

English/Modern Languages Plagiarism Policy
Rick Hansen Secondary School

Rationale

In school, we are constantly surrounded by the ideas of others: we listen to lectures and music, read reference and textbooks, watch movies and TV shows. Using these ideas, teachers instruct students how to analyze, synthesize and document this information. The purpose of these assignments is to assess the student's own capacity to read, think about, and comment, in their own words, on what they have been taught. Using another author's ideas and/or words, and pretending they are your own, is a form of stealing; in fact, the word *plagiarism* comes from the Latin for *kidnapping*. This document has been created to instruct students and parents about intellectual honesty and honest authorship.

What Students Can Consider is Acceptable Behaviour During the Writing Process

- * Clarifying an assignment, through discussion with others - preferably your teacher
- * Clarifying the ideas in a work of literature, though discussion with others - preferably your teacher
- * Peer-editing drafts of your assignments with others
- * Using research techniques that are available to you - reference books, Internet, etc.
- * Using ideas that are considered common knowledge - i.e. facts that are likely to be known by many people (such as "Stephen Harper is Prime Minister of Canada")
- * Giving credit, whenever directly quoting another person's actual spoken or written words
- * Giving credit whenever paraphrasing another person's words

Why Plagiarism is Not Acceptable Behaviour

When teachers assess student assignments, we are looking both for our students' strengths and weaknesses and for areas that require further instruction and help. Plagiarism and/or cheating give a teacher a false view of a student's progress. Sometimes plagiarism is deliberate (a student directly copies or rephrases material from the Internet or a textbook and pretends it is his own) and sometimes plagiarism is accidental (a student incorrectly or incompletely documents sources); however, if a student does not properly acknowledge a source of an idea or fact, it is always plagiarism.

What is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is a bit like copyright infringement where you use something created by someone else without acknowledging you have done so. Think about the music you listen to. How much of it is truly original? Has the artist or group used a lyric, guitar riff, bass line from a previously recorded song? Many hip-hop and rap songs sample the work of others, but these musicians acknowledge where they got the music from. They do not take credit for what they didn't create. This is what plagiarism is.

What Does Plagiarism Include?

- * The *following examples are likely deliberate plagiarism*
- * Directly copying someone else's assignment or portion of an assignment and submitting it as your own
- * Turning in purchased papers, or papers found on the Internet, as your own
- * Turning in work done for a previous course as your own
- * Turning in the work, or heavily edited work, of tutors, parents, siblings or friends as your own
- * Paraphrasing and/or rephrasing ideas of another person without giving the author's name or source

What is the Difference Between an Acceptable and an Unacceptable Paraphrase?

Here is the original text from “Juliet” an essay found on “Free Online Research Papers” :

<http://www.freeonlineresearchpapers.com/juliet-shakespeare-romeo-juliet>

In the play Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet, the character Juliet goes through many changes and tragedies in her life. Shakespeare conveys Juliet, in the beginning, as a young hearted, naive, daddy’s girl who would never think twice of disobeying her family. However, as the play continues Juliet changes into a mature, compassionate woman. Moreover, Juliet’s character undergoes significant changes during the course of the play and she begins to look at life through a different perspective.

Here is an unacceptable paraphrase that is plagiarism:

Juliet, a character in Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet, goes through both changes and tragedies. Juliet, in the beginning of the play, is shown by Shakespeare to be young hearted, naïve and also a daddy’s girl. She was very obedient and would not once consider disobeying her family. As the play goes on, however, Juliet changes to be more mature and compassionate. So, this character undergoes huge changes and begins to look at life through different eyes.

What makes this passage plagiarism?

- * The writer has only changed a few words and changed the order of a few sentences
- * The writer has directly used words and phrases from the original text
- * The writer has not cited the source

Here is an acceptable paraphrase that is not plagiarism:

Juliet, a character in Shakespeare’s play, Romeo and Juliet, is first introduced in Act I, as an innocent, devoted, young girl. She loves her father, respects her mother and wishes both to please and obey them. By the end of Act V, she has gained a level of maturity and compassion that was not apparent at first. Events have changed her outlook on life and she has learned that sometimes it is necessary to disobey the family she loves. (“Juliet”, <http://www.freeonlineresearchpapers.com/juliet-shakespeare-romeo-juliet>)

What makes this passage acceptable?

- * The writer uses her own words and phrases
- * The writer lets her reader know the source of her information

Here is an example of quotations and paraphrase used together, which is also acceptable:

Juliet, a character in Shakespeare’s play, Romeo and Juliet, “goes through many changes and tragedies in her life”. She is first introduced to the audience an innocent, loving, “daddy’s girl” who wishes to please and obey her father. By the end of the play, she has become a “mature, compassionate woman”. Events have changed her outlook on life and she has learned that sometimes it is necessary to disobey the family she loves. (“Juliet”, <http://www.freeonlineresearchpapers.com/juliet-shakespeare-romeo-juliet>)

What makes this passage acceptable?

- * The writer gives credit for the ideas in the passage
- * The writer uses quotation marks to indicate direct quotations from the passage
- * The writer lets her reader know the source of her information

NOTE:

Even if you cite the text, if you use words directly, without using quotation marks, this is plagiarism. Whether your information comes from a book or the World Wide Web, you must cite your sources. *Incorrect or incomplete citation of sources is likely an example of accidental plagiarism.*

What Does Cheating Include?

- * Showing or sharing an assignment with another student, whether or not you believe it will be copied
- * Translating an assignment from one language into another language, using a computer or another source, and submitting it as your original work
- * Not contributing appropriately or completely to group work, but taking credit anyway
- * Using summaries/commentaries (*Cliffs Notes*, *Spark Notes*, etc.) instead of reading literary works
- * Using any form of memory aid (translator, notes, iPod, dictionary, etc.), during a test without the express permission of your teacher
- * Giving or receiving answers during tests
- * Stealing a copy of a test (from the teacher's room, the photocopy room, etc.)

What Can Students Do To Promote True Achievement?

- * Learn how to accurately reference your sources.
 - Go to the Google Search Engine and look up information such as:
 - * *Writing a Précis, Summary*
 - * *APA/MLA format/citation*
- * Learn the difference between acceptable and unacceptable paraphrasing.
- * Check with your teacher about his/her rules about documentation
- * Be sure that you understand your assignments and how they will be graded.
- * Talk to your teacher if you have questions. Do not rely on your classmates.
- * Assume your assignment will be completed individually, unless your teacher states otherwise
- * Keep a realistic schedule.
 - Try to balance your academic work and your personal life.
 - Remember, you can't always do everything all the time.
- * Maintain a schedule of assignment due dates.
 - Leaving assignments to the last minute can cause undue stress, and tempt you to take shortcuts.
- * Inform your teachers and/or parents if your life seems out of balance or overwhelming.

What Can Parents Do To Promote True Student Achievement?

- * Understand that many times students make poor decisions because of pressure to excel.
 - This pressure can be internal or external - but it is real.
- * Encourage your child to get extra help from teachers and/or peer tutors
- * Guide your child to choose courses in which s/he will be successful and challenged without undue stress.
- * Please contact the teacher as soon as possible, if you suspect your child is experiencing difficulties in the class.
- * If your child is caught cheating and you are contacted, please remember that this is a learning experience; help your child to accept the consequences of his/her inappropriate actions.

A Final Word of Encouragement

All this can be nerve-wracking, but don't be afraid to use books, websites and other sources. Research, and the research process, is an important part of academic growth and future career goals. If you remember to show where the information came from, and document your sources correctly, you're in the clear.