

## Ashland University

### Undergraduate Academic Integrity Awareness Exercise

All assignments submitted to fulfill course requirements are governed by the Ashland University Academic Integrity Policy. Undergraduate Students can find the policy in the Student Handbook. The policy is also accessible via the following link:

Undergraduate policy: <http://eagleweb.ashland.edu/policies/AcadIntegPolicyFinal.pdf>

Students are expected to have reviewed the Ashland University Academic Integrity Policy and abide by it. Any form of academic misconduct will be viewed as 'willful' and actionable according to course syllabi and policy guidelines.

While there are many forms of academic misconduct, the most prevalent breach of academic integrity occurs when a person plagiarizes work by presenting someone else's work as his or her own. The best way to avoid this error is to properly reference and cite works. This document is designed to inform you of your responsibilities in three ways: The first section provides case studies of common situations that have been submitted to the Academic Integrity Board (WHY IS THIS PLAGIARISM?). The next section provides links to helpful resources (TOOLS THAT CAN HELP YOU AVOID PLAGIARISM). The last section provides more detailed instruction on how to avoid common errors associated with the use of others' works ("BUT I CITED IT").

Microsoft Word 2007 includes standard writing manuals (see "Citations & Bibliography" section under "References"). All Ashland University students have access to Microsoft Office 2007 through campus computer labs and wireless checkout laptops, and can have the software uploaded to personal computers. (Information about Microsoft Office 2007 was sent to each student via Ashland University Emails. For assistance, contact the Information Technology Office located in 100 Patterson.) Since Word 2007 is available to students, no student can use ignorance as an excuse for failing to properly cite material.

### WHY IS THIS PLAGIARISM?

Ashland University Academic Integrity Board

#### Case # 1:

Karen submitted a research paper. She cited her sources within the text and at the end of the paper without using quotation marks. Over 75% of her paper consisted of text copied in this method. The instructor charged her with plagiarism and failed her for the course. Karen argued that she attempted to cite her sources but did not know how to cite them and was not given instruction by the professor on how to do proper citations.

1. Why was Karen charged with plagiarism? Karen was charged with plagiarism for several reasons. Her work was viewed as plagiarism because she did not follow the citation and reference guidelines available to her in standard writing manuals. Even if she had followed these guidelines for citation and reference, she still would have been charged with plagiarism because she maintained the same sentence structure, diction and phrasing, rather than rephrasing using her own writing abilities. It is not the responsibility of the professor to provide instruction on proper citation format. Handbooks are available and students can seek assistance through the Writing Center (104 Bixler Hall, ext. 5199).
2. Why did Karen fail the course? The course grading practice is at the discretion of the instructor. This instructor considered her paper such an egregious violation of academic integrity that he could not justify permitting her to pass the course.

### **Case # 2:**

Michael had a 5-point assignment. He copied one sentence from the internet without using quotation marks or citing the reference in his 3-page paper. The instructor charged him with plagiarism and gave him a 0 for the assignment. Michael argued that he thought internet information was public domain and did not need quotation marks or to be referenced, plus he had no idea how to reference internet information.

1. Why was Michael charged with plagiarism? Michael was charged with plagiarism because he did not use quotation marks or properly reference his web cite. While commonly known facts and ideas do not need to be cited, information available through the internet cannot be presumed to be public domain material. It still must be cited using quotation marks and referenced. Handbooks are available and students can seek assistance through the Writing Center (104 Bixler, Hall, ext. 5199).
2. Why did Michael receive a 0 for the assignment? The course grading practice is at the discretion of the instructor. This instructor considered his action serious enough to earn zero points for the assignment, but not serious enough to fail the course.

**Case # 3:** Wendy submitted test corrections to her instructor. She copied a statement from her textbook without citing it. The instructor charged her with plagiarism and gave her a 0 for the test. Wendy argued that since the textbook was required for the course she assumed it did not need to be referenced.

1. Why was Wendy charged with plagiarism? Wendy was charged with plagiarism because she did not properly cite or reference her use of the textbook when making the test corrections. Even textbook materials need to be cited and referenced.
2. Why did Wendy receive a 0 for the assignment? The course grading practice is at the discretion of the instructor. This instructor considered her action serious enough to earn zero points for the test, but not serious enough to fail the course.

## **TOOLS THAT CAN HELP YOU AVOID PLAGIARISM**

More information about plagiarism can be found in an ENG100 or 101 handbook, in the IUL book "Doing Honest Work in College," and on the websites listed below.

[http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r\\_plagiar.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_plagiar.html)

<http://sja.ucdavis.edu/avoid.htm>

[http://www.depauw.edu/admin/arc/writing\\_center/plag.asp](http://www.depauw.edu/admin/arc/writing_center/plag.asp)

[http://www.bu.edu/history/writing\\_guide.html#plagiarism](http://www.bu.edu/history/writing_guide.html#plagiarism)

<http://www.gananda.org/library/mshslibrary/plagexamples.htm>

Additional assistance on the topic as well as related topics is available through the Writing Center:

<http://www3.ashland.edu/centers/writing/wcent.html>

**The following discussion on plagiarism is offered as an additional tool to help students better understand proper citation.**

## BUT I CITED IT!

by Gary Levine, Director of Composition, Ashland University

Plagiarism is representing someone else's work as your own. You are almost certainly aware that turning in a paper from the Internet or a paper written by another student as your own is plagiarism. However, there are other levels of plagiarism beyond this "murder one." Even if you cite your source in the text and in your bibliography, plagiarism can include borrowing your source's ideas, sentence structure, or language. Unintentional plagiarism can still result in a zero on an assignment, failure of a course, and academic integrity charges filed against you, depending on the severity of the offense.

