

# Plagiarism

You are a student and you have to write a paper?

And you found very good articles which fit exactly into your own paper?

Why should you reinvent the wheel if you could just copy and paste?

You are a scientist and you want to make sure that nobody passes off your ideas, writings etc. as his own?

You might be wondering why all the worry about plagiarism?

You might be wondering why everybody insists on correct citation?

You don't want to be expelled from your university because you plagiarized?

## **So make sure you know about plagiarism!**

Everything on the Internet is considered common knowledge - WRONG! Unless it is common knowledge, you must cite your source whether your source is found on the Internet or in print.

Make sure to always cite your source – and cite it correctly!

Find out if it is plagiarism – or not!

Find out if somebody copied your own writings and committed plagiarism.

Find out more in this handout.

**And talk to your librarian!**

**Your IFM-GEOMAR Library team**

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## Definition

### First of all: There is no such thing as “The” definition!

Mostly, plagiarism is defined as using the ideas or writing of another as one's own without giving proper credit.\*

*(\*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000), 9 December 2008)*

### BUT...

...it is very difficult to define it exactly. Is it just a one-to-one copy of sentences? How much has to be copied in order to be considered a plagiarism? Is it still plagiarism if you edit the text? If you only use the order of arguments and do not copy the words?

The following joke definition attributed to Wilson Mizner circulates around the Internet:

Copy from one book = plagiarism;

Copy from two books = an essay;

Copy from three books = a compilation;

Copy from four books = a dissertation.

Today some might add: Copy from the Wikipedia = term paper.

You are committing plagiarism if you:

- Copy phrases, sentences, or passages from electronic or print sources (journal articles, the web, etc.) into your own papers and reports without giving credit by citing the original source
- Quote someone else's exact words without giving credit to the original author
- Use someone else's specific ideas even if you restate them in your own words.

[Text from: -Hochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft Berlin: [http://plagiat.htw-berlin.de/ff/definition/1\\_1/defs](http://plagiat.htw-berlin.de/ff/definition/1_1/defs) And: - San Jose Library: [http://www.sjlibrary.org/services/literacy/info\\_comp/plagiarism.htm](http://www.sjlibrary.org/services/literacy/info_comp/plagiarism.htm)]

## **Common Knowledge**

### **How can you tell if something is common knowledge?**

Consider :

- 1) Can it be found in many different places?
- 2) Is it widely known by a lot of different people?

Only information that is widely available from a variety of sources-such as historic facts and geographic data-can be used without needing to cite the information and its author. If you still aren't sure, cite your source or check with your professor or TA.

### **Examples of common knowledge:**

- Dates of wars
- Abraham Lincoln was President of the United States
- Capitals of states and countries
- Columbus reached America in 1492

### **Don't be fooled:**

- Everything on the Internet is considered common knowledge - WRONG!
- Unless it is common knowledge, you must cite your source whether your source is found on the Internet or in print. Information found in an encyclopedia is considered common knowledge - WRONG!
- Encyclopedias contain lots of information, some of which is common knowledge, and some which is not. Facts found in newspaper articles are considered common knowledge - WRONG!
- Newspaper articles of course do contain facts that are considered common knowledge, but not everything included in a newspaper article is common knowledge.

[Text was kindly offered by: UC San Diego Libraries:

<http://libraries.ucsd.edu/locations/sshl/guides/preventing-plagiarism/common-knowledge.html>]

## **A Closer Look**

The following topics examine specific scenarios and provide prevention tips.

### **The Most Common Types of Plagiarism Include:**

1. Passing off another's ideas or work as your own
2. Fabricating citations
3. Copying, cutting and pasting without citing the original source
4. Paraphrasing incorrectly
5. Using media files, such as image, audio or video files without citing them

#### **1.) Passing off Another's Ideas:**

Instead of copying words, you use someone else's ideas without giving them credit. This also includes taking credit for entire words written by someone else.

#### **Several examples include:**

- Using an author's ideas or words without citing the author.
- Using a person's work such as music, film, photography, and any other media without giving credit to the person.
- Buying a paper online and submitting it as your own.
- Recycling a paper someone else wrote.

#### **2.) Fabricating Citations**

You make up all or part of a citation.

#### **Remember!**

- If you falsify a citation, that is plagiarism
- If you falsify part of a citation, that is plagiarism
- If you cite a real source, but do not use it in your paper, that is also plagiarism.

