

Plagiarism: What It Is and How To Avoid It

The Answer: Cite Your Sources

Documenting or citing your sources is the solution to plagiarism. Citing your sources gives credit to the original writer of the ideas and expression. It also allows anyone reading your paper to track which sources were used and where to find more background information.

There are many style manuals available which provide consistent methods for citing sources. In general, Carroll Community College uses the following style guides:

- Modern Language Association (MLA) Handbook for Writers of Research Papers —used for most English and humanities courses.
- Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) —used for science and some social sciences courses.
- Current English 101 textbooks.
- Library handouts on documenting sources available in print or online.

Remember, it *is* acceptable to use other writer's words or ideas in your papers and essays as long as you give credit to the original author.

If you have any questions about plagiarism or documenting your sources, feel free to contact any of the librarians.



1601 Washington Road · Westminster, MD 21157
410-386-8000 · 1-888-221-9748 · www.carrollcc.edu

Revised 1/2009 · 283-09-0109

What Is Plagiarism ?

Plagiarism is defined as either submitting another's paper as one's own or by including in one's work passages of another author without giving due credit, i.e. quoting or paraphrasing without proper citation of source.

Plagiarism can be either intentional or unintentional. Intentional plagiarism occurs when you knowingly copy someone else's words or ideas. Unintentional plagiarism occurs as a result of not knowing the correct rules for documentation or sloppy research.

Why Is Plagiarism Wrong ?

- taking another's words or ideas as your own is morally wrong. It is like stealing someone else's intellectual property.
- you don't learn anything by using someone else's work. How can you learn to write or express yourself if you use another's ideas or words?
- according to copyright law, it is illegal to steal other's words or ideas.

Some Types of Plagiarism Are:

- an *unacknowledged quotation*—quoting someone else's words exactly without attributing them to the author or using quotation marks.
- *close paraphrase*—copying from the source but changing only a few words or phrases.
- *loose or mosaic paraphrase*—copying ideas or information from a source even though you may use different words or sentences.

How To Avoid Plagiarism

With careful attention to your reading and research methods, it is easy to avoid plagiarism. While doing your research, take clear notes including identifying information for each source that you use. The following guidelines have been suggested by J. Raymond Hendrickson in his book, [The Research Paper](#).

- try to use your own words as much as possible
- when you do use another writer's words, use quotation marks and give credit to the source
- don't make slight changes in the language then fail to give credit. If the expression is essentially the same, the author still deserves credit.
- document new concepts and ideas you have uncovered in your research, even if you are not quoting word for word.
- if you are in doubt, it is best to cite the source of information.
- become familiar with the rules for documentation.