

Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism

The English Department prohibits cheating or academic dishonesty in any form, including cheating and plagiarizing the work of another person.

Defining Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of using the ideas, written work, images, or visual or audio files created by another person or persons as if they were your own. This is so whether you quote the source's words exactly, use his or her images or audio files, or restate the source's ideas in your own words. Submitting without the knowledge or permission of your instructor a paper for one class that you have written for another class (including work written for your high school classes) is considered "self-plagiarism" and could result in penalty. Purchasing or downloading essays is also a form of plagiarism since the work you hand in is not your own.

Whenever you use information from another source in any medium, you must credit the original author or source by providing citations in the appropriate form as defined by your instructor.

You may have previously learned "rules" which tell you that you don't need to use quotation marks or to cite your source unless you "borrow" at least four consecutive words—but the truth is that anytime you use words and ideas that are not your own, you need to cite the source.

Examples of Plagiarism

- The submission of another person's work in any medium, either in part or as a whole, without acknowledgement
- Failure to give credit for ideas, statements, facts, or conclusions that rightfully belong to another person
- Failure to use quotation marks when quoting directly from another source whether the quotation is a paragraph, a sentence, or a phrase
- Paraphrasing (putting in your own words) another person's work without acknowledging that person as the author
- Submitting your written work for another class unless you have the express permission of both instructors

Note that quotation marks, signal phrases, and parenthetical citations generally address these problems.

The Consequences

According to university policy, as a student at Cal Poly, you are responsible for your actions. English 134 instructors have clearly stated plagiarism policies on their syllabi. It is your responsibility to become familiar with these policies.

Upon discovery of any form of academic dishonesty, you will be subject to a penalty as determined by the instructor (you may fail the assignment; you may fail the course). In addition, a report detailing the incident of academic dishonesty as well as the penalty determined by the instructor will be filed with the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

According to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities, if you are caught cheating or plagiarizing, you risk:

- Receiving an F in the course and being removed from the class.
- A referral to the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities with a probable disciplinary sanction ranging from Probation [until your] graduation, suspension or expulsion.
- A disciplinary file/record and transcript notation (not the box you want to check on graduate school applications, and they all ask).
- Your personal reputation in the/your Department. Do you want to be known as a “cheater”? How will this reflect on you when you are attempting to transition into your profession?
- Disappointing your parents, family and most importantly . . . yourself!

Reading *Fresh Voices* Essays that Cite Sources

As you read the essays in this collection, focus on how students use sources to support their own ideas. In particular, note how they introduce and quote sources, how they paraphrase, summarize, and integrate quotations with signal phrases. In addition, don't skip over the works cited page at the end of essays. Rather, focus on how this page supplements the essay: every source cited in the essay (including images) needs to appear here. Learning how to incorporate and cite sources properly helps to build your credibility with your readers. While you may learn a different citation style in your major, the key is to know how to work with outside sources.

Work Cited

“Don’t Risk It.” Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. 11 June 2007 <http://osrr.calpoly.edu/dont_risk_it.html>.