# Plagiarism & Academic Integrity



If you are a**student** you can use this collection of resources (worked examples, activities and links) to improve your all-round academic literacy and, consequently, reduce the possibilities for plagiarism.

If you are a member of **staff** you will be able to refer students to these pages and keep yourself abreast of some of the issues that surround plagiarism and academic integrity.

## Three steps to avoiding plagiarism

This resource aims to address three issues that often result in plagiarism: unfamiliarity with the concepts of plagiarism and knowledge of academic integrity; knowing how it occurs, and developing the necessary academic skills to avoid plagiarism.

### ****Step 1: Know what plagiarism is****

[**Plagiarism**](https://student.unsw.edu.au/node/147) is taking the ideas or words of others and passing them off as your own. Plagiarism is a type of intellectual theft.

### ****Step 2: Know how plagiarism happens****

Most plagiarism is the result of underdeveloped academic skills. We have listed the [**common types of plagiarism**](https://student.unsw.edu.au/node/148).

### ****Step 3: Develop effective academic skills****

Most students who plagiarise do so unintentionally, usually because they don't have the skills to avoid over-reliance on the work of others or because they aren't sure what constitutes plagiarism. If they [**develop their academic skills**](https://student.unsw.edu.au/node/148), the chances of plagiarism is greatly reduced.

In this resource we have also provided steps to [**avoiding plagiarism**](https://student.unsw.edu.au/node/169) including [**how to be organised**](https://student.unsw.edu.au/node/170), so you can develop good academic practice, and a list of [**other resources and links**](https://student.unsw.edu.au/node/171) so you can learn more.

# What is Plagiarism?

**Plagiarism**at UNSW is using the words or ideas of others and passing them off as your own.

Plagiarism can take many forms, from deliberate cheating to accidentally copying from a source without acknowledgement.  Consequently, whenever you use the words or ideas of another person in your work, you must acknowledge where they came from.

## Why do I need to know about it?

One of the contradictions of academic writing is that while you are expected to research and refer to experts and authorities, you are also expected to produce original work.  This is based on the assumption that you are very clear about your own ideas and about how others have influenced your understanding.

It is important to recognise that all scholarship involves understanding, researching and expanding on the work of others to some degree. Undergraduates, for instance, may base their original contribution on selecting, ordering, summarising and interpreting what others have said to support their own academic argument.  Therefore, it is important to learn how to reference well; that is, how to consciously and clearly acknowledge what your debts are in your work.  Then your own contribution can be clearly identified and appreciated.

As part of an academic community, and thereby benefiting from your membership, you are expected to abide by its ethical practices. It is partly this tradition of [acknowledgement of sources](https://student.unsw.edu.au/node/163), in the form of ‘in-text’ citation or foot or end-notes, that separates academic writing from other forms of knowledge: it is part of the strength of academic research.

## Why is it wrong to plagiarise?

Plagiarism is unethical for three reasons.

* Firstly, it is unethical because it is a form of theft. By taking the ideas and words of others and pretending they are your own, you are stealing someone else’s intellectual property.
* Secondly, it is unethical because the plagiariser subsequently benefits from this theft.
* Thirdly, a degree is evidence of its holder’s abilities and knowledge. If a student gains employment on the basis of a qualification they have not earned, they may be a risk to others.

No doubt some students do cheat. They deliberately take the results of other people’s hard work, use it to gain credit for themselves, and learn little or nothing in the process. But most cases of plagiarism are accidental, and could be avoided if students become more conscious of their own writing and research practices. Most students who plagiarise do so unintentionally, usually because they don't have the skills to avoid over-reliance on the work of others or because they aren't sure what constitutes plagiarism. The best way to avoid plagiarism is to:

* know what it is
* develop the skills to write well and consequently avoid doing it.

Both intentional AND unintentional plagiarism are violations of [UNSW regulations.](https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/Plagiarism.html)

# Common Forms of Plagiarism

### ****Copying****

* Using the same words as the original text without acknowledging the source or without using quotation marks is plagiarism. [More](https://student.unsw.edu.au/node/149)
* Putting someone else's ideas into your own words and not acknowledging the source of the ideas. [More](https://student.unsw.edu.au/node/150)
* This includes copying materials, ideas or concepts from a book, article, report or other written document, presentation, composition, artwork, design, drawing, circuitry, computer program or software, website, internet, other electronic resource, or another person's assignment, without appropriate acknowledgement.

