

There are basically three kinds of plagiarism:

(1) Using another person's exact words without including quotation marks **\*and\*** citation.

If you use someone else's exact words, then you must cite the original source (either in a footnote or in a citation in the text), and you must enclose the words in quotation marks or else set them off from the rest of the text by indenting them from the other text.

(2) Using another person's words, but changing some of them, or rearranging them. This is plagiarism even if the source is cited.

(3) Summarizing or paraphrasing another person's words without citation. If you use what someone else has written, but you describe it or summarize it in your own words, then you don't need to enclose it in quotation marks, but you still must provide a citation to the original source, either in a footnote or directly in the text.

Note that it's not enough to simply include a reference to the original source in your bibliography; "citation" of the original source means citing it where it appears in the text.

If you aren't certain that you understand what constitutes plagiarism, here are two websites that provide excellent descriptions and examples:

<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>

<http://www.hamilton.edu/academics/resource/wc/usingsources.html>

An expert on plagiarism and the law, attorney Ronald B. Standler, points out that plagiarism is fraud: "The plagiarist knows that he is not the true author of the work, yet the plagiarist willfully and deliberately puts his name on the work ... and then submits the work as an inducement to some kind of reward (e.g., a good grade on a term paper [or] a graduate degree for a thesis or dissertation ...). Using phrases like 'academic misconduct' to describe plagiarism is too sterile, too kind. Plagiarism is fraud." According to Standler, anyone (including a college student) who plagiarizes copyrighted material can be sued in federal court by the owner of the copyright. Standler also provides some colorful descriptions of how unsympathetic the courts can be toward college students who have been disciplined for plagiarism and seek relief via lawsuit. One of his examples demonstrates that **\*even if the original author gives you permission to use his or her exact words,\*** it's still plagiarism if you don't use quotation marks and a citation. (See Standler's website, <http://www.rbs2.com/plag.htm>)

Finally, here's an assessment of plagiarism by a Virginia Tech student, Josh Reid:

"Plagiarism is the basest form of parasitism. A leech may make a living from other organisms, but even a leech doesn't take credit where credit is not due. Thievery of words, [plagiarism is a] disease that debilitates creativity and scholastic equality. ...

Most plagiarists know how dishonest their actions are, but they are ignorant of the damage they do to their own creative growth. The writing process ... may seem an arduous and superfluous task, where a "harmless" act of borrowing from another source could mean a better grade and less hassle; however, the writing act -- the struggle to convert ideas into words -- is an essential skill for personal expression and the workplace. When you struggle, curse, and claw out your hair over that term paper, you are undergoing an important human trial: growth. This growth can be painful, difficult, annoying, but you will find yourself inexpressibly better for having survived the crucible.

Writing is much like lifting weights -- you must be the one doing the work. If someone always benches the bar for you, your muscle development will be abysmally low. ... For those who make a habit of plagiarism, there will be moments in the future, perhaps at a board meeting, where you are required to contribute something idiosyncratically meaningful and original but you will flounder, because your creative center has atrophied from lack of use. You will have nothing to say, because someone else has always said it for you."