



What is plagiarism...

And how do I make sure I never,
ever do it?



What does “plagiarism” mean?

- Plagiarism is presenting someone else’s words or ideas as if they were your own.
- Plagiarism is **STEALING** another writer’s words or ideas.



How do I know if I'm plagiarizing?

- Plagiarism occurs when you put someone else's words into your paper without putting quotation marks around them.
- It also occurs when you read about an idea or a fact and then put it in your paper without telling the reader where you got it.



Can you give me an example?

- Let's say in researching this lesson, I looked up some information on the internet. I took some text from the following web page:

`<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01>`

- The name of this website is “The OWL [Online Writing Lab] at Purdue.”





Keep going...

When I include the text I've borrowed, I'll put it in quotation marks so that readers know that I did not write it. I'll also tell the readers who *did* write it.

The authors of the OWL at Purdue website (<http://owl.English.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01>) write the following about plagiarism: "A charge of plagiarism can have severe consequences, including expulsion from a university or loss of a job, not to mention a writer's loss of credibility and professional standing."

Since I put the quote in quotation marks and told the reader where the quote is from, I am not guilty of plagiarism.

Explain that again...

- To make sure that I am not plagiarizing, I told you where the passage came from and put it in quotation marks.



- But if I just put the passage into my own writing as though I wrote it myself, that would be plagiarism.

Okay, I get it. If I borrow someone's words, I need to quote them. But what if I borrow someone's *ideas*?

- If you take a fact, statistic, or argument from another writer or text, you still need to tell us where it came from.



How do I give credit to the author of an idea that I borrowed?

- You can give the author credit by mentioning his or her name, and/or by naming the text or website that you got the information from. Here's an example:
- According to Barbara Ehrenreich in the book *Nickel and Dimed*, the odds against a welfare recipient getting a job that would pay the bare minimum necessary to live are about 97 to 1.



How many of the author's words can I use before it's plagiarism?

- You can use a word or two that the author also used, especially if it's a key term. For example, if you read an essay about the death penalty, you don't need to put the words "death penalty" in quotation marks just because the author used them.



So when does it become plagiarism?

- Using the same word or key term as an author is okay, but anything longer than that should be put into quotation marks or rewritten into your own words.
- In most cases, you should avoid using any of the same wording that the author used, unless you're putting it in quotation marks.
- When in doubt, use quotation marks.



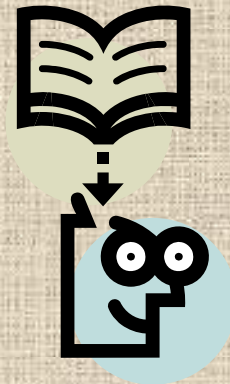
How do I put an author's idea into my own words?

- Putting an author's idea into your own words is called "paraphrasing."
- When you paraphrase, make sure you are not copying the author's phrases or sentence structure. Your rewrite should look totally different from the original.



How different does my paraphrase need to be from the original?

- *Completely different.* It shouldn't have any of the same wording, phrasing, or sentence structure as the original.
- Your paraphrase should also mention who or where you are paraphrasing from.



Could you give me an example?

Here's a quotation from an essay called "In Praise of the F Word" by Mary Sherry:

"Passing students who have not mastered the work cheats them and the employers who expect graduates to have basic skills."

The following is an *incorrect* paraphrase of that quote:

When we pass students who have not mastered the work, we cheat them and the employers who expect graduates to have particular skills.

This paraphrase is incorrect because it is too similar to the original. It has used many of the same words and phrases, as the following slide will demonstrate.

Why was that paraphrase incorrect?

Notice how similar the incorrect paraphrase was to the original passage:

Original Passage:

“Passing **students who have not mastered the work cheats them and the employers who expect graduates to have** basic **skills.**”

Incorrect Paraphrase:

When we pass **students who have not mastered the work**, we **cheat them and the employers who expect graduates to have** particular **skills.**

Even though the incorrect paraphrase sounds a little different from the original, almost all of the words are the same!

How could I paraphrase the passage correctly?

A correct paraphrase would use almost none of the original words or phrasing. It would also name the author or text of the original passage:

Original Passage:

“Passing students who have not mastered the work cheats them and the employers who expect graduates to have basic skills.”

Correct Paraphrase:

According to Mary Sherry, it is not fair to pass students who have not done strong work in school. She argues that passing these students will hurt them in their future careers.

This paraphrase shows that you have understood the passage and re-explained its main ideas in your own words.

Could you review all of that?

- Plagiarism is including someone else's words or ideas in your paper without giving that person proper credit.
- To avoid plagiarism, place any phrases or sentences that are not your own in quotation marks and explain who wrote them.
- If you use any facts or information from another writer, make sure to explain where they came from.
- Make sure to paraphrase correctly by putting the author's ideas into your own words and explaining who the author is.



What about page citations?

- You may have learned more rules about how to properly give credit to an author, such as including the page number that a quote is from.
- You will learn more about page citations from your teacher later in the term. For now, the rules you have learned in this presentation will keep you safe from plagiarism.



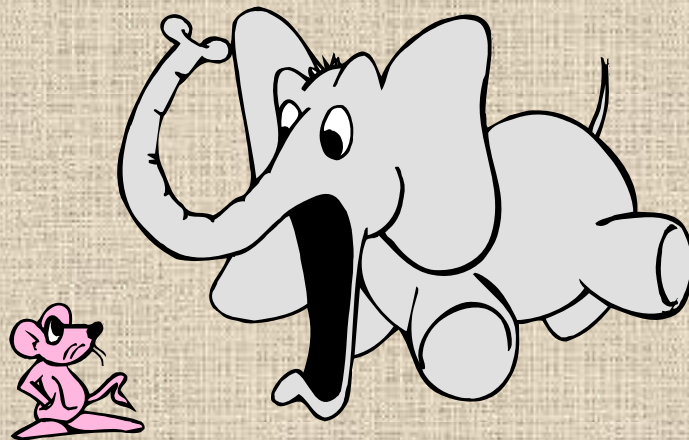
What are the consequences of plagiarism?

- Plagiarism is against the rules at all schools, including LPC.
- If any paper or writing assignment contains plagiarized words or ideas, your instructor will give you a zero for that assignment.
- You may face other consequences, such as having to meet with the dean of student services or having your plagiarism appear on your school records.



Should I be scared of plagiarizing accidentally?

- No, don't be scared. Just do your best not to copy other people's words and ideas, make sure to always put other people's words in quotation marks, and always tell readers where you got any borrowed ideas from.



Are we done yet?

- Yup! This presentation is over. Hope it was useful.
- This presentation was written by Karin Spirn, English Instructor at Las Positas College.

