

Ahahay!!! Are you one of the students who are having sleepless nights bonding with your computer to do research papers? I bet you are tired of reading piles of books and articles, etc. just to be able to beat the deadline set by your professor. For sure, the temptation to just copy directly from your source or just download articles from the internet is there hanging around you to finish an instant research paper.

Hep, hep, hep! You may have done your paper easily if you would give in to the temptation but you might also have a pending case in the students' tribunal due to *plagiarism*.

With this issue, this primer aims to give you basic information regarding plagiarism based on Georgetown University's official website and Indiana University Writing Tutorial Services article on plagiarism. Answers to basic questions on plagiarism are presented for clarification. Furthermore, suggestions on how to avoid committing this intellectual dishonesty are also provided to serve as your guide in avoiding this.

So what does plagiarism mean in the first place?

As a student, you may have encountered the term "plagiarism" often when given guidelines by professors for your paper works. But do you really know what it means?

As defined by the Cornell University Honor Council, *plagiarism* means "the act of passing off as one's own the ideas of another" (from the website: www.georgetown.edu/honor/plagiarism.html). One commits it when he or she makes use of others' ideas but does not give due credit to the author(s) referred to.

Does it mean that if I put my source in the bibliography I am safe from plagiarizing?

No. Students often think that just putting their source in their bibliography is enough to be able to cite the written materials they used as reference. Unfortunately, this does not them from committing plagiarism.

This instance is actually called "the mosaic" (from the website: www.georgetown.edu/honor/plagiarism.html). This happens when you have used other's findings or writings but have just cited the corresponding author(s) in your bibliography. As such, this would be a vague way of referring to your source since the author's specific idea would not be directly attributed to him.

So, what are the other instances where I might be committing plagiarism?

Most of the time, students are also having difficulty in borrowing original ideas from others because they cannot find other ways to state them with their own words. Sure one can use their ideas as is but what commonly happens is that one tends to just copy the exact terms used by the author. However, this can also be a room where one can commit plagiarism.

Consider the original text from Heilbroner, Robert L. *An Inquiry into the Human Prospect*. New York: WW Norton and Company, 1974, page 37 (cited from the website: www.georgetown.edu/honor/plagiarism.html) :

The race between food and mouths as perhaps the most dramatic and most highly publicized aspect of the population problem, but is necessarily the most immediate threatening. For the torrent of human growth imposes intolerable social strains on the economically backward regions, as well as hideous costs on their individual citizens... The cesspool of Calcutta thus becomes more and more the image of urban degradation toward which the dynamics of population growth are pushing the poorest lands.

In case you have written in your paper a paragraph like this ((cited from the website: www.georgetown.edu/honor/plagiarism.htm) :

The cesspool of Calcutta is a good example of a city where urban disorganization is being threatened because of a rapidly increasing population. These cities are technologically static, economically backward, and impose intolerable social strains and hideous costs on their individual citizens.

and put no credit on Heilbroner in the end of your paragraph or just put his work in the bibliography, you have plagiarized. There are lot of characteristic phrases such as "cesspool of Calcutta," "hideous costs," and "population problem" that appear to be in just few words but speaks a lot.

But what if I can't use another terms other than what the sources used?

Of course it is natural for us to borrow the exact ideas of others. This also occurs in the academe since it is widely acknowledged that it is necessary to build upon the works of others. What one can do when is to quote the said phrases and give proper citation at the end of the paragraph.

Consider the following example used in the website www.georgetown.edu/honor/plagiarism.htm:

The "cesspool of Calcutta" is a good example of a city where "urban disorganization" is being threatened because of a rapidly increasing population. These cities are "technologically static," "economically backward," and impose

intolerable social strains and "hideous costs on their individual citizens."
(Heilbroner, 37)

By doing this, you have now followed the rules. To reiterate, it is required to put on quotations everything you have copied directly from the source. Meanwhile, for long statements, usually three lines in your paper, to be borrowed from the original text, it is proper to put it in a new line and indent. Again, do not forget to cite your source properly.

However, there seems to be something lacking in using quotes all over your paper - your role as a good writer. It would not be a wise move to copy all terms. Some intellectual work should also be done. It is important that you build the arguments of your paper without sacrificing your job as a writer.

So can I just paraphrase & give proper citations?

