CBC Learning Resource Center & Library
Student Tip Sheet for Avoiding Plagiarism

What is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is defined as "the false presentation of someone else's writing as one's own. In the case of copyrighted work, plagiarism is illegal".* Trivial changes in copied text, in an attempt to avoid copyright infringement, are specifically prohibited by law in the USA.

Jeff Herman's guide to book publishers, editors, & literary agents by Jeff Herman (2004)

Fair Use (Section 107) of copyright:

It is *not* an infringement of copyright to make short quotations from a work for purposes of criticism, comment, teaching, scholarship, or research. 17 USC §107. However, every quotation *must* be clearly identified with the name of the author and the source of the quotation. Suitable forms for identification of author and source are contained in academic style manuals (e.g., *The MLA Handbook*), in the rules for footnotes or bibliographic citations.
Read more from the Stanford University Libraries' Fair Use Center: http://fairuse.stanford.edu

The following guide is adapted from The University of Minnesota Libraries:
http://tutorial.lib.umn.edu/infomachine.asp?moduleID=10&lessonID=28

Why do some students engage in some form of plagiarism?
- Accidental plagiarism happens when a writer does not intend to plagiarize, but fails to cite his or her sources completely and correctly. Careful note-taking and a clear understanding of the rules for quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing sources can help prevent this.
- Some students neglect to budget enough time to adequately accomplish a paper, presentation or other project. They then engage in plagiarism to finish their task.

Some tips for avoiding accidental plagiarism when you use sources:
- Cite every piece of information that is not a) the result of your own research, or b) common knowledge. This includes opinions, arguments, and speculations as well as facts, details, figures, and statistics. Common knowledge is a particular fact that most people would know and that is found in many sources. A good example of common knowledge is that Martin Luther King Jr. was a civil rights leader.
- Use quotation marks every time you use the author's words (for longer quotes, indenting the whole quotation has the same effect as quotation marks).
- At the beginning of the first sentence in which you quote, paraphrase, or summarize, make it clear that what comes next is someone else's idea:
  - According to Smith…
  - Jones says…
  - In her 1987 study, Robinson proved…
- At the **end** of the **last sentence** containing quoted, paraphrased, or summarized material, insert a **parenthetical citation** to show where the material came from:
  - The St. Martin's Handbook defines plagiarism as "the use of someone else's words or ideas as [the writer's] own without crediting the other person" (Lunsford and Connors 602). [Notice the use of brackets to mark a change in the wording of the original.]
- Consult the Bedford Handbook (St. Martin's; Diana Hacker; etc), or the latest MLA Style Guide, or APA style guide, all available in your library or on the library's web page.
- Have your instructor proofread your writing.

Samples of student guides to plagiarism from other academic institutions:

Purdue University Online Writing Lab: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_plagiar.html

U.C. Davis Student Judicial Affairs: http://sja.ucdavis.edu/files/plagiarism.pdf