

HSS English Division: Definition and Penalties for Plagiarism

Definition

Plagiarism (from the Latin word for ‘kidnapper’) is the deliberate or accidental presentation of someone else’s ideas or words as your own. This includes:

- The unacknowledged use of words, images, diagrams, graphs, or ideas derived from any source such as books, journals, magazines, the visual media, and the internet. Note: cutting and pasting words from the internet into your own essay, even if you reword them, is still plagiarism.
- Copying the work of a fellow student, having another student write one’s assignments, or allowing another student to borrow one’s work.
- Buying and/or copying essays, assignments, projects etc from the internet or any other source and handing them in as your own.

Please bear in mind that your lecturers know the subject and have read widely. They therefore can spot unreferenced quotations, and can tell the difference between university level writing and that of published scholars.

Penalties

- If a first year student is caught plagiarizing, and it is the student’s first offense, the student will have the opportunity to rewrite the paper with one grade reduction.
- After the first year of studies, it is expected that a student thoroughly understands the implications of plagiarism. Thus, after the first year, or if a student is caught plagiarizing a second time, the student will receive an F for the assignment.

Why plagiarism is academically dishonest

- The unacknowledged borrowing of another’s work is theft.
- Independent and creative thinking, as well as intellectual responsibility, are fundamental to a humanities education, and cannot be developed if one simply borrows the work of another.

How to avoid academic dishonesty

Plagiarism

- If you use an author’s exact words, you must put them in quotation marks. If you paraphrase another’s ideas, you again must indicate the source to your reader.
- Facts and statistics that are not “common knowledge” must be referenced.
- Be sure to use the method of citation recommended by your professor.
- If in doubt, it is always best to reference your material.
- Remember that your lecturer wants to see your ideas and interpretations. Avoid excessively quoting secondary sources and show your reader your thinking.

Collusion and complicity

- Ask your lecturer if you are allowed to work on assignments in groups.
- Get the approval of your professor if you want to hand in material that you have already submitted for another course.
- Do not allow students to copy your work (including work from previous semesters).
- Follow the examination rules set out by the university.

If you still have questions, please ask your professors, or consult the website:
<http://www.plagiarism.org>.

Sources for this document:

The Little, Brown Essential Handbook. Ed. Jane E. Aaron. New York: Pearson Longman, 2006.