

About PLAGIARISM

Because the purpose of the University in writing assignments is to improve your ability to express yourself in writing, your themes and exercises must be your own work. To submit to your instructor a paper that is not truly the product of your own mind and skill is to commit plagiarism. To put it bluntly, plagiarism is the act of stealing the ideas and/or expression of another and representing them as your own. It is a form of cheating and a kind of academic misconduct. It is important, therefore, that you understand what it consists of, so that you will not unwittingly jeopardize your college career.

The following guidelines will help you learn when to give proper credit for sources you use.

Plagiarism can take several forms. The most obvious form is word-for-word copying of someone else's work, in whole or in part, without acknowledgement, whether that work be a magazine article, a portion of a book, a newspaper piece, another student's essay, or any other composition not your own. Any such verbatim use of another's work must be acknowledged by (1) enclosing all such copied portions in quotation marks and by (2) giving the original source either in the body of your essay or in a footnote.

For example, if you wish to quote Charles Darwin directly in his own words, you must enclose what Darwin wrote in quotation marks and give the source of the quote in parentheses, as in Example 1, below:

Example 1:

In The Origin of Species, Darwin states, "Man still bears in his bodily frame the indelible stamp of his lowly origin " (920).

If you do not mention Darwin by name in the sentence, you must add his name to the parenthetical citation:

Example 2:

As we have read, "Man still bears in his bodily frame the indelible stamp of his lowly origin " (Darwin 920).

In either case, the parenthetical references should correspond to the *List of Works Cited* which appears at the end of your paper.

A second form of plagiarism is the unacknowledged paraphrasing of the structure and language of another person's work. Changing a few words of another's composition, omitting a few sentences, or changing their order does not constitute original composition and therefore can be given no credit. If such borrowing or paraphrase is ever necessary, the source must be scrupulously indicated by footnotes.

For example, the following is a quote from Heisenberg's "Non-Objective Science and Uncertainty:"

"In the nineteenth century nature still appeared as a set of laws in space and time in which man and man's intervention in nature could be ignored in principle, if not in practice" (Heisenberg 444).

If you wished to paraphrase (or re-write in your own words) Heisenberg's statement, you would not need quotation marks, but you must still acknowledge the source of the idea as follows:

Example 3:

In the 1800s, nature still seemed governed by laws and man's intervention could be ignored (Heisenberg 444).

Still another form of plagiarism is more difficult to define. It consists of writing a theme based solely on the ideas of another. Even though the language is not the same, if the thinking is clearly not your own, then you have committed plagiarism. If, for example, in writing a theme you reproduce the structure and progression of ideas in an essay you have read, or a speech you have heard, you are not engaging your own mind and experience enough to claim credit for writing your own composition.

For example, the authors represented in your Modern Condition anthologies were selected for the originality of their ideas and their contribution to the intellectual history of our times. Representing their ideas as your own would be committing plagiarism. You may feel free to quote them or paraphrase them as in the examples above, but you must always give others credit for their ideas by acknowledging their source.

Why be so concerned about plagiarism? Simply put, plagiarism is intellectual theft, and therefore as dishonest as any other form of stealing. It is an insult to your fellow students, and to the colleagues you will have in the future. Moreover, in the absence of the strictest standards of intellectual integrity, the entire realm of intellectual endeavor--scientific, literary, political, etc.--would be undermined and cease to provide the solid foundation of our nation and culture. As you embark on your intellectual career at Adelphi, you assume serious responsibilities to uphold the highest standards of honesty and integrity in all of your work.

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