

Avoiding Plagiarism

h What is plagiarism?

“The action or practice of taking someone else's work, idea, etc., and passing it off as one's own; literary theft.”

– Oxford English Dictionary Online

Always give credit when you use other people's content—words, ideas, images and so forth—in your academic work. Your assignments and exams must also be your own original work, not someone else's. Otherwise you are plagiarizing: taking credit for another's work, whether in part or whole, and whether intentionally or accidentally. The consequences of plagiarism range from a failing grade for an assignment or course to disciplinary probation or even expulsion from the university.

h Types of plagiarism

Intentional plagiarism

- x Buying a paper online or from another student
- x Hiring or letting someone do your work for you
- x Stealing or "borrowing" all or part of someone else's work (even if you have the author's permission)
- x Cobbling together a paper by copying and pasting from different sources without citing any of it
- x Submitting the same assignment twice (you're plagiarizing yourself!)
- x Selling papers or allowing others to copy your work is also subject to academic penalties

Plagiarism by improper citation (can be deliberate, but is often unintentional)

- x Copying something word for word but not using quote marks (even if you cite it, it's still plagiarism)
- x Using significant ideas and concepts from someone else without a citation—even if you put them into your own words (called paraphrasing), you need to give credit
- x Paraphrasing too closely by making only small changes, still retaining the same structure and words as the original (even if you cite it!)
- x Citing a source you didn't actually look at

assignment tempt
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¾ If an author has captured a concept perfectly, quote it, or paraphrase most of it but put quote marks around the few words that could not be said any other way. Always cite paraphrases! You may not be using someone else's words, but you are using their ideas.

h Examples of paraphrasing and quoting

The following examples use an excerpt from the book *Reconceiving Midwifery*, edited by Ivy Lynn Bourgeault, Cecilia Benoit and Robbie Davis-Floyd (2004). The in-text citations shown below are in MLA style.

Original text from pages 3 -4 (the introduction, written by the editors):

Wrong paraphrasing:

This paraphrase merely replaces some terms with synonyms and changes the word order, leaving the sentence