

What is plagiarism?

The *SWIC Student Handbook* Student Conduct Code defines plagiarism as “the use or close imitation of the language, thoughts or work of another to include copying, quoting, paraphrasing, using another’s creation, images or illustrations to represent them as your own work without proper acknowledgement of the source” (25). Instructors may also offer more specific details about what they consider plagiarism and their policy for dealing with plagiarized work on their syllabi, so students should refer to that information as well when using sources in their work.

Facts about plagiarism:

- It is often unintentional and happens as a result of careless errors or inconsistent note-taking.
- Instructors and colleges do not excuse either accidental or purposeful plagiarism.

Avoiding plagiarism is very important when using outside sources in your writing because even if it’s not on purpose, plagiarism violates academic integrity and carries harsh penalties. To prevent plagiarism, consider these tips and follow the steps below during the research process.

Before starting your project:

- Allow enough time to read, think, and write about your sources
- Understand your instructor’s requirements for acceptable documentation
- Jot down your own ideas and questions about the topic

During the research process:

- Use a thorough note-taking system
- Document the source of any idea which is not your own

- Use highlighters of different colors to mark your words and those of sources
- Record full names of sources and/or titles referenced; also note page numbers
- Print or save any online sources (use a USB drive or send information to your e-mail)
- Note the publication date, URL (Web address), and database name for the works cited list
- Copy complete publication information for print sources
- Distinguish direct quotations by placing quotation marks around the author's words
- Identify paraphrases, summaries, and statistics with source details
- Label visuals such as images, charts, and graphs with source information
(Maimon, et al. 244-46)

Source: Maimon, Elaine P. et al. *A Writer's Resource: A Handbook for Writing and Research*. 3rd ed. McGraw-Hill, 2010.

Final paper checklist:

- Check with your instructor for documentation guidelines. These are common styles:
 - MLA Style
 - APA Style
 - Chicago/Turabian Style
- Place parenthetical references or footnotes immediately following borrowed material

- ❑ Include page numbers, if available, in parentheses at the end of the sentence or in a footnote
- ❑ Use clear wording so readers know who said what
- ❑ Avoid ambiguous pronouns and wording choices
- ❑ Use authors' names when possible with strong signal verbs to clearly attribute quotations
- ❑ If a source doesn't have an author, refer to the title of the article and Web page link
- ❑ Make sure to distinguish *your* ideas from source material
- ❑ Paraphrase carefully and accurately; always include a reference to the original source
- ❑ Be certain that paraphrases and summaries are in your own words and sentence style
- ❑ Use quotation marks for even a few borrowed words, unique phrases, or specific terminology
- ❑ Make sure your citations in the paper match what is on the works cited, reference, or bibliography page at the end of the paper

Helpful resources:

Follow these links to plagiarism quizzes and tutorials:

http://www.lib.usm.edu/plagiarism_tutorial.html

<http://tilt.colostate.edu/integrity/resources/quiz/index.cfm>

<http://owl.excelsior.edu>

For further assistance:

Visit the Success Center at any of our three locations to speak with an English Specialist or a peer writing tutor:

Belleville Campus, Liberal Arts Complex, Room 1307

Sam Wolf Granite City Campus, Room 403

Red Bud Campus, Room 124

Consult www.swic.edu/SuccessCenter and follow the Study Resources link to access helpful English handouts for information regarding citation guidelines and styles.