

The University of West Florida Plagiarism Policy

What is Plagiarism?

A major misconception some students have is believing that rewriting something is not plagiarism because they are "putting it in their own words." However, if the source is not acknowledged, such rewriting IS PLAGIARISM. Copying and pasting actually accounts for only a small percentage of plagiarism. Most plagiarism is a result of text manipulation. The accessibility of the Internet makes plagiarism very tempting, and unintentional plagiarism often springs from this source as well.

Simply stated, plagiarism is using someone else's work without giving appropriate credit. This improper usage can include the following:

- Copying and pasting text from on-line media, such as encyclopedias.
- Copying and pasting text from any Web site.
- Transcribing text from any printed material, such as books, magazines, encyclopedias or newspapers.
- Simply modifying text from any of the above sources. For example, replacing a few select words with one's own does not constitute original work and thus is plagiarism.
- Using photographs, video or audio without permission or acknowledgment is plagiarism. You may use photographic, video or audio sources with or in a paper or multimedia presentation that you create, as long as you do not profit from it or use it for any purpose other than the original assignment. You should include the source in your bibliography.
- Using another student's work and claiming it as your own, even with permission, is academically unethical and is plagiarism. Known as "collusion," this misrepresentation is unacceptable.
- Purchasing course papers or other work from commercial sources is academically unethical and is treated as plagiarism.
- Translation from one language to another is not using your own words and ideas and is treated as plagiarism. Translations fall under the guidelines for quotations, summaries and paraphrasing.
- Using an essay that you wrote for another course or purpose without getting permission from the instructor of both the current course and the course in which the original work was submitted is SELF-PLAGIARISM. You may use your previous work as a basis for new research if the original work is included in your bibliography.

Quoting, Summarizing & Paraphrasing

Whenever you quote, summarize or paraphrase, you must acknowledge the original source. If you do not directly credit your source in a citation, YOU ARE PLAGIARIZING!

- If you quote a source, you must quote exactly, word for word. Cite the source in the paper with a footnote or parenthetical reference.
- The sources for summaries and paraphrasings must also be cited. Cite these exactly as you would a quotation. Summaries and paraphrasings are merely condensed versions of someone else's work. You must, therefore, give them credit for the information.
- Simply put, PARAPHRASING is putting an author's work into your own words. Although the information is in your own words, it is still the original author's work. You have merely rephrased it. SUMMARIZING is writing out the main points of someone else's work in your own words. Once again, this is not information which you have created; therefore, it must be cited.

Unacceptable and Acceptable Paraphrases

Here's the original text from page one of *Lizzie Borden: A Case Book of Family and Crime in the 1880s* by Joyce Williams et al.:

The rise of industry, the growth of cities, and the expansion of the population were the three great developments of late nineteenth century American history. As new, larger, steam-powered factories became a feature of the American landscape in the East, they transformed farm hands into industrial laborers and provided jobs for a rising tide of immigrants. With industry came urbanization, the growth of large cities (like Fall River, Massachusetts, where the Bordens lived) which became the centers of production as well as of commerce and trade.

Here's an UNACCEPTABLE paraphrase that is plagiarism:

The increase of industry, the growth of cities, and the explosion of the population were three large factors of nineteenth century America. As steam-driven companies became more visible in the eastern part of the country, they changed farm hands into factory workers and provided jobs for the large wave of immigrants. With industry came the growth of large cities like Fall River, where the Bordens lived, which turned into centers of commerce and trade as well as production.

What makes this passage plagiarism?

The preceding passage is considered plagiarism for two reasons: the writer has only changed around a few words and phrases, or changed the order of the original's sentences; the writer has failed to cite a source for any of the ideas or facts. If you do either or both of these, you are plagiarizing.

Here's an ACCEPTABLE paraphrase:

Fall River, where the Borden family lived, was typical of northeastern industrial cities of the nineteenth century. Steam-powered production had shifted labor from agriculture to manufacturing, and as immigrants arrived in the U.S., they found work in these new factories. As a result, populations grew, and large urban areas arose. Fall River was one of these manufacturing and commercial centers. (Williams 1)

Why is this passage acceptable?

This is acceptable paraphrasing because the writer accurately relays the information in the original use of the writer's own words; the writer lets the reader know the source of the information.

Here's an example of quotation and paraphrase used together, which is also ACCEPTABLE:

Fall River, where the Borden family lived, was typical of northeastern industrial cities of the nineteenth century. As steam-powered production shifted labor from agriculture to manufacturing, the demand for workers "transformed farm hands into factory workers," and created jobs for immigrants. In turn, grown populations increased the size of urban areas. Fall River was one of these manufacturing hubs that were also "centers of commerce and trade." (Williams 1)

Why is this passage acceptable?

This is acceptable paraphrasing because the writer records the information in the original passage accurately, gives credit for the ideas in this passage and indicates which part is taken directly from the writer's source by putting the passage in quotation marks and citing the page number.

Strategies for Avoiding Plagiarism

- Put in quotation marks everything that comes directly from the text, especially when you are taking notes.
- Paraphrase, but be sure you are not just rearranging or replacing a few words. Instead, read over what you want to paraphrase carefully (cover up the text with your hand or close the text so you won't use any of it for a " guide") before writing out the idea in your own words.
- Check your paraphrase against the original text to be sure you have not accidentally used the same phrases or words, and that the information is accurate.

What is Common Knowledge?

Common knowledge: facts that can be found in numerous places and are likely to be known by many people.

Example:

John F. Kennedy was elected President of the United States in 1960.

This is generally known information. You do not need to document this fact. However, you must document facts that are not generally known and ideas that interpret facts.

Example:

According to the American Family Leave Coalition's new book, *Family Issues and Congress*, President Bush's relationship with Congress has hindered family leave legislation (6).

The idea that "Bush's relationship with Congress has hindered family leave legislation" is not a fact, but an interpretation; consequently, you need to cite your source.

UWF Plagiarism Policy

The UWF Student Handbook, Code of Student Conduct, Academic Misconduct, states: "Plagiarism. The act of representing the ideas, words, creations or work of another as one's own."

Plagiarism combines theft with fraud, and the penalty is correspondingly severe: failure for the assignment and, in some cases, for the entire course. At the instructor's discretion, she/he may recommend that the student be suspended from the university.

Ignorance of the rules about plagiarism is no excuse for it, and carelessness is just as bad as purposeful violation. Students who have plagiarized have cheated themselves out of the experience of being responsible members of the academic community and have cheated their classmates by pretending to contribute original ideas.

For complete information regarding Academic Misconduct, refer to the [UWF Student Handbook](#) or contact Student Affairs in Building 21, 474-2384.

Need Help?

The University Writing Lab, located in Building 51, room 157, is available to assist students with proper procedures for writing papers and documenting sources. Visit the Writing Lab or check out its web site at <http://uwf.edu/writelab> or e-mail writelab@uwf.edu

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