

Whitewater TAG Network Southern Lakes Anthology 2007-2008

Plagiarism Teaching Tools

1. General Plagiarism Definition & Examples

2. Plagiarism Pretest and Answer Key

Plagiarism quiz and other tools:

<http://www.lib.sfu.ca/researchhelp/tutorials/interactive/plagiarism/tutorial/table-of-contents.htm>

www.plagiarism.org

3. Teaching & Learning: Lesson Plans

<http://henson.austin.apple.com/edres/ellesson/elem-writplagerism.shtml>

http://www.cybersmartcurriculum.org/lesson_plans/45_08.asp

http://www.cybersmartcurriculum.org/lesson_plans/68_09.asp

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/619/01/>

4. “Plagiarism goes high-tech”

Wisconsin State Journal, Oct. 16, 2005

<http://www.madison.com/archives/read.php?ref=/wsj/2005/10/16/0510150364.php>

Plagiarism

Because students often are confused about what is and is not plagiarism, this handout is designed to help you understand what is acceptable. There are some gray areas and if you have any questions, ask your instructor. Plagiarism is very serious and it can be grounds for failure in a course. **So ask first.**

Another important point is that as you progress in your education the standards become higher. As a high school or college student you are expected to have your own ideas. You are expected to read information and explain it in your words. If you complete an assignment by copying material, you are not showing that you understand something. Repeating or copying a textbook or Internet site does not show that you understand what you read.

Definition

Plagiarize \ˈplɑ-jɛ-,rɪz also j - -\ *vb* **-rized; -rizing** *vt* [*plagiary*] : to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own : use (a created production) without crediting the source *vi*: to commit literary theft: present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source - **plagiarizer** *n*

FROM: *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary 9th ed*, (Springfield, Ma: Merriam 1981, p. 870).

What to do

Now what does this mean for you?

1. First, it is unacceptable to copy something out of a book, newspaper, journal, Internet site, or any other printed source. The most blatant example of this is to directly copy something word for word. **It does not matter if it is only a phrase.** If it is not yours, either do not use it, or place it in quotes and reference it. There are different methods for doing this. The important thing is that the reader can tell what is yours, and what someone else's is.
 - a. **For short quotes, use quotation marks in the sentence.** An example is "CFC's: These substances are also of concern in connection with the destruction of stratospheric ozone" [Bunce, N. *Environmental Chemistry* (Winnipeg: Wuerz, 1994, p. 19)]
 - b. **For longer quotes it is appropriate to indent the entire passage:**

Chlorofluorocarbons, CFCs: These substances are also of concern in connection with the destruction of stratospheric ozone (Chapter 2). Like N₂O, they have no tropospheric sinks, but are infrared absorbers. Up to 1984, the tropospheric concentrations of three of the major commercial CFCs...

[Bunce, N. *Environmental Chemistry* (Winnipeg: Wuerz, 1994, p. 19)]

2. Another reason to use references is to show where you get information from. When you state a fact, unless it is "general knowledge," you should say where it comes from. Otherwise, a careful reader will have no way to verify your statement. It may be subjective to decide what "general knowledge" is, but keep in mind who is your audience.
3. As an example what is your reaction to the statement:

Wetlands emit 150 million tons of methane each year [Bunce, N. *Environmental Chemistry* (Winnipeg: Wuerz, 1994, p. 18)].

Without the reference, why should you believe it?

4. The above examples may seem obvious. If you use something word for word it **MUST** be acknowledged. Things start to get a bit gray when you paraphrase. There is one simple solution to this dilemma. **DO NOT PARAPHRASE!** Only use someone else's writing when it serves a purpose. Only use someone else's writing when you want to quote precisely what they wrote. If this is not your goal, **USE YOUR OWN WORDS.**
 - a. This avoids any ambiguity about who wrote it. After all, you do not want someone to accuse you of plagiarism.
 - b. You need to learn how to write in your own style. You may be influenced by authors that you find clear and easy to understand, but your writing needs to be **YOUR** writing. Mimicking someone else is not a productive exercise. You just learn to cut and paste.
 - c. An instructor who is reading or grading your work is interested in **YOUR** understanding of an idea. Instructors not interested in your ability to copy explanations from an Internet site or textbook. The author of the Internet article or the author of a book understands it. You are directed to an Internet site or textbook because there is information that your instructor wants you to know. When writing about a required source your instructor needs to know if **YOU** understand it.
 - d. Understanding and learning is more than just replaying something you have heard. Writing is a valuable exercise that tests your ability to explain a topic. You demonstrate your understanding of material when you write a summary in your own words. This is an important part of learning.

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