Part 4: Learn How to Recognize and Avoid Plagiarism

Plagiarism Defined by IIT

The Illinois Institute of Technology states that plagiarism occurs when a student uses some else’s words or ideas, and fails to document the source - (https://web.iit.edu/cac/student-resources/writing-guides/writing-process/plagiarism-and-avoiding-it).

IIT Code of Academic Honesty

Anyone who knowingly engages in plagiarism violates IIT’s Code of Academic Honesty and is subject to disciplinary measures -

1. The student will be expelled from the course, or

2. The student will have his or her grade reduced.

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Examples of Plagiarism

1. Submitting someone else’s paper as your own.
2. Buying a paper from a website or from another student.
3. Copying sentences, paragraphs, or ideas from someone else’s work without citing the source.
4. Changing a few words in a sentence or paragraph even if you cite the source.

Common Knowledge is not Subject to Plagiarism

Common knowledge does not have to be cited. Examples include -

1. “A square has four sides” – don’t have to cite the source.
2. “The earth is round” – don’t have to cite the source.
3. “Isaac Newton discovered gravity” – don’t have to cite the source.
Why Students End Up Plagiarizing

In most instances of plagiarism students do not start out with the intention of copying some else’s work. They end up plagiarizing for three basic reasons:

1. *They do not take careful notes* during the research process so they are not sure where they got the sentence, paragraph, or idea from.

2. *They start writing their paper too late*, and then don’t have the time to carefully paraphrase or restate the sentence in their own words.

3. *They have not done enough research* so they become too reliant on only a few sources of information.
Best ways to avoid Plagiarism

1. Start the research process as early as possible.

2. Take notes as you read and carefully record all the elements of your bibliography (title, author, journal, page number, year published, website address, etc).

3. Use Endnote during the entire research process to export and import all of your citations.

4. If you are cutting and pasting a passage be sure to place it in quotations so that when you start writing you realize that you will have to paraphrase that passage.

5. Ask your instructor if you are unsure if something is plagiarism.
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When to Use Quotations

Quotations should be used if you are stating the exact words from your source. More specifically -

1. Quote when the writer’s words are especially vivid, memorable, or expressive.

2. Quote when paraphrasing would be less clear.

3. Quote when the exact words are important to your paper.

4. As a general rule no more than 10% of your paper should be quotations.
Example of Plagiarism – No Quotations

Sample Passage from “Copyright Law” by Schechter and Thomas -

Copyright protection is not available for any work of the U.S. government. As specified in section 105, the U.S. government cannot claim copyright in works prepared by government employees in the course of duties of their employment.

Copying the passage verbatim and not using quotes or citing the passage is the worst form of plagiarism -

Copyright protection is not available for any work of the U.S. government. As specified in section 105, the U.S. government cannot claim copyright in works prepared by government employees in the course of duties of their employment.
Example of Properly Cited Passage

Sample Passage from “Copyright Law” by Schechter and Thomas -

Copyright protection is not available for any work of the U.S. government. As specified in section 105, the U.S. government cannot claim copyright in works prepared by government employees in the course of duties of their employment.

This time the passage was placed in quotations and properly cited -

“Copyright protection is not available for any work of the U.S. government. As specified in section 105, the U.S. government cannot claim copyright in works prepared by government employees in the course of duties of their employment” (Schechter and Thomas 71-72).
Paraphrasing Defined

Paraphrasing is the act of restating a passage in your own words. You know you have correctly paraphrased when –

1. You use your own words.
2. You use a different sentence structure.
3. You incorporate all of the main ideas of the passage.
4. You include or define important technical terms of the passage.
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Example of Improper Paraphrasing

- Sample passage from “Copyright Law” by Schechter and Thomas with both sentences in different colors -

  Copyright protection is not available for any work of the U.S. government. As specified in section 105, the U.S. government cannot claim copyright in works prepared by government employees in the course of duties of their employment.

- Switching the order of the sentences is not proper paraphrasing-

  As specified in section 105, the U.S. government cannot claim copyright in works prepared by government employees in the course of duties of their employment. Therefore, copyright protection is not available for any work of the U.S. government.
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Example of Proper Paraphrasing

Sample passage from “Copyright Law” by Schechter and Thomas with both sentences in different colors -

Copyright protection is not available for any work of the U.S. government. As specified in section 105, the U.S. government cannot claim copyright in works prepared by government employees in the course of duties of their employment.

This paraphrased sentence uses different words but keeps the main idea of the original passage.

Per section 105, U.S. government works are not eligible for copyright protection (Schechter and Thomas 71-72).
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- **Plagiarism and Copyright Law**
  
  Correctly paraphrasing and citing a work does not mean that you are in compliance with copyright law. Also, adhering to copyright law does not mean you aren’t plagiarizing.

- **Using Another Person’s ideas**
  
  Copyright law does not extend to ideas so using someone else’s ideas does not violate copyright law. However, whenever you use someone else’s ideas you must paraphrase and cite the source to avoid plagiarism.

- **Using Another Person’s Sentence or Paragraph**
  
  Both Copyright law and plagiarism extend to another person’s sentence or paragraph so you must adhere to copyright law. Also, you must use quotations or paraphrase the sentence, and cite the source to avoid plagiarism.
We’re Done!!!

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