

A Note on Plagiarism

In preparing your assignments, not only should you read widely on your topic, you should also be aware of the opinions of the leading scholars in the area. Your own opinions and evaluations should be supported by extensive reference to expert opinion and published research. Where requested, assignments must therefore include:

- A bibliography of all works which substantially influence the writing of the essay, and
- The acknowledgement of all evidence and sources of information

It is intellectually dishonest to present someone else's ideas, without acknowledgement, as your own. To copy another writer's words verbatim in an acknowledged quotation is a mark of respect for the author, but to use his words without acknowledgement is plagiarism, ie. dishonest action or cheating.

Plagiarism is to be guarded against all costs. Given the pressures students experience in the course of their studies, the temptation to plagiarise is understandable, but, because it is a form of cheating, it is not acceptable academic practice and is strongly discouraged.

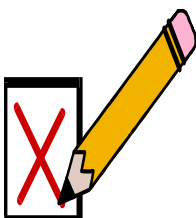
Here is an authoritative definition of plagiarism:

*Plagiarism is the use of another person's ideas or expressions in your writing without acknowledging the source. The word comes from the Latin word *plagiarius* (kidnapper), and Alexander Lindsey defines it as 'the false assumption of authorship; the wrongful act of taking the product of another person's mind, and presenting it as one's own' (Plagiarism and Originality [Bew Tirdl Garoerm 1952]2). In short, to plagiarise is to give the impression that you have written or thought something that you have in fact borrowed from someone else. (Achert, W.S. & Gibaldi, J. 1988, MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, New York, p 1-6)*

Another source comments thus:

The expropriation of another author's findings, interpretation or text, presented thereafter as one's own creation without proper attribution to its actual source, is a cardinal violation of the ethics of scholarship. Plagiarism tests our powers of discrimination because it takes many forms and appears in varying degrees. Most transparently, it involves the use of another person's language and sources without citation. More subtle is the unacknowledged appropriation of concepts, data and footnotes, all disguised in paraphrased or newly crafted sentences' (American Historical Association, May 1990, cited in Courier Mail, 5 November 1991).

N.B. Plagiarism also involved the appropriation of the work of other students (with or without their permission), as well as authors of books, articles, computer programs or audio-visual material.



Penalties for plagiarism shall be determined by the Head of Department in consultation with the Principal. Penalties, if any, should depend on the degree of severity of the breach of academic ethics.

Penalties may include:

- ✗ Subtraction of marks for assignments, or
- ✗ Failure of the assignment or of the unit as a whole.

Plagiarism can be avoided by following the rules about referencing. In general you must provide references in the following circumstances:

- Direct Quotation:** wherever you quote another person's words verbatim (i.e. word for word), whether it be a phrase, a sentence or paragraph, you should place it in single quotation marks and provide the source from which it was taken.
- Paraphrasing:** wherever you sum up another person's words in your own words (eg. by reducing the ideas conveyed in two pages of a book to a sentence of your own), you must also provide the appropriate reference. You can usually identify these circumstances if the paraphrased section is (or can be) preceded by the phrase – Manning Clark believes ... D.H. Lawrence stated ... David Potts argues ... or Sally Walker questions.....
- Multiple Summation:** this is similar to (ii) above, but involves the paraphrasing and summary of several authors' works into a single paragraph or your own.
- Statistics:** whenever you employ statistics (eg. on population, gross national product, newspaper circulation figures, etc.), you should indicate sources from which they are derived.
- Controversial Facts:** for example, if you say Australia was first discovered by Europeans in 1522 (rather than 1770), you must acknowledge the source, because it is not 'common knowledge' or commonly accepted historical 'fact'.

N.B. Plagiarism also includes dishonest use of ideas, as well as the actual form of words.

Some of these examples are self evident, but others may require the exercise of judgement on your part. If in doubt, ask your teacher. Above all, you should develop the habit of referencing assignments from the start of your secondary studies.