### 3.) Copying, Cutting & Pasting

You copy words or the whole passage from the original source without giving credit.

#### **Remember!**

- Cite the source of your info whether it's found in a print source, electronic form or on the Internet, unless it's considered common knowledge
- Use quotation marks around a phrase or sentence that you use from a print source, electronic source or a Web site.
- The Internet has made it easier to copy/cut and paste, BUT the Internet has also made it easier to identify cases of plagiarism.

### 4.) Paraphrasing Incorrectly

You restate or summarize someone else's words but don't give them credit.

Paraphrasing correctly:

- Is **not** rearranging words in a sentence
- Is **not** substituting words with a thesaurus
- Is synthesizing a passage of text and describing it (the idea) in your own words
- Is restating or summarizing someone else's words or ideas **and** giving credit to the author (that fall outside of common knowledge).

### **Tip: 5 Steps to Successful Paraphrasing**

- Read the entire text, underlining key points and main ideas
- In your own words, write a sentence about the main idea of the text (i.e., summarize).
- Also, write key points in the text Highlight any words, phrases, or key passages that you would want to quote directly
- Combine the above for a new paraphrased paragraph, using your own words.

- Cite your source Even if you paraphrase, you have to acknowledge the material you read and paraphrased

### **5.) Using media files, such as image, audio or video files without citing them**

Images and other types of media files found on the Internet need to be cited just like words/text. Even when they're available for free or easy to download, you still need to cite them.

#### **Misconceptions:**

- Anything you find on the Internet is available for anyone to copy and paste; therefore, you don't have to cite it
- Anything you find on the Internet is considered common knowledge; therefore, you don't have to cite it.
- Images, charts, and graphs in books can be photocopied; therefore, you don't have to cite them

**[This text was kindly provided by UC San Diego Libraries!]**

## Plagiarism Software – Test

### Results of the 2008 software test of the University of Applied Sciences, Berlin

The results of our investigations in 2008 should not be interpreted as a purchase recommendation. We have only tried to assess how well the systems recognize plagiarism overall, and to evaluate the usability of those systems in daily work in universities, colleges, and high schools. Institutions that plan to acquire software for detecting plagiarism should more closely investigate those systems which seem to fit their situation best.

#### Overview of the test

The [overview chart](#) shows that the results of the test in a large chart. The [test method](#) and the [evaluation criteria](#) are described on separate pages. The [test cases](#) are also explained in more detail.

A [summary](#) of the test and the collusion recognition, as well as a press release and pictures, are also available.

#### Evaluation of plagiarism detection systems

##### Very good systems

The year 2008 is no different from previous tests: there was no system in this category, although the criteria were a bit lower this time. Only humans can reach very good results here!

##### Good systems

- 1: [Copyscape Premium](#)
- X: [Plagiarism-Detector](#) Note: The system installed a Trojan at some customer's sites and has been removed from the list.
- 3: [Copyscape Free](#)
- 4: [Urkund](#)
- 5: [Docoloc](#)  
- [PlagAware \(new\)](#)
- 7: [Ephorus](#)

##### Satisfying systems

- 8: [SafeAssign](#)
- 9: [Strikeplagiarism](#)

- 10: [PlagiatCheck](#)
- 11: [AntiPlag](#)
- 12: [PlagAware \(alt\)](#)

Sufficient systems

- 13: [Turnitin](#)
- 14: [XXXX](#)

Insufficient systems

- 15: [Plagiarism-Finder](#)
- 16: [Turnitin Global](#)

Aborted tests

- [ArticleChecker](#)
- [CatchItFirst](#)
- [checkforplagiarism.net](#)
- [paperseek](#)
- [WebMasterLabor](#)

Other system

- [ETBlast](#) – looks for plagiarism in the MEDLINE database
- [ProfNet](#) – access denied
- [Eve2](#) – Money is accepted, but the software does not work
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**Evaluation of collusion recognition systems**

Good systems

- [JPlag](#)
- [Turnitin](#)
- [WCopyFind](#)

Satisfactory systems

- [YAPLAF](#)

## Consequences of plagiarism

Consequences of plagiarism are shown here:

<http://libraries.ucsd.edu/locations/ssh/guides/preventing-plagiarism/real-world-examples.html>