriptions to Turnitin. Instructors who need to pay for their own subscription are charged \$3 per student annually. Once instructors create an account, students can upload their final papers directly into Turnitin. Turnitin creates originality reports within two minutes of each submission, enabling the instructor to see which parts of the document are derivative.

PlagiarismDetect.org (<http://plagiarismdetect.org/>)

This site offers standard and premium services. Standard credits are \$.05 and premium credits are 25 cents, and they never expire. The standard version is designed for students and instructors who want a fast, cheap way to check text. The premium service uses SMART technology and multi-layered scanning for better accuracy. First, users upload text (doc, docx, odt or txt files) or paste it into the checking area. Then the system checks it for similarities against a private database and websites open for indexation. Within one minute, users are redirected to the results section, where any areas that have been plagiarized will appear. The plagiarized areas are hyperlinked to make it easy to check the source. Unlike most sites, Plagiarism Detect allows users to check both English and Spanish text.

PlagiarismChecker.com (<https://www.plagiarismchecker.com/>)

Instructors can check student papers for plagiarism with Plagiarism Checker, one of the more basic plagiarism-detecting sites. The site is free, but instructors are limited to checking phrases rather than entire documents. After users type phrases (or paste from a computer file) into the search box, Plagiarism Checker will provide Google search results with a list of Web pages containing those phrases.

Quetext (<https://www.quetext.com/>)

This plagiarism checker and citation assistant is user-friendly, quick, and free. Buying a membership allows users to upload multiple documents at once and provides access to more in-depth searches for plagiarism and sources.

Preventing Plagiarism on Campus

Students can be tempted to plagiarize written work, especially when they feel under pressure to perform. There are many written resources online, like paper mills or even other students, that make buying a paper a simple matter of a digital banking transaction through PayPal, Venmo, or another direct payment application. While many of the papers offered through these paper mills can be flagged by plagiarism checkers such as Turnitin, students are still finding ways to beat the system. Some students are buying essays and using language conversion software to rearrange word order, insert synonyms, or input invisible periods between words to throw off the plagiarism scanning technology. In addition to taking the proper precautions with current plagiarism detection software, instructors should educate their students about proper citations, conducting academic research for school papers, and plagiarism.

Top Tips for Instructors:

- ☑ Talk to students about plagiarism and your expectations. Take time to explain the proper way to cite resources (see below) and review potential pitfalls.
- ☑ Make it clear when assigning the project that the students must keep copies of their references available in case there is a question of plagiarism.
- ☑ Break down larger projects into micro-assignments. Asking students to hand in an outline and rough draft makes it harder for them to plagiarize. It can be difficult to enforce this over multiple weeks, as students may change their topics at the last minute. Be firm and require them to include the content they've written for the micro-assignments.
- ☑ Require that they use recent sources. This may stop students who are tempted to use paper mills because it is more challenging to find papers with sources that are recent enough for the assignment. Some teachers may even require a specific number of sources to be used, no more and no less.
- ☑ Ask students to journal their writing process over time and submit it online. Holding students accountable for how they developed and researched their topic will make them more apt to be honest.
- ☑ Don't assign the same project each year. Otherwise, when students find out their friends have already taken your course with the same project, they may try to use the previous work as a source.
- ☑ Have students submit their assignments to Turnitin before handing it in. In this way, you can use Turnitin as a teaching tool. Students will discover how easy it is to accidentally plagiarize.
- ☑ At the start of the semester, guarantee harsh punishment for turning in plagiarized work. While you may not have to enforce your rules down to the last detail, it can be helpful to be firm from the start. Simply stated, you could outline a zero-tolerance policy on the syllabus so there is no question about the severity of cheating in your class.
- ☑ Our expert, Shelley Errington Nicholson, suggests that, in addition of including links to the appropriate APA and MLA citation guides, teachers should include a sample final paper in their course materials. This shows students the quality of paper their teacher expects from them and includes proper formatting.

