

PLAGIARISM

One of the biggest mistakes that a person can make in academic composing is plagiarizing.

Plagiarism is a serious academic crime. Students who plagiarize may fail a paper, fail a course, be expelled from their college, and may suffer serious financial, educational, and personal loss.

COSTS AND LOSSES

Here are a few stories of how plagiarism can lead to serious loss:

An undergraduate sophomore student plagiarized in a history course at a community college on a very simple assignment. The faculty member caught the student and reported it to their department chair. Well, the department chair did not hesitate to begin the process of expelling the student from college. The student was expelled from college. The student lost over four semesters worth of tuition and college credits.

In addition, the student's transcript contained a note about the expulsion (citing academic dishonesty). When the student applied for transfer to another college, the other colleges refused to take him. They told the student, "Why should we admit you, when we have a waiting list of honest students?"

Another undergraduate student took a composition course from a graduate student. The student was a "Pledge" for a major fraternity. The fraternity had a file of past examinations and past "passing" assignments from instructors. The student took a paper from the "passing" assignments file and turned it into his instructor.

Well, the instructor recognized that the student did not write the paper, and the instructor knew that the student was a pledge for a major fraternity. The graduate student was a "past member" of the particular fraternity. He simply visited his friends and requested access to the file. His "member" friends allowed him access. The instructor found the paper in the "passing" assignments file. The end result: The student failed the class and was immediately released from the fraternity.

A graduate student, pursuing a doctoral degree was desperately trying to complete a dissertation. Instead of writing it, the student sent a request to a "ghost writing" service (which writes papers for you). The graduate's dissertation committee was suspicious about the quality of the paper and its contents. So, they immediately held an inquiry about the dissertation and held an oral exam for the student. When the student failed

the oral exam, the student then confessed to “outsourcing” the dissertation to a ghostwriter. The student was expelled from their program. The student lost multiple scholarships and financial aid, lost their reputation, and lost the opportunity to receive their doctorate. Currently, this student has not been able to successfully apply to any other graduate programs/schools.

PLAGIARISM DEFINED

Plagiarism has many different meanings and modes (i.e., the way things are plagiarized).

IF YOU

- co-write or co-author a text with another person
- borrow or use another person’s text without proper citations
- use texts composed by another person
- purchase/buy a text from another person
- rework or reuse old texts (e.g., papers for other classes, etc.)
- fabricate or make-up things in your paper
- paste together an entire text from different courses
- translate a text from another language (not composed by you)

THEN, you have plagiarized.

THE REALITIES OF PLAGIARISM

As a student, you need to understand that a faculty member has a “brain” too. Many of your professors have increased their abilities to inductively and deductively conclude that the work you have submitted is either yours or not. In addition, many colleges offer the faculty members quite a few plagiarism detection tools. For example, one plagiarism detection tool allows the instructor to search the entirety of the World Wide Web to locate contents of a paper; in other words, a faculty member can see where pieces of information originate.

In addition, in many types of composition courses, your professors have been trained in linguistics and style. Simply by examining the word choice of your formal and informal assignments, the instructor can tell if a paper was written by you or not. Finally, your professor has probably seen every type/attempt at plagiarism in his/her classes. From experience, many of them know how plagiarism is done and how to catch plagiarizing perpetrators.

ADVICE/RULES OF THUMB

- +Approximately 95% of the paper must be composed by you (outside sources and support will account for about 5%).
- +You are allowed to use common knowledge
- +You are allowed to discuss well-known ideas
- +Cite everything taken from a book, article, site, etc.

- +Make sure to have a parenthetical citation and a bibliographic citation for all quotes, paraphrases, and parenthetical summaries.
- +Push yourself to meet your deadline.
- +Use a reliable and newer word processor (to help with grammar and spelling)
- +Do not be lazy.
- +Do not take the “easy way” out of a situation/work hard (this is how we learn).
- +Do not procrastinate. Start composing your text immediately.
- +If you will be late, ask for an extension ahead of time (some instructors will provide it).
- +Let your faculty member know if you have concerns about your text.
- +Ask a tutor for help
- +Visit a writing center or composition lab (if needed).