### ****Collusion****

* Collusion is acting with another person (or other persons) with the intention to deceive. At uni, it is unauthorised collaboration on assessments. [More](https://student.unsw.edu.au/node/168)
* Examples of collusion can include:
  + working with other people to prepare or produce assessable work that should be prepared or produced individually.
  + paying another person to perform an academic task and passing it off as your own work.
  + offering to produce academic work for another person or seeking payment for producing another person's work.
  + copying from, or allowing others (intentionally or unintentionally) to copy your work or share your answers to an assessment task.
  + allowing someone else to rewrite or edit your work (except for the use of a scribe approved by SEADU)
  + rewriting or editing work for another student
* Collusion should not be confused with academic collaboration on group projects.

### ****Inappropriate paraphrasing skills, resulting in copying the written expression of someone else without acknowledgement****

* Using the exact words of someone else, with proper acknowledgement, but without quotation marks.[More](https://student.unsw.edu.au/node/151)
* Changing a few words and phrases while mostly retaining the original structure and/or progression of ideas of the original, and information without acknowledgement. [More](https://student.unsw.edu.au/node/151)
* This also applies in oral presentations where someone paraphrases another’s ideas or words without credit.

### ****Relying too much on other people’s material****

* Relying too much on other people's material; that is, repeated use of long quotations (even with quotation marks and with proper acknowledgement). [More](https://student.unsw.edu.au/node/152)
* Using your own ideas, but with heavy reliance on phrases and sentences from someone else without acknowledgement. [More](https://student.unsw.edu.au/node/153)
* Piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without appropriate referencing.

### ****Inappropriate citation****

* Citing sources which have not been read, without acknowledging the 'secondary' source from which knowledge of them has been obtained.
* 'Padding' reference lists with sources that have not been read or cited within assignments.

### ****Self-plagiarising****

* Duplicating previously submitted work that you have handed in for another course, in part or in whole.
* Re-using parts of, or all of, a body of work that has already been submitted for assessment without proper citation.

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# Using Exact Wording

## Common forms of plagiarism

Quoting from a source ‘word for word’ without using quotation marks is plagiarism.

### Original

The complexity of the current global economy has to do with certain fundamental disjunctures between economy, culture and politics which we have barely begun to theorise.

### Plagiarised

The complexity of the current global economy has to do with certain fundamental disjunctures between economy, culture and politics which we have barely begun to theorise.

### Acceptable

"The complexity of the current global economy has to do with certain fundamental disjunctures between economy, culture and politics which we have barely begun to theorise" (Appadurai 1999, p. 221).

### What makes it acceptable?

* The use of quotation marks to indicate borrowed material
* Correct in-text citation
* The material between quotation marks is exactly the same as the original

# Using Significant Ideas

## Common forms of plagiarism

Putting someone else's ideas into your own words and not acknowledging the source of the ideas.

### Original

"The complexity of the current global economy has to do with certain fundamental **disjunctures** between economy, culture and politics which we have barely begun to theorise" (Appadurai 1999, p. 221).

### Plagiarised

The world economic system is marked by economic, cultural and political tensions that are yet to be fully understood.

### Acceptable

The world economic system is marked by economic, cultural and political tensions that are yet to be fully understood (Appadurai 1999, p. 221).

### Why it it acceptable?

* In-text citation indicates the source of this viewpoint: this is necessary even though the student has 'translated the original into his/ her own words.

**Better**

Political, economic and cultural tensions, at best partially understood, mark the world economic system (Appadurai 1999, p. 221).

**Why is it better?**

* A better paraphrase. Changes the sentence structure and order of information.
* Succinct and economical - a nice turn of phrase!

# Using Sentences from Someone Else

## Common forms of plagiarism

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.

### Original

The complexity of the current global economy has to do with certain fundamental disjunctures between economy, culture and politics which we have barely begun to theorise.

### Plagiarised

The complexity of the current global economy has to do with certain fundamental disjunctures between economy, culture and politics which we have barely begun to theorise (Appardurai 1999, p. 221).

### Acceptable

"The complexity of the current global economy has to do with certain fundamental disjunctures between economy, culture and politics which we have barely begun to theorise" (Appadurai 1999, p. 221).

### What makes it acceptable?

Uses quotation marks to indicate that both words and ideas have been borrowed from the original source.

* The sentence taken from the original remains unchanged.
* A correct citation is provided.

# Relying Too Much on Other People's Material

## Common forms of plagiarism

Relying too much on other people's material; that is, repeated use of long quotations (even with quotation marks and with proper acknowledgement).