Using Proper Citation to Avoid Plagiarism

There is no excuse for students to cite sources improperly in their papers. Incorrect citation implies that the ideas and information in a paper are the student's, even though they belong to another author. Overall, it shows a lack of respect for the academy and devalues the college experience for all. Different disciplines, professors and institutions may require a specific citation style (footnotes, endnotes or parenthetical citations). The three most commonly used style guides in academia are APA Style, Chicago Style and MLA Style.

Citation Resources

- American Psychological Association — APA Style (<https://www.apastyle.org/>)
- Chicago Manual of Style Online (<https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>)
- Modern Language Association — MLA Style (<https://www.mla.org/style>)
- Purdue Online Writing Lab — APA Style (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/>)
- Purdue Online Writing Lab — Chicago Manual of Style 16th Edition (https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/chicago_manual_17th_edition/cmos_formatting_and_style_guide/chicago_manual_of_style_16th_edition/)
- Purdue Online Writing Lab — MLA Formatting and Style Guide (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>)

Common Citation Mistakes and Fixes

Below are some common citation mistakes, using an excerpt from an actual book as an example. Parts of this example are used in an online tutorial on plagiarism for students at Indiana University-Bloomington, School of Education. Keep in mind that in an academic paper, the source must also be referenced using footnotes, endnotes or parenthetical citations, depending on the instructor's guidelines. Be sure you understand your teacher's citation expectations before you begin to write. It is better to ask questions and do it correctly the first time. It can be very time consuming to go back through a paper and add or change citation formats.

Example: Original Text

"Developing complex skills in the classroom involves the key ingredients identified in teaching pigeons to play ping-pong and to bowl. The key ingredients are: (1) inducing a response, (2) reinforcing subtle improvements or refinements in the behavior, (3) providing for the transfer of stimulus control by gradually withdrawing the prompts or cues, and (4) scheduling reinforcements so that the ratio of reinforcements in responses gradually increases and natural reinforcers can maintain their behavior."

Source: Gredler, M. E. (2001). *Learning and instruction: Theory into practice* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

TYPE

Verbatim Plagiarism:

Student copies writer's text word for word.

EXAMPLE

Developing complex skills in the classroom involves the key ingredients identified in teaching pigeons to play ping-pong and to bowl.

CORRECTED EXAMPLE

According to Gredler (2001), "Developing complex skills in the classroom involves the key ingredients identified in teaching pigeons to play ping-pong and to bowl" (page #).

TYPE

Mosaic Plagiarism:

Combining multiple direct quotes from the writer without any attribution.

EXAMPLE

Developing complex skills in the classroom involves providing for the transfer of stimulus control.

CORRECTED EXAMPLE

In her book on developing classroom skills, Gredler identifies several ways in which "developing complex skills in the classroom" provides "for the transfer of stimulus control" (page #).

TYPE**Inadequate Paraphrasing:**

Student moves writer's words around and summarizes main ideas but does not use quotes or give credit to the writer.

EXAMPLE

Inducing a response, scheduling reinforcement so that natural reinforcers can maintain their behavior and providing for the transfer of stimulus control by slowly withdrawing cues, are the key ingredients identified to both teach pigeons to bowl and in developing complex classroom skills.

CORRECTED EXAMPLE

According to Gredler, the same factors apply to the development of complex skills in the classroom as to the development of skills in any setting. A response must be induced and then reinforced as it gets closer to the desired behavior. Reinforcers have to be scheduled carefully and cues withdrawn gradually so that the new behaviors can be transferred and maintained (2001:page #)..

TYPE**Uncited Paraphrase:**

Student doesn't give the writer credit even though the words are paraphrased.

EXAMPLE

The same factors apply to the development of classroom skills in the classroom as to the development of skills in any setting.

CORRECTED EXAMPLE

According to Gredler, the same factors apply to the development of complex skills in the classroom as to the development of skills in any setting (2001).

TYPE**Uncited Quotation:**

The student uses quotes around the direct quotation but does not cite the source.