Sure! We often do paraphrases most of the time. When you are asked what happened to the last episode of "Endless Love" or "Lord of the Rings: The return of the King" by a friend, you would not tell them what exactly happened during the 30 minutes or 3 hours of the show. What you usually do is to give the summary and highlights of the story.

To reiterate, *paraphrasing* means restating other's ideas in your own words.

However, some guidelines in paraphrasing should be followed. Usually, What one tends to do is to just replace some words in the paragraph just to say that he has paraphrased it. Unfortunately, this way of paraphrasing is also a case of plagiarism. We have to keep in mind that there are *acceptable & unacceptable* paraphrases.

Consider the following example from page 1 of *Lizzie Borden: A Case Book of Family and Crime in the 1890s* by Joyce Williams et al. (used in the website: www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.htm):

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.

You will be plagiarizing if you do something like this in your paper:

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.

The example above is a case of unacceptable paraphrase since the writer only changed a few words or the order of sentences from the original text and failed to cite the source properly. Again, as a writer, it would not be good to just assemble the original text in your source. Moreover, this would be dangerous because you might have written an inaccurate version of the author's work.

To illustrate, here is an acceptable paraphrase (used in the website: www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.htm):

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 US, 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).

Now, the writer has precisely relayed the original information in his own terms & has given proper citation.

But I am having a hard time in paraphrasing, are there guidelines in making acceptable paraphrases?

Yes. There are some guidelines for you to consider to be able to paraphrase properly. Here are helpful tips to follow:

- *Read, read, read!* This might be tiring and time consuming but this is an efficient way to understand your materials very well. With this, You can easily write down in your own words what you have read because you know it by heart. Moreover, you can avoid looking at your source and copy it directly. You can also be safe from relaying what was said in the source inaccurately if you are familiar with the information your about to use.
- *Write & Check.* After doing your paraphrase, it would be helpful to compare what you have written with your source to check errors in arguments and data that you have presented.
- *Practice makes perfect.* The more you do proper paraphrasing stuffs, the more you get use to it.

What would happen to me if I have committed plagiarism?

Plagiarism and other forms of intellectual dishonesty such as cheating are absolutely prohibited under UP Rules and Regulations. In case you are caught for doing it, UP's University lawyer will be conducting your prosecution. If proven guilty, you will be expelled and dishonorably discharged from the University.

Furthermore, your degree can be forfeited when proven guilty of plagiarism. This happened to Arokiaswamy William Margaret, a UP student, where her PhD title was forfeited because she was found guilty of ninety (90) instances of intellectual dishonesty from plagiarizing in her PhD thesis as upheld by the Court (G.R. No. 134625).

But I am not familiar with the proper ways of citations, so what can I do?

The most common way of citing nowadays is the use of the APA (American Psychological Association) style. There are a lot of available materials online that provide basic guidelines in using the APA style. Here are some links that you can check out:

www.apastyle.org/elecref.html
webster.comnet.edu/apa/apa_index.htm
www.psywww.com/resource/apacrib.htm
owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_apa.html

More are available in the internet but check your source and assess whether the guidelines that you would follow are credible.

For more questions on plagiarism, you can visit the following websites:

- www.georgetown.edu/honor/plagiarism.htm
- www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.htm

Remember, intellectual dishonesty is a serious crime. You might have done your paper easily by just copying from books and other written materials but you have to face the consequences of committing plagiarism. It is always proper to always give due credits to the persons whose works you are using as source to acknowledge the work they have done. Besides, if you were in their shoes, I am pretty sure that you will not want others to pass your works as theirs.

So, good luck & enjoy writing your papers PROPERLY.

Sources:

- Georgetown University Honor Council (1999). What is Plagiarism? [Online] *Georgetown University Honor Council Web Site*. [http:// www.georgetown.edu/honor/plagiarism.htm](http://www.georgetown.edu/honor/plagiarism.htm) [November 16, 2003]
- Indiana University Writing Tutorial Services (1998) Plagiarism: What it is and How to recognize and Avoid It. [Online] *Indiana University web Site*. URL. [http:// www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.htm](http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.htm) [November 16, 2003]

- AROKIASWAMY WILLIAM MARGARET CELINE vs. UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES, *et al.*
G.R. No. 152309. (2002) [Online] URL.
<http://www.supremecourt.gov.ph/resolution/2nd/2002/2Dec/152309.htm>. [January 12, 2004] 