### Unacceptable

Australia's national identity "has always been contested" (Wignam, 1994:38). However, some images of Australianness 'have proliferated more widely than others' (Taylor, 2000:179). The most prominent and "resilient of national types has been the bushman" (Zatakis, 1977:66). After first appearing

in the art and literature of late colonial Australia, consolidated and modified by the ANZAC mythology of C.E.W. Bean, filmed by George Chauvel and Peter Weir, embodied by Bradman and Waugh, beloved of John Howard and Bob Carr, the figure of the bushman still holds centre stage in debates about Australianness despite his irrelevance to most Australians' everyday lives (Strauss, 1999: 1).

Indeed,"'attempts to produce other national imaginaries like, for example, multiculturalism, have in the last decade lost ground to a resurgent Australian legend" (Wetherall, 2003:71).

### ****Why is it unacceptable?****

In this example the writer has constructed a paragraph in which every sentence has been taken more or less directly from another source. By using so many different quotations the writer has not really included his or her own voice.

Note: Some students use long quotes to 'pad out' their assignments and reach a set word limit. However, in some schools direct quotations do not count towards the word limit; so, constructing these sorts of paragraphs serves no real purpose. When you use a direct quotation, make it count!

[More about quoting, summarising and paraphrasing](https://student.unsw.edu.au/node/206)

# Relying on Other People's Phrases and Sentences

## Common forms of plagiarism

Using your own ideas, but with heavy reliance on phrases and sentences from someone else without acknowledgement.

### Original

"The complexity of the current global economy has to do with certain fundamental disjunctures between economy, culture and politics which we have barely begun to theorise" (Appadurai 1999, p. 221).

### Plagiarised

The fundamental disjunctures between economy, culture and politics makes free trade an impossible ideal.

### Acceptable

The "fundamental disjunctures between economy, culture and politics" (Appadurai 1999, p. 221) make free trade an impossible ideal.

### What makes it acceptable?

In-text citation and quotation marks indicate the material you have borrowed.

**Better**

Free trade is an impossible practice because, as Appadurai has argued in a different context, there are basic disjunctions within the global economic system (Appadurai 1999, p. 221-2).

**What makes it better?**

* A paraphrase used rather than a quote.
* The necessary in-text citation is provided.

# Plagiarism Quiz

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| Which of the following are incidents of plagiarism? This is an exercise in using academic language. Look at the reading on the right hand side of the page. Can you find more appropriate language? |
| Top of Form   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | 1 | You borrow an essay written by another student and then submit it as your own work. Is this plagiarism? | | | |  |  |  | Yes, because it's not my own work. | |  |  |  | No, because the other student gave me permission. | |  | | | | | 2 | You hand in an essay for one subject that you have already submitted for another: plagiarism? | | | |  |  |  | Yes. Students shouldn't 'recycle' assignments. | |  |  |  | No. I wrote the essay, so it's my work. | |  | | | | | 3 | You download an article from the internet, or take a published journal article or a section of a book, and pretend that it's your own work. Is this plagiarism? | | | |  |  |  | Yes | |  |  |  | No | |  | | | | | 4 | You copy down exact sentences or paragraphs from someone else’s work (essay, article, book, lecture, web page, newspaper) and put them in your essay without using quotation marks or a footnote/ in-text citation. Plagiarism? | | | |  |  |  | Yes | |  |  |  | No | |  | | | | | 5 | You borrow sentences or paragraphs from someone else and put them in your assignment. Although you haven’t used quotation marks, you have provided correct citations (or footnotes): so you haven’t plagiarised, have you? | | | |  |  |  | Yes, because plagiarism applies to both words and ideas. | |  |  |  | No, because I've cited my source. | |  | | | | | 6 | You paraphrase an idea you really like from a reading and put it in the essay you are working on. It's in your own words, so you don't bother with a citation. Have you plagiarised? | | | |  |  |  | Yes | |  |  |  | No | |  | | | | | 7 | You have written a paragraph outlining a concept you have come up with. However, you have relied heavily on phrases and sentences that have come from your reading. Because the concept is yours, you haven't provided references for the words. Have you plagiarised? | | | |  |  |  | Yes, because I've used the words and phrasing of other writers. | |  |  |  | No, because it's my own idea. | |  | | | | | 8 | You hand in an essay where almost every line is a direct quotation from a source. In fact, you have done a lot of reading for this assignment. You have referenced these sources correctly (quotation marks and citation), so it can’t be plagiarism: can it? | | | |  |  |  | Yes, I've relied too much on the words of others. | |  |  |  | No, I'm showing that I've done lots of research. | |  | | | | | 9 | You find a great source for research on the internet. The site has no 'author', so you copy the information and use it in your assignment. Is this plagiarism? | | | |  |  |  | Yes, all sources of information must be cited. | |  |  |  | No, information on the net is up for grabs. |   Bottom of Form |

**How Does Plagiarism Happen?**

Plagiarism happens for a number of reasons—one is because some students decide consciously to gain credit for the work of others. However, most incidents of plagiarism are the product not of deliberate cheating, but of underdeveloped academic skills.