EXAMPLE

When it comes to skill development, "developing complex skills in the classroom involves the key ingredients identified in teaching pigeons to play ping-pong and to bowl."

CORRECTED EXAMPLE

According to Gredler, when it comes to skill development, "developing complex skills in the classroom involves the key ingredients identified in teaching pigeons to play ping-pong and to bowl" (2001:page #).

The Consequences of Plagiarism in College

The established policies at colleges and universities outline the consequences of plagiarism. These policies are part of each school's student code of conduct. Depending on the severity of the offense, consequences can vary from being asked to redo a paper to being expelled. Although instructors tend to be more understanding in cases of accidental plagiarism, they are still required to set consequences. For example, students may need to attend a workshop or training that covers types of plagiarism and how to avoid them.

Short-term Consequences

Rewritten paper

The instructor may require student to rewrite a paper if plagiarism is suspected.

Failed grade

The most lenient consequence is a failing grade on a paper.

Anti-plagiarism training seminar

The seminars are designed as a preventive measure against future instances plagiarism.

Reprimand or verbal warning

The instructor or dean informs the student that another instance of suspected plagiarism may result in a written warning.

Formal written warning

the student receives a formal written disciplinary warning that another instance of suspected plagiarism may result in harsher disciplinary action.

Loss of credit

The student receives a failing grade in the course.

Long-term Consequences

List these on your GDoc

Temporary transcript notation

The student receives a temporary transcript notation until graduation.

Academic probation

Continued enrollment of a student on probation may be conditional upon adherence to the plagiarism policy. Student may be restricted from extracurricular activities.

Permanent transcript notation

The student receives a permanent transcript notation.

Suspension

The student is separated from the school for a stated period of time with specified conditions of reinstatement.

Indefinite suspension

The student is considered to no longer be matriculated in the school, although there are specified conditions for reinstatement.

Expulsion

The student is permanently removed from the school, including its facilities, programs, events and activities.

Resources for Students and Teachers

Students can protect themselves against unintentional plagiarism by being proactive and organized. There are many free websites and subscription-based software services that allow students to check their work against a database of articles and reports. Students can receive a plagiarism report with the results so they can make changes before turning in their papers. Likewise, educators can determine whether students have plagiarized work by uploading or copying and pasting content to the same websites. The following section includes links to plagiarism-detection websites as well as helpful resources for students and teachers.

Resources for Students Choose 5 resources and review. Add to your Gdoc.

Writing Discussion Board Posts in Online Classes ([/college-resource-center/online-discussion-boards/](https://college-resource-center/online-discussion-boards/))

A critical part of engaging with your fellow students and professors in an online class is the discussion board. As a major component of many courses, quality discussion board posts lead to more helpful and education interactions and exchanges with your cohort. This guide shows you how to get the most out of your discussion posts and thoughtfully engage with your teachers and classmates.

Writing Rescue Guide for College Students ([/college-resource-center/college-writing-guide/](https://college-resource-center/college-writing-guide/))

Affordable Colleges Online offers an easily accessible guide for citing sources, avoiding plagiarism, and locating useful online resources. This source can help you from start to finish to ensure you include all the required components of an original, accurately cited research paper.

Indiana University's How to Recognize Plagiarism (<https://www.indiana.edu/~academy/firstPrinciples/choice.html>)

This site offers video tutorials and online tests to help students learn about various instances of plagiarism. The site also includes a resources section with links to helpful articles on citing your sources.

Avoiding Plagiarism (https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/teacher_and_tutor_resources/preventing_plagiarism/avoiding_plagiarism/index.html)

A resource by Purdue Online Writing Lab guide to help writers develop strategies for avoiding accidental plagiarism. The site includes a list of best practices and an example exercise.

5 Most Effective Methods for Avoiding Plagiarism (<https://www.grammarly.com/blog/5-most-effective-methods-for-avoiding-plagiarism/>)

An article from Grammarly about how students can prevent plagiarism. Grammarly is a grammar-checking tool that also identifies plagiarized content.

