

What is plagiarism?

According to the Texas A&M University Definitions of Academic Misconduct, plagiarism is the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results or words without giving appropriate credit (www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor). You should credit your use of anyone else's words, graphic images, or ideas using standard citation styles. If it should be discovered that you have failed to properly credit sources or have used a paper written by someone else, it can be recommended that you receive an F for the course. The Aggie Honor System Office processes for adjudication and appeals can be found at www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor.

Plagiarism can take several forms. It is your responsibility to know what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. 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)

A checklist on how to avoid plagiarism:

- Learn how to cite your sources using the appropriate style manual.
- Using a sequence of sentences or word language of another author's work is considered an act of plagiarism.
- Keep careful notes and documentation as you do your research.
- It is advisable not to "overquote" in your paper. Remember the paper should be made up of your own ideas and arguments.
- Downloading information from the Internet or any other electronic database product to include in your paper, without citing its source, is considered an act of plagiarism.
- Cite ideas from other sources when they add weight to your own argument or ideas.
- Learn how to paraphrase wisely using your own words and citing the source appropriately.
- Use quotation marks even if a footnote is provided.
- Know the difference between a bibliography and a reference list. Your reference list is where your source material cited in your paper is listed. The bibliography includes general background material which you read but did not cite in your paper.
- Paraphrasing does not mean you do not need to cite the source.
- Always quote the exact words of an author and surround them in quotation marks, citing the source within the body of the text and in the reference list.
- If you are not sure whether to cite a source, cite it.
- Changing a few words of another author's work is still considered an act of plagiarism.
- Do not start your paper the night before your paper is due. This may cause you to stress out enough to "cut corners."

Williams Library, Texas A&M University at Galveston, May 26, 2010

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