Plagiarism in these cases is a consequence of students' difficulties with the cluster of skills and states of mind needed to be successful in a tertiary learning environment. If you develop these skills your chances of being accused of plagiarism will be greatly reduced.

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| **Problem** | **Solution** |
| Intellectual insecurity: the 'use your own words' paradox | [Find your own voice](https://student.unsw.edu.au/node/156) |
| Poor time management | [Learn to use your time effectively](https://student.unsw.edu.au/node/158) |
| Lack of a clear argument: not answering the question | [Develop a clear argument](https://student.unsw.edu.au/node/159) |
| Lack of critical/ analytical skills | [Asking questions and developing answers](https://student.unsw.edu.au/node/160) |
| Inadequate research | [Read and research more widely](https://student.unsw.edu.au/node/161) |
| Poor note-taking | [Develop note-taking systems](https://student.unsw.edu.au/node/162) |
| Poor referencing skills | [Learn how to acknowledge your sources](https://student.unsw.edu.au/node/163) |
| Underdeveloped writing skills | [Work to improve your writing](https://student.unsw.edu.au/node/165) |
| Cheating | [Don't do it!](https://student.unsw.edu.au/node/168) |

# Paraphrasing, Summarising and Quoting

Much of the work you produce at university will involve the important ideas, writings and discoveries of experts in your field of study. The work of other writers can provide you with information, evidence and ideas, but must be incorporated into your work carefully. Quoting, paraphrasing and summarising are all different ways of including the works of others in your assignments.

Your lecturers expect you to demonstrate an understanding of the major ideas/concepts in the discipline. Paraphrasing and summarising allows you to develop and demonstrate your understanding and interpretation of a text and to [avoid plagiarism.](https://student.unsw.edu.au/node/169)

They are important tools for reshaping information to suit the many writing tasks that will be required of you. They also require the analytical and writing skills which are crucial to success at university.

## What are the differences?

#### Paraphrasing

* does not match the source word for word
* involves putting a passage from a source into your own words
* changes the words or phrasing of a passage, but retains and fully communicates the original meaning
* must be attributed to the original source

#### Summarising

* does not match the source word for word
* involves putting the main idea(s) into your own words, but including only the main point(s)
* presents a broad overview, so is usually much shorter than the original text
* must be attributed to the original source

#### ****Quotations****

* match the source word for word
* are usually a brief segment of the text
* appear between quotation marks
* must be attributed to the original source

## [Quotations](https://student.unsw.edu.au/paraphrasing-summarising-and-quoting)

## [Paraphrasing](https://student.unsw.edu.au/paraphrasing-summarising-and-quoting)

## [Summarising](https://student.unsw.edu.au/paraphrasing-summarising-and-quoting)

#### Ethical Use of Scholarly Materials

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* Students must observe academic conventions in the ethical use of the materials of others. Maintaining standards in scholarship requires a commitment to scholarly values. Among such values is the adherence to ethical behaviour.  
    
  Many aspects of ethical behaviour come together in the process of research and, in particular, in the use of scholarly materials. In the interests of maintaining high standards in scholarship and research, the University reminds students that when they are completing assignments, conducting research and writing theses, they are ethically bound:
* to cite the published source, to acknowledge the originator of substantial ideas upon which they are building their work, and to acknowledge quotations by the use of quotation marks;
* to refer to, or use unpublished scholarly materials only with the appropriate consent, and to acknowledge the source of the materials if that consent is given;
* to refrain from plagiarism with its multiple facets as defined in [Student Misconduct Procedures (pdf) - Annexure 1 (page 15)](http://www.gs.unsw.edu.au/policy/documents/studentmisconductprocedures.pdf" \t "_blank);
* to ensure that their use of scholarly materials does not result in obstructing access by others, in particular, where such materials are held within the University by a library or research centre;
* to faithfully represent the views of authors cited and not to misrepresent authors’ views either by partial or censored quotation, or by quotation out of context, or by misleading commentary;
* to seek access only to scholarly materials to which they know they are entitled or authorised, and not to attempt to access such material to which they know they are not entitled or authorised (for example, by computer hacking);
* to respect the rights of other authors and to refrain from tampering with digital records (whether in text, image, sound, or other format) over which the originator has copyright and/or has asserted the moral rights of ownership;
* to refrain from manipulating digital records (whether in text, image, sound, or other format), whether in their original context or in a different context, so as to mislead their audience.