Harvard Guide to Using Sources (<https://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/>)

A series of articles published by the Harvard College Writing Program designed to help students avoid plagiarism in academic writing.

Plagiarism.org (<https://www.plagiarism.org/>)

A free, comprehensive plagiarism resource sponsored by the makers of plagiarism-checking websites Turnitin (<https://turnitin.com/>), WriteCheck (<https://en.writecheck.com/>) and iThenticate (<https://www.ithenticate.com/>).

Plagiarism Tutorial (<https://plagiarism.duke.edu/>)

This short handbook by Duke University takes students through the concept of plagiarism step by step.

Straight from Students: Smart Tips for Searching Online (<https://ww2.kqed.org/mindshift/2013/08/22/straight-from-students-smart-tips-for-searching-online/>)

A chapter about smart online search tactics from the book *Connected Learners: A Step-By-Step Guide to Creating a Global Classroom*.

UC Davis Office of Judicial Affairs (<https://sja.ucdavis.edu/publications.html>)

Links to publications about not only plagiarism but also collaboration and integrity, including "Collaboration: When You Can and When You Can't Work with Others" and "Why Integrity Matters."

The Writer's Handbook: Avoiding Plagiarism (https://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html)

The University of Wisconsin-Madison published this document to be used as a student handout for preventing plagiarism in academic writing.

Resources for Teachers

Anti-Plagiarism Strategies for Research Papers (<https://www.virtualsalt.com/antiplag.htm>)

A document that includes advice and helpful tips for instructors who are concerned about plagiarism in higher education.

International Journal for Educational Integrity (<https://www.ojs.unisa.edu.au/index.php/ije/index>)

Journal established in 2005 as a platform for research in the multidisciplinary field of academic integrity.

Resources for Teachers: How to Detect Plagiarism (<https://cmsw.mit.edu/writing-and-communication-center/resources/teachers/detect-plagiarism/>)

A brief, well-linked guide to detecting plagiarism developed for instructors at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Teaching and Learning with Technology (<https://tlt.psu.edu/services/>)

Publication of Penn State University that features tools to recognize and avoid plagiarism.

The School for Ethical Education (<https://ethicsed.org/>)

Organization that teaches strategies and promotes programs that support ethics in education. The organization runs a contest open to high school and college students to create public service announcements for academic integrity.

SafeAssign (<https://safeassign.blackboard.com/>)

Tool from Blackboard.com that compares submitted assignments against a set of sources to prevent plagiarism as well as create opportunities to help students identify how to properly attribute resources rather than paraphrase.

Turnitin Plagiarism Webcasts (<https://www.turnitin.com/solutions/plagiarism-prevention>)

Webcasts and videos about plagiarism, including "Responding to Plagiarism: Lesson Plans and Strategies" and "The Plagiarism Spectrum." Webcasts are available in Turnitin's library.

UC Davis Office of Judicial Affairs (<https://sja.ucdavis.edu/publications.html>)

Plagiarism publications for faculty, including "Creating a Climate of Academic Integrity: Tips to Prevent Cheating" and "Responding to In-Progress Cheating."

The International Center for Academic Integrity (<https://academicintegrity.org/>)

An organization founded to combat cheating, plagiarism and academic dishonesty in higher education. Members receive benefits such as access to hundreds of printed and online plagiarism resources, networking opportunities, and an annual conference.

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Stay up-to-date with Affordable Colleges Online.
Join our email list to receive the quarterly newsletter.

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About Us

(<https://www.affordablecollegesonline.org/about-us/>)

New Privacy Policy

(<https://www.affordablecollegesonline.org/privacy-policy/>)

Do Not Sell My Info

(<https://privacyportal-cdn.onetrust.com/dsarwebform/79ba7c84-ebc2-4740-8d11-bf1cc4501e59/2eb84b73-6fcf-49ca-94aa-c8cc5fd1c1c6.html>)