Plagiarism

Always ask your teacher:
- what the definition of plagiarism is in your school.
- how to identify sources of information.
- if you have to hand in your notes as well as the final project.

In my country, it is acceptable to copy other people's written work. Why is it different here?

The definition of plagiarism varies from country to country.

In some countries, copying a paragraph of someone else's work is not considered wrong. In some cases, not quoting a source is common because it is considered general knowledge and it would be insulting to assume the teacher did not know the source.

Why do some students plagiarize, even when they know it's considered a form of cheating?

- They feel pressure to get good marks, and they think another person's writing will be better than their own.
- They have not yet developed confidence in their writing.
- They find an author that they agree with, and feel it's just easier to copy.

Remember that your teacher will know if you are using writing that is not your own. Vocabulary and sentence structure used by professionals is very different from that of a student. Your teacher would rather you hand in your own writing, even with mistakes, than hand in writing that you copied.

VSB

"Plagiarism"

Plagiarism

Answers to Commonly Asked Questions

Plagiarism

What is Plagiarism?

In Canada, plagiarism means that a student takes credit for someone else's ideas, words and pictures. It is copying someone else's work, making it appear as if the ideas are his/her own. This includes using the work a tutor has done for the student.

Examples include:

- an entire essay or report is copied word for word.

- only minor changes have been made from the original source or some sentences have been reworded.

Using another person's ideas, statistics, drawings, or information is fine, as long as credit is given to the author, creator, or source.

What are some common ways students plagiarize?

With Internet use, many students are able to quickly find research material that they can copy and paste into their own writing. Not quoting the source of this material is considered plagiarism and is a form of cheating.

Examples include:

- students use parts of sentences, whole sentences or paragraphs from different sources and join them together as if it were their own work.

- students reword or reorganize someone else's material and pretend it is their own. Changing the order of the words does not make it your own.

- students use the ideas and opinions of another person without giving them credit.

When is it okay not to give credit to an idea?

This is a difficult question. If an idea is considered 'common' or 'general' knowledge, it is okay not to give credit.

Examples include:

- The moon is a satellite of earth.

- Vancouver is in an earthquake zone.

What happens if a student is caught plagiarizing?

They may receive a zero for the assignment, or be asked to withdraw from the course.

How can a student avoid plagiarism?

1. Take notes as you do your research. These notes should list the main ideas and supporting details. Use these notes to write your work. Use direct quotes to support your ideas, rather than as the only basis for your writing.

2. Keep a record of all the books, page numbers, and authors you used. This includes information from: books, articles, internet, diagrams, charts, etc. It is better to write down more than you think you need.

3. Ask your teacher how you should identify your sources. Usually this means writing in-text citations (footnotes) and works consulted (bibliography).

In-text citations- a way to identify direct quotes from someone else's work.

Works consulted- an alphabetical list of books, articles, magazines, websites, etc. that you used when you were gathering information.

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