**The Path to Avoiding Plagiarising**

The first step on this path is to stop and **reflect** on your thinking about the issue or problem you are investigating.  Your ideas may not be very clear or very well informed at this stage, but thinking about them and writing them down gives you a place to start recognising what you need to know next.

* See the Learning Centre’s guide to [Reflective writing](https://student.unsw.edu.au/node/197)

**Reading** then becomes the way you deepen your understanding.  It is also when you start to document how all these other ideas help you identify how and why you think the way you do. Selecting which ideas you will use in your assignment and organising your citations is the beginning of the referencing process.  Your note making practice makes this possible.  Without it you have no map of the path of your developing understanding.

* See the Learning Centre’s guides to [Effective reading](https://student.unsw.edu.au/node/282) and [Effective notemaking from written text](https://student.unsw.edu.au/node/289)

The skills of **summarising and paraphrasing** need to be exercised at this stage.  If you cut and paste directly from your readings, you are plagiarising.  Time can get away from you and you end up not thinking about your writing and just ‘popping’ the words of others into your assignment.  Summarising and paraphrasing take more time, but they are well worth the work and are excellent academic practices.

* See the Learning Centre guides to [Paraphrasing, summarising and quoting](https://student.unsw.edu.au/node/206) and [Introducing quotations and paraphrases](https://student.unsw.edu.au/node/203)

**Writing** takes practice and often your first draft is submitted with disastrous results.  Your first attempt will usually be disorganised and will need to be redrafted, but as you become more practiced and better informed you will begin to develop your own writing style, your own voice.

Another step on this path to good academic practice is the **discovery of the way people talk, think and communicate in the subjects you are studying**. It is similar to working in another country.  You need to learn the variations of the language, the different ways of writing and speaking about that particular world. It is for this reason that different values are given to academic ideas in different subjects, and that different skills are used to emphasise those values.  You will learn about this culture from your lecturers and tutors, from your readings and also by developing your academic practices, one of which is referencing.

Importantly, **time management** will be a crucial part of your academic journey to avoid plagiarising.  Reading well, note making, summarising and paraphrasing, writing, learning the culture of your discipline as well as becoming familiar with referencing conventions, all take time.  It is definitely worth the effort to plan your time efficiently.

* See the Learning Centre’s guide to [Time management](https://student.unsw.edu.au/node/71)

# Other Plagiarism Resources

There is a lot of online information about plagiarism. This page aims to help you navigate your way through the huge number of available net resources. Rather than simply list a vast number of URLs , we have provided an annotated catalogue of sites that may be useful to you. Some of these sites are general resources, while others are targeted as specific skills or disciplines. This collection of resources will be updated as new resources are found.

### UNSW information

* [Student conduct](https://student.unsw.edu.au/conduct)
* [Plagiarism](https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/Plagiarism.html)
* [Ethical use of scholarly materials](https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/Ethical.html)
* [Turnitin support](https://student.unsw.edu.au/node/1232)

### Links to helpful sites

[You Quote It, You Note It!](http://library.acadiau.ca/tutorials/plagiarism/)

Vaughan Memorial Library, Acadia University. A simple animated interactive tutorial that runs through the basics.

[Academic Honesty and Plagiarism](http://academichonesty.unimelb.edu.au/" \t "_blank)

This site from The University of Melbourne provides a clear and simple overview of the basics.

[InfoSkills - Information Literacy and Academic Integrity Tutorial](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/Resources/Divisions/Academic/Library/information-skills/infoskills/index.html)

This online module from The University of Newcastle Library explains the values behind academic integrity, helps to define academic misconduct and plagiarism, and identifies some strategies and techniques for good academic practice.

[Plagiarism Master](http://www.deakin.edu.au/current-students/study-support/study-skills/plagiarism-test/index.php)

From Deakin University, this excellent self-test examines and explains elements of plagiarism and collusion.

[Plagiarism & Academic Integrity at Rutgers University](http://www.scc.rutgers.edu/douglass/sal/plagiarism/intro.html)

An animated tutorial from Rutgers University. Offers some simple scenarios and hypotheticals, plus a text-only version.

[Avoiding Plagiarism](http://www.ssu.uts.edu.au/helps/resources/plagiarism/)

Online tutorial from The University of Technology

[Understanding Academic Integrity & Plagiarism](http://www.academicintegrity.uoguelph.ca/index.cfm)

The University of Guelph