

Plagiarism & Academic Integrity

Why do I need to know about it?

Every writing assignment is an opportunity to learn and grow as a student.

Plagiarism gives a false impression of your knowledge on a subject.

Avoiding plagiarism respects others' contributions to the field of study.

What is plagiarism?

“When you represent someone else’s ideas, words, artistic product, or creation as being your own without giving that person appropriate credit”

- CSU, Stanislaus Division of Student Affairs

Educational experiences at a university engage you in a give and take, in which you—as a student—learn from others and develop the ability to make your own contributions to the body of knowledge. The act of plagiarizing cheapens your academic accomplishments in the eyes of others and calls into question the legitimacy of the ideas and products you have truly created¹.

All of the following are considered plagiarism ([from www.plagiarism.org](http://www.plagiarism.org)):

- 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



Plagiarism can be avoided by:

- ✓ properly citing your sources
- ✓ attributing any concepts or ideas you incorporate into your work to your sources
- ✓ enclosing direct quotations in quotation marks (“ “)
- ✓ providing the information on your sources in footnotes or endnotes.



Consequences of plagiarism

- “F” on assignment or in course (at the discretion of the instructor).
- Referral to Judicial Affairs
- Dismissal from University
- Noted on transcripts
- Impacts your future and follows you in your career.

Excuses, excuses . . .

Common misconceptions about plagiarism*

Everyone does it. I'm no different.

While many do, not everyone plagiarizes.

I don't have enough time to complete the assignment.

Waiting until the last minute to start an assignment is a common problem, and it increases the temptation to plagiarize. Budgeting your time, making a calendar to plan out what tasks you will complete each day, and getting started early will help. Talk to your professor about how much time you should plan for your assignment. Get help from educational counselors in Counseling Services if you need help with time management skills. Schedule an appointment with a tutor in the Writing Center to help organize and plan out your writing process.

It's a mindless assignment. I won't get anything out of it—or—I already know it.

Plagiarism is not defined by the worthiness of an assignment. What a shame it would be to suffer a disciplinary penalty for the sake of a "mindless" assignment you could have easily finished properly.

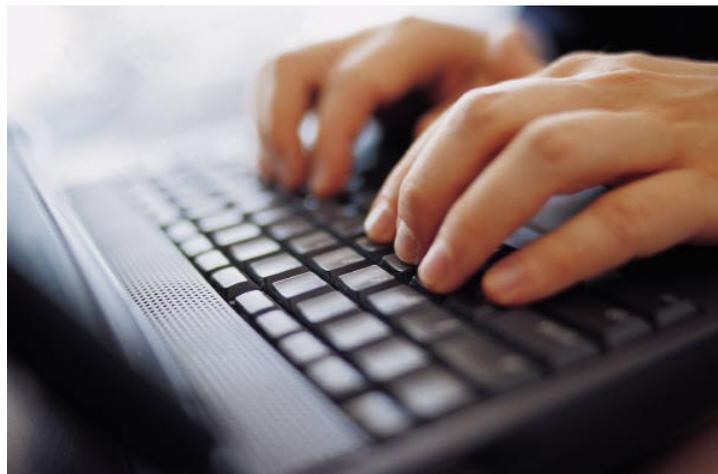
The author or creator doesn't care if he/she gets credit.

The creator's views are irrelevant. The violation occurs when you mislead others into believing the work you have produced is yours alone, without acknowledging your resources.

I didn't even know I was plagiarizing! I paraphrased everything. Nothing was word-for-word.

Even paraphrased passages must be acknowledged or cited properly. If you do not know how to properly cite, then find out! Consult the style guide for your area of study for information on how to properly cite sources in your work. Ask your professor for guidance on assignments that require research. Go to one of the links referenced in this handout for help with citations. Make an appointment in the campus Writing Center for help with research, paraphrasing, and citation.

*Adapted from CSU, Stanislaus Division of Student Affairs, 2003, pages 2-3



It was just an idea. It wasn't published in a book or website.

If the idea is original or unique to another person, then you must give the person credit.

- The exception to this is commonly known information. For example, by this time in human history, we all know the earth revolves around the sun. It is not necessary to give Copernicus credit for this idea. However, if your best friend creates a distinct phrase to describe the mating habits of penguins, and this phrase isn't one anyone else has heard and one that does not naturally occur to you, then you should give it proper attribution with a footnote or comment offset in parentheses.

I won't get caught. It's no big deal. It's just this one time.

- Every year, students who thought that they would not be detected or who claim that it is the first time they have plagiarized are caught and sent to the campus Judicial Office.
- Faculty members regularly utilize software that enables them to double check your materials against information in published forms—including those on the internet.
- Every once in a while, a student makes the mistake of plagiarizing material published by his or her own professor.
- Your professors know the subjects they teach very well, are familiar with the materials that are available, and can often easily find out the correct sources (that's why they're professors).