Avoiding Unintentional Plagiarism

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Is this Plagiarism?

- Turning in a paper purchased online
- Turning in a paper written by another student
- Claiming authorship in a group writing assignment when no contribution was made

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Serious</th>
<th>Very Serious</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Somewhat Serious</th>
<th>Slightly Serious</th>
<th>Not Serious</th>
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<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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Is this Plagiarism?

- Copying a few sentences from a source without giving credit
- Adding a source to a bibliography without reading the source
- Turning in the same assignment in multiple classes (without the instructors’ knowledge)

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## Is this Plagiarism?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purchased paper</td>
<td>5.48</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copied paper</td>
<td>5.48</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit for group work without doing the work</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copying a few sentences</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adding unread sources to a bibliography</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turning in the same assignment twice</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>20</td>
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* Results from a 2009 survey of 723 students at Colorado State University.
What can we do?

- Understand the Nature of the Problem
- Understand Types of Plagiarism
- Understand Why Writers Plagiarize
- Develop Appropriate Writing and Learning Strategies
Understanding Plagiarism

**Intentional:** copying someone else’s work and passing it off as your own.
- The most serious form of plagiarism
- An academic integrity issue
Understanding Plagiarism

**Unintentional:** using someone else’s work without properly acknowledging where the ideas or information came from.

- The most common form of plagiarism
- A pedagogical issue
Basic Concepts: Plagiarism

Quotation, Paraphrase, & Documentation Problems

Patchwork Writing

Creating Fake Citations

Deliberately Passing Off Passages as Original Work

Copying an Entire Essay

Purchasing an Essay

Unintentional
Pedagogical Issues

Intentional
Academic Integrity Issues
Why Plagiarize Intentionally?

- “It’s easier to plagiarize.”
- “I ran out of time.”
- “I couldn’t care less about this assignment.”
- “I’m no good at writing.”
- “I didn’t think I’d get caught.”
- “Everybody cheats.”
- “This course is a waste of my time.”
Why Plagiarize Unintentionally?

- Lack of knowledge of proper citation practices
  - Quotation
  - Paraphrase
  - In-text Citation and Works Cited Lists
- Lack of understanding of the issue
  - Difficulty restating or integrating new information into the overall argument
Some Useful Strategies

- Plan Your Work (Time Management)
- Conduct a Knowledge Inventory
- Take Notes Carefully
- Distinguish Between Your Ideas and Those Drawn from Sources
- Cite Each Source in the Text and in a Works Cited or References List
Knowledge Inventory

1. What do I already know about this subject?
2. What don’t I know?
3. What do I want to know?

Once you’ve completed your inventory, meet with your instructor, consult a librarian, or talk with someone who knows about your subject.
Take Notes Carefully

- Use Quotation Marks
- Use Caution when Paraphrasing
- Avoid Patchwork Summaries
- Include Source Information on Notes
  (Author, Title, Date, Journal or Publisher, Page)
- Double-check Your Notes When You Take Them and When You are Drafting
Distinguish Yourself

- Use Author Attributions:
  - According to ...
  - So and so observes ...
  - So and so argues ...
- Check Your Notes for Stylistic Inconsistencies
Identify Your Sources

In-text Citation:

Jessica Richards argues, “We need to develop an efficient, cost-effective means of distributing hydrogen fuels before we can move to a hydrogen economy. If we don’t, we’ll be operating in crisis mode when the next serious oil shortage arrives” (322).

Jessica Richards argues that we need to create an “efficient, cost-effective” system for delivering hydrogen fuels now, instead of while we are facing a critical oil shortage (322).
Identify Your Sources

Works Cited and References Lists:


Tips

- Identify every passage that uses source material:
  - Check against your notes (and sources)
  - Check author attributions
  - Check for stylistic inconsistencies
  - Check punctuation of quotations
  - Check for close paraphrases
  - Check for patchwork summaries
  - Check for citation style issues
- Check every citation against your works cited list.
- Check every entry in your works cited list against the text.
Tips

- Get feedback from a friend or classmate: Ask them to flag anything that looks questionable.
- If you have questions:
  - Visit the Writing Center
  - Talk with a Librarian
  - Talk with your Instructor
If You Are Suspected ...

1. Collect your materials:
   - Copies of your sources, outlines, notes, rough drafts, peer reviews, and so on

2. Reflect on your process:
   - Writing process, research process, note taking process, collaborative work

3. Review your work:
   - Identify passages that might have raised suspicions
If You Are Suspected ...

4. Meet with the instructor
   - Listen carefully
   - Take notes
   - Try to understand the instructor’s concerns
   - When the instructor finishes, take a moment to reflect
   - Be prepared for follow-up questions
If You Are Suspected ...

5. If you agree with the instructor
   O Ask for guidance about avoiding the problem in the future
   O Ask what the penalty will be
   O Inform your academic advisors

6. If you disagree
   O Ask for a hearing from the Office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services
   O Learn as much as possible about CSU’s hearing process
   O Learn about potential penalties
   O Inform your advisors
Conclusions

- If you plagiarize intentionally, and are caught at it, you should be held accountable.
- If you engage in plagiarism unintentionally, it’s a sign that you have not gained sufficient skill as a scholar, writer, or researcher, or have not gained sufficient understanding of an issue. In these cases, use the situation to identify areas in which you can improve your learning processes and writing skills.
Resources

- TILT: Plagiarism Tutorial and Self Test:  
  [http://tilt.colostate.edu/integrity/resources/quiz](http://tilt.colostate.edu/integrity/resources/quiz)

- Learning@CSU: Practicing Academic Integrity  
  [http://learning.colostate.edu/integrity/](http://learning.colostate.edu/integrity/)

- Writing Studio: Avoiding Plagiarism  
  [http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/guide.cfm?guideid=17](http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/guide.cfm?guideid=17)

- Writing Center: Hours and Services  
  [http://writingcenter.colostate.edu](http://writingcenter.colostate.edu)