



Plagiarism:

Not As Simple As It Seems

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Code of Academic Integrity *

A Cornell student's submission of work for academic credit indicates that the work is the student's own. All outside assistance should be acknowledged, and the student's academic position truthfully reported at all times.

Guidelines

- I. A student shall in no way misrepresent his or her work.

Examples of Violations

I. Knowingly representing the work of others as one's own. p. 1.

Plagiarizing, or representing someone else's written work as one's own without acknowledgment or with insufficient, or improper acknowledgment. (For more information on plagiarism, see *Acknowledging the Work of Others*, p. 15). p. 12

* Office of the University Faculty, Cornell University 2006

Code continued (pg 15)

ACKNOWLEDGING THE WORK OF OTHERS

Education at its best, whether conducted in seminar, laboratory, or lecture hall, is a dialogue ... If this dialogue is to flourish, students who enter the University must assume certain responsibilities. Among them is the responsibility to make clear what knowledge is theirs and what is someone else's. ... Students who use facts or ideas originating with others must plainly distinguish what is theirs from what is not. **To misrepresent one's work knowingly is to commit an act of theft. To misrepresent one's work ignorantly is to show oneself unprepared to assume the responsibility presupposed by work on the college level.** ... **What is prohibited is simply improper, unacknowledged use (commonly known as "plagiarism").**

www.plagiarism.org

- Many people think of plagiarism as copying another's work, or borrowing someone else's original ideas. But terms like "copying" and "borrowing" can disguise the seriousness of the offense: According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, to "plagiarize" means to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own, to use (another's production) without crediting the source, to commit literary theft, to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source. In other words, plagiarism is an act of fraud. It involves both stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterward.

All of the following are considered plagiarism:

- turning in someone else's work as your own
- copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- failing to put a quotation in quotation marks
- giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
- copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not (see our section on "fair use" rules)

Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided ... by citing sources.



The Little Book of Plagiarism

Richard Posner

- “Plagiarism is a species of **intellectual fraud**. It consists of unauthorized copying that the copier claims (**whether explicitly or implicitly, and whether deliberately or carelessly**) is original with him and **the claim causes the copier’s audience to behave otherwise than it would if it knew the truth.**” p. 106

Accepted Copying Without Acknowledgement (Posner)

- Judicial opinions
 - Judges sign opinions which they did not write; only lawyers and some others know that clerks commonly write much/most/all of the text.
 - Judges and clerks insert into their writing, without attribution, verbatim passages from lawyers' briefs.
- Textbooks
 - Don't give sources because *originality* is not expected. Reliable textbooks emphasize and present ideas that are accepted.

Citations in Textbooks

“ Shifting cultivation does not require pesticides, chemical fertilizers , or mechanized plowing; it is thus energy efficient in terms of fossil fuel. **As geographer David McGrath** has pointed out however, it is not energy efficient in view of the biomass that is destroyed.... **Some have suggested** that the fields under shifting cultivation mimic the rain forest.....”

South America Caviedes and Knapp, Prentice Hall 1995

Figure Attribution



FIGURE 5.6 Concentric ring agriculture. (Reprinted by permission from *Advances in Economic Botany*, vol. 7, pp. 174–188, S. Hecht and D. Posey, © 1989, The New York Botanical Society)



FIGURE 5.7 Early drawing of Andean foot plow. (Guamán Poma de Ayala)



Posner continued

- Professors and well-known writers are less severely punished than students and novices for plagiarism.
- Double standard, cynicism etc.

Why Do Students Plagiarize

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- **Intentional**

- Time constraints/poor planning.
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Confusion over boundary between research and plagiarism
- Finding data on internet is an attainable, useful skill that provides lots of information. Interpreting and analyzing this information is very hard work that initially seems less worthwhile.
- Others say it and explain it better.
- Pressure to perform and succeed.
- Other students do it – I am at a competitive disadvantage.

Why? (continued)

- **Unintentional**

- Citation confusion.
- Can't distinguish between paraphrasing and plagiarizing.
- Sloppy note taking.
- Can't find source.
- Confusion about expectations.
- Can't distinguish between 'common knowledge' and original ideas.
- Cultural differences.

Types: Sources Not Cited

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- The Ghost Writer The writer turns in another's work, word-for-word, as his or her own.
- The Photocopy The writer copies significant portions of text straight from a single source, without alteration.
- The Potluck Paper The writer tries to disguise plagiarism by copying from several different sources, tweaking the sentences to make them fit together while retaining most of the original phrasing.
- The Poor Disguise Although the writer has retained the essential content of the source, he or she has altered the paper's appearance slightly by changing key words and phrases.
- The Labor of Laziness The writer takes the time to paraphrase most of the paper from other sources and make it all fit together, instead of spending the same effort on original work.
- The Self-Stealer The writer "borrows" generously from his or her previous work, violating policies concerning the expectation of originality adopted by most academic institutions.

Types: Sources Cited

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- The Forgotten Footnote The writer mentions an author's name for a source, but neglects to include specific information on the location of the material referenced. This often masks other forms of plagiarism by obscuring source locations.
- The Misinformer The writer provides inaccurate information regarding the sources, making it impossible to find them.
- The Too-Perfect Paraphrase The writer properly cites a source, but neglects to put in quotation marks text that has been copied word-for-word, or close to it. Although attributing the basic ideas to the source, the writer is falsely claiming original presentation and interpretation of the information.
- The Resourceful Citer The writer properly cites all sources, paraphrasing and using quotations appropriately. The catch? The paper contains almost no original work! It is sometimes difficult to spot this form of plagiarism because it looks like any other well-researched document.
- The Perfect Crime The writer properly quotes and cites sources in some places, but goes on to paraphrase other arguments from those sources without citation. This way, the writer tries to pass off the paraphrased material as his or her own analysis of the cited material.



Preventing, Detecting

- Address causes and structure obstacles.
- Software
 - Turnitin
- Lighten up; consider as educational/developmental rather than ethical/moral issue.