

Plagiarism

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WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn about what it means to plagiarize and why you shouldn't do it. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. What Is Plagiarism?

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When most students think of **plagiarism**, they may think of outright copying another's works. However, plagiarism can delve into murky territory that includes everything from wrongful appropriation to blatant thievery.

While plagiarism may not be a crime per se, in many academic and professional contexts, plagiarism carries with it serious risks, including expulsion and/or termination from a position, organization, or company.

In its simplest form, plagiarism occurs when someone takes the words or ideas of someone else and attempts to present them as their own. Appropriating a person's work without proper credit is what distinguishes plagiarism from mere citation or quotation. When a writer quotes or cites a person, text, image or other piece of intellectual property, the writer must give credit to where or from whom the quote or idea originated.

The "ideas" part of plagiarism can be especially tricky. Though unlikely, two completely different people may produce the exact same idea at the exact same moment. Inevitably, one person would be guilty of plagiarism. And while this does happen, the instances are few and far between.

Deliberate plagiarism should be avoided in academic and professional settings. To knowingly take the work of others and attribute it as one's own is widely regarded as unethical, unprofessional, and illegal across most industries and organizations.

Many academic and professional services can detect whether entire sections of books, articles and other works are published elsewhere, particularly on the World Wide Web. Additionally, if a writer has a unique writing style and author's voice, it can be even easier to identify plagiarism if the content is cut and pasted into a work with a completely different tone and style.

However, unintended plagiarism is more common than one might think. Sometimes the problem stems from working too closely with source material. To avoid unintended plagiarism, writers often develop new content with the aid of notes, as opposed to whole sources such as books, articles, or web pages. Writers also craft original compositions by working off their own notes and paraphrasing.



TERM TO KNOW

Plagiarism

The act of plagiarizing; the copying of another person's ideas, text or other creative work, and presenting it as one's own, especially without permission.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned about the importance of avoiding **plagiarism**. Word to the wise: Just don't plagiarize. Seriously. Don't do it. Intentional plagiarism isn't as easy to get away with as you think: institutions and companies have ways of detecting whether or not you've plagiarized your work, and it can have serious academic and professional repercussions if you are caught. If you find yourself tempted to nab a couple of lines from one of your research sources, put the full source away. Instead, rely on your own notes and paraphrasing to lessen the temptation to outright copy the work of another.

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