

# Avoiding Plagiarism

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Kingsborough Community College's academic integrity statement gives students the following definition of plagiarism, with examples:

*Plagiarism is the act of presenting another person's ideas, research or writings as your own. Examples of plagiarism include but are not limited to:*

- a. *Copying another person's actual words or images without the use of quotation marks and footnotes attributing the words to their source.*
- b. *Presenting another person's ideas or theories in your own words without acknowledging the source.*
- c. *Failing to acknowledge collaborators on homework and laboratory assignments.*
- d. *Internet plagiarism, including submitted downloaded term papers or parts of term papers, paraphrasing or copying information from the internet without citing the source, or "cutting and pasting" from various sources without proper attribution.*

Many English department professors include the following language about plagiarism on their syllabi:

*Plagiarism:* *Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. In most cases, submitting other people's written words as your own simply won't work. It probably won't make sense as a response to a particular assignment and it is incredibly easy to identify. Anyone caught submitting plagiarized work, even a short section "borrowed" from a website or other text, risks failing the assignment and possibly the class, as well as disciplinary action. Please see the college policy on academic integrity for further information about what constitutes academic dishonesty.*

As you may have noticed, the college takes plagiarism seriously, many professors reserve the right to impose harsh penalties on students who plagiarize.

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**So, how do you avoid plagiarism? Below are FOUR essential steps you should take when you write a paper that refers to work by other authors:**

1. **Paraphrase:** Paraphrasing is reading another author and using **your own words** to express the same idea. This is different from plagiarism precisely because your words will not be the same as the author's words, but you still need to be careful to cite paraphrases when necessary. Ideas or concepts that are an author's original creation must be cited in order to give that author the credit they deserve.

2. **Quoting:** To establish your own credibility as a writer, it helps to let your readers know that you have read a little bit about the topic before you begin writing. It is also a good idea to be forthcoming with readers about which information belongs to you and which information belongs to other authors. Including another author's exact words means that you must use quotations marks. You may introduce the author's words with a signal phrase, such as:

*[Author name] writes that such freedoms "are not guaranteed equally to every citizen." (88).*

Doing so will not only set your own ideas apart from the ideas of others, but it may even help you support a point or argument that you make.

3. **Citing:** Whether you are using APA, MLA or Chicago citation styles, you must include in-text citations in your sentences and paragraphs. Depending on the style, these will include some of the following: a page number, author name and/or article title, or date of publication. These in-text citations correspond to a works cited page, which gives the reader the author, date of publication, title, and the source.  
**(For more information on citing and quoting, please see the relevant CAWS materials.)**
4. **Take your professor's advice:** If your professor says that all you need to do is cite handouts, required readings or library resources, then it is likely that you do not need to look for additional information by yourself, especially when this information is from internet sources that are sometimes difficult to trust and difficult to quote and cite properly. It is best not to take the risk of plagiarism for improperly citing websites that may not be trustworthy in the first place.

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