Here is a passage taken from a writing guide published online by Boston University's Department of History:

The word 'plagiarism' derives from a Latin term. In ancient Rome, a *plagiarus* was a sea-pirate who kidnapped children and either held them for ransom or sold them as slaves—the lowest form of criminal whose crime obviously harmed the children themselves but also threatened the future development of the whole society. Keeping that derivation in mind helps to explain why the academic world regards plagiarism as so serious an offense. In intellectual life, ideas are our stock-in-trade, our capital, our means of exchange; and to the extent that all intellectual work builds on the work of others, stealing another person's ideas represents a capital offense against the idea and its creator, and also undermines the entire process of intellectual development for the academic community.

If I drop this passage or part of it into my paper on plagiarism without crediting it at all, then I am obviously guilty of plagiarism. What if I add an **in-text citation** afterwards, e.g. (Backman, para. 3), and have the source listed in my bibliography? In MLA style, the correct **works cited entry** in my bibliography would be

Backman, Clifford, et al. "Plagiarism." Boston University Department of History Writing Guide. Oct. 1998. Boston University. 28 Jul. 2005  
<[http://www.bu.edu/history/writing\\_guide.html#plagiarism](http://www.bu.edu/history/writing_guide.html#plagiarism)>

**If I copy the passage word-for-word, even if I have a correct in-text citation and works cited entry, I am guilty of plagiarism. The writing appears to be mine, and it is unclear what ideas or facts I drew from my source.**

But what if I do this?

The *term* 'plagiarism' comes from a Latin *noun*. In *the days of Rome*, a *plagiarus* was a *buccaneer* who kidnapped *kids* and either held them for *money* or sold them *into slavery*-- a lowly type of *bad guy* whose crime *clearly* harmed the children themselves *and* also jeopardized the future development of Rome *itself*. Keeping that *source* in mind helps to explain why *college professors think* plagiarism is *such a big deal*. (Backman, para. 3).

Even though I've **cited** the source **in-text** (Clifford Backman is the first author listed on the website, and the passage appears in paragraph 3 on the section of plagiarism) I've still stolen the **sentence structure** of the highly educated people who wrote this and passed it off as my own, plugging in my own synonyms-- "term" for "word," "comes" for "derives," "the days of" for "ancient," "buccaneer" for "sea-

pirate," "kids" for "children," and so on. Also, readers might well assume that only the first two sentences are drawn from my source, despite my placement of the citation.

Similarly, I am guilty of plagiarism if I write this:

From a Latin term we derive the word 'plagiarism.' The lowest form of criminal in ancient Rome, a *plagiarius* was a sea-pirate who kidnapped children, either selling them as slaves or holding them for ransom. This crime threatened the future development of the society as well as obviously harming the children themselves. Our means of exchange in intellectual life, our capital, our stock in trade are ideas. (Backman, para. 3).

Here I've switched most of the sentence structures around, but the **diction** and **phrasing** belong to the original writers-- words and phrases that I wouldn't have necessarily thought of myself, e.g. "our stock-in-trade, our capital, and our means of exchange." In both cases, someone reading my paper would probably assume that the bit about sea pirates came from my source, but that the language and secondary ideas were mine. Again, I am taking credit for the efforts and ability of other people.

## SO WHAT DO YOU DO?

USE SIGNAL PHRASES, PARAPHRASING, AND QUOTES!

### SIGNAL PHRASES:

Signal phrases usually include the author's name and thus signal to the reader the ownership of ideas. Thus I might start with something like "According to a writing guide published by Boston University's Department of History," or (if Backman had been the sole author of the passage) "History professor Clifford Backman tells us that . . ." By using the signal phrase, you make it clear that you're introducing a new idea that isn't yours.

### PARAPHRASING:

Paraphrasing means putting a passage into your own words AND sentence structure. The best way to avoid plagiarism is to avoid looking at your source while you write and to check afterwards for accuracy.

***We learn from Boston University's Department of History*** that our word "plagiarism" comes from the Latin *plagiari*, sea-pirates in ancient Rome who kidnapped children for ransom and to sell as slaves. The pirates' actions were a despicable crime against both the children and the community at large. ***As the department's web site explains***, the source of our modern word indicates just how seriously academics take intellectual theft: ideas are all academics have, and if we don't respect the ownership of ideas then our intellectual society will break down (Backman, para. 3).

Notice I haven't tried to replace every word, such as "sea-pirates," and "ancient Rome," because those are commonly used terms without effective synonyms, and I haven't tried to revise every sentence structure, because I don't want to distort meaning. What I *have* done is use **signal phrases** both for the origin of the term *and* the idea that the term's origin reflects the importance of academic integrity to the intellectual community. My **paraphrase** is also more concise than the original. If I wanted to keep some of the original phrasing, I would add a **quotation**, like this:

We learn from Boston University's Department of History that our word "plagiarism" comes from the Latin *plagiari*, sea-pirates in ancient Rome who

kidnapped children for ransom and to sell as slaves. The pirates' actions were a despicable crime against both the children and the community at large. As the department's web site explains, the source of our modern word indicates just how seriously academics take intellectual theft: ideas are all academics have, "**our stock-in-trade, our capital, our means of exchange,**" and if we don't respect the ownership of ideas then our intellectual society will break down (Backman, para. 3).