What is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of others and presenting them as your own. Plagiarism is a type of intellectual theft. It can take many forms, from deliberate cheating to accidentally copying from a source without acknowledgement.

Whenever you use the words or ideas of another person in your work, you must acknowledge where they came from. You can avoid plagiarism by following the suggestions outlined in this guide.

Common Forms of Plagiarism

- Downloading an assignment from an online source and submitting it as your own work.
- Buying, stealing or borrowing an assignment and submitting it as your own work.
- Copying a section of a book or an article and submitting it as your own work.
- Quoting from a source 'word for word', without using quotation marks is plagiarism.
- Copying, cutting and pasting text from an electronic source and submitting it as your own work.
- Using the words of someone else and presenting them as your own.
- Using significant ideas from someone else and presenting them as your own.
- Putting someone else's ideas into your own words and not acknowledging the source of the ideas is plagiarism.
- Copying the written expressions of someone else without proper acknowledgement.
- Lifting sentences or paragraphs from someone else, even with proper acknowledgement, gives the impression that the idea or information comes from the source cited, but that the phrasing, the choice of words to express it, is your own contribution.
- Relying too much on other people's material
  Avoid repeated use of long quotations. Too many direct quotations (even with quotation marks and with proper acknowledgement) result in your sources speaking for you, meaning your own contribution is minimal. Use your own words more and rely less on quotations.

Plagiarism & the Internet

The internet can be a great source of information and an effective research tool. However, just because electronic information is easily available does not mean it is 'free'. Remember that the information you find online should be referenced, just like any other source. Online sources should be used with care, fully acknowledged and evaluated in the same way you would any print-based source of information. Resist the temptation to 'cut and paste' text directly from an electronic resource into your assignment. You should rewrite any information in your own words. When using the internet, cite the source of anything that you borrow, including material from web pages, email, and newsgroups. These materials are the words and ideas of people who deserve to be given credit. For referencing purposes, always make a note of the 'address' or URL of web pages and the date you accessed the material. If possible, print out the web pages.
How to Avoid Plagiarism

Be Aware of What Constitutes Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of others and presenting them as your own. Many students plagiarize unintentionally. Unintentional plagiarism can result from not knowing how to acknowledge or incorporate sources of information, or from careless note-taking or 'cutting and pasting' of electronic sources. Both intentional AND unintentional plagiarisms are violations of regulations.

Plan Your Work

Plan ahead and begin writing your assignments well before they are due. Leaving work until the last minute doesn't give you enough time to read, digest, form your own ideas and write information in your own words. When students rush to meet a tight deadline, they are more likely to plagiarize unintentionally or succumb to the temptation to 'cut and paste' information directly from electronic resources.

Learn to How to Acknowledge Your Sources of Information

The Golden Rule: Make sure your assignments are referenced correctly. Referencing allows you to acknowledge the contribution of other writers in your work. Whenever you use words, ideas or information from other sources in your assignments, you must cite and reference those sources.

Acknowledge ALL Your Sources

Academic books are not the only sources that require acknowledgement. ANY words, ideas or information taken from ANY source requires a reference.

What kind of information should I reference?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference when you are using words or ideas from:</th>
<th>No need to reference:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• books and journal articles;</td>
<td>when you are writing your own observations or experiment results (for example, a report on a field trip);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• newspapers and magazines;</td>
<td>when you are writing about your own experiences (for example, a reflective journal);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• pamphlets or brochures;</td>
<td>when you are writing your own thoughts, comments or conclusions in an assignment;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• films, documentaries, television programs or advertisements;</td>
<td>when you are evaluating or offering your own analysis;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• web pages or computer-based resources;</td>
<td>when you are using 'common knowledge' (facts that can be found in numerous places and are likely to be known by a lot of people) or folklore;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• letters or emails;</td>
<td>when you are using generally accepted facts or information (this will vary in different disciplines of study. If in doubt, ask your tutor).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• personal interviews;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• lecturers or tutors (This isn't always necessary, but check with your lecturer or tutor about their preferences before you draw on their ideas).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reference when you reprint any diagrams, illustrations, charts or pictures.</td>
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</table>
Writing in your own words: Summarising & Paraphrasing
You can integrate evidence/source material into your assignments by summarising and paraphrasing. Summaries and paraphrases offer alternatives to using direct quotations.

• A summary is an overview of a source, condensing it to its most important ideas.
• A paraphrase is usually a short section of text. It retains the meaning but uses different words.
Summarise or paraphrase in your own words and sentence patterns. Follow with a reference. However, just changing one or two words does not make a paraphrase; you must digest the ideas, understand them, and write them in your own words and phrasing.

Why writing in 'your own words' is important
Expressing information or ideas in your own words (by paraphrasing or summarising) demonstrates that you have understood, absorbed, and interpreted information. It also helps you to develop your writing style.

Use Quotations
A quotation is an exact reproduction of spoken or written words. When you want to reproduce someone's exact words in your work:
1. present them between quotation marks and follow them with a citation.
2. use quotation marks even when you borrow a phrase or a single, special word from another source.
3. always include page numbers in your reference.

Learn to make effective notes from sources
Students often plagiarise unintentionally when they take 'word-for-word' notes from sources and then simply reproduce these in their assignments. To make sure that you don't accidentally plagiarise, take notes carefully. Develop a system to distinguish between what you have copied directly from a source, what you have noted in your own words, and your own comments about the material.

Before you begin to take notes, record the bibliographic information for the source at the top of the page. Carefully note which source the material comes from and all the information needed for referencing that source. You won't want to try to retrace your path to an Internet site or run back to the library the night before your paper is due just because you forgot to write down the necessary information the first time!

When taking notes from a source, try to write in your own words. Cover the original source, then relying on your memory, write a summary or paraphrase. Check your version with the original for accuracy and any phrases you may have accidentally reproduced. Put any unique words or phrases that you can't change into quotation marks. If you copy down the exact words from a source, make sure they are between quotation marks.

Use 'in-text' referencing in your notes. During note-taking, develop the habit of concluding each paragraph with the author's name and the page number between brackets. This will help you reference the information when you use it in an assignment.

References
Purdue University Online Writing Lab, *Avoiding Plagiarism* [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_plagiar.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_plagiar.html)