

Avoiding Cheating

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WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn about the ways cheating is commonly detected and helps you form strategies to avoid pitfalls that result in cheating. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. How Cheating Is Detected

Cheaters tend to underestimate their instructors' ability to catch them. Remember, your instructor has years or even decades of experience with students and all manner of classroom circumstances, including cheating. Whatever cheating method a student might employ, the instructor has likely seen it before.

Even if a cheater can successfully hide their illicit activity from the instructor, what about the classmates surrounding him? The cheater seeks unfair advantages over their classmates, and this provides a classmate who sees what he's up to with a motivation to turn him in.



THINK ABOUT IT

To return to the example of the improper use of smartphones in an exam, imagine for the sake of this exercise that you are the instructor giving the exam. You look out at the room of students and see the majority of students with their eyes trained on the test paper on their desks. A few students look up at the ceiling, concentrating on remembering a specific detail. But there is one student who sticks out. Their eyes dart nervously from looking somewhere in the vicinity of their lap to looking at you.

Would you have any trouble figuring out something was not right? Would you have any difficulty guessing what it might be?

2. Avoiding the Pressure to Cheat

In a tense moment, cheating can appear to be an attractive option. Schoolwork can be demanding and difficult, and cheaters often justify their actions by pointing to the pressure they are under: "I had three exams this week; I just didn't have time to study."

One great way to avoid the pressure to cheat is to be aware of your schedule and be prepared in advance to manage your time when things get hectic. Avoiding panic will help alleviate the pressure to cheat. Even if you do fall behind, being honest with your instructor is going to make you feel better than cheating.

One tool that may help you process this is to weigh the long-term benefits versus the short-term ones. When you view your problems in that context, you will see how honesty is always the better way to go.

ADOPT HONEST PRACTICES AS A STUDENT

KNOW THE CONSEQUENCES

Understand that if you get caught cheating or plagiarizing, it will create major issues for you. In many cases, you could fail or be expelled.

MANAGE YOUR TIME

Avoid procrastinating on assignments, and plan enough time to study so you won't feel pressured to cheat.

COMMUNICATE

If you are having a personal crisis that will prevent you from completing an assignment, let your instructor know right away, and ask them what you can do.

REPORT CHEATERS

If you know someone in your course is cheating, your awareness of their cheating could potentially get you in trouble if you don't do anything about it.



THINK ABOUT IT

It's the day of your statistics exam and you didn't have time to study because something unexpectedly came up the night before. Statistics is your weakest subject this term and a bad grade on the exam could really do some damage to your grade for the course and your overall GPA. You take pride in how hard you've worked to get your GPA where it is and you don't want to risk it, so you consider taking a shortcut—jotting down some formulas you'll need on a piece of paper and then sneaking the paper under your test.

This is a short-term solution but think about it from a long-term perspective. You may get some extra points on the test and it might help your grade, but you've compromised the pride you take in having put in the honest work and earning that GPA.



SUMMARY

Cheating is easy to detect If you do it, you are likely to get caught. Honesty is always the better choice. **Avoid the pressure to cheat** by being aware of your schedule and preparing in advance.