Avoiding Plagiarism with Correct Documentation

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Plagiarism and Communication Mediums

Plagiarism can happen in any communication medium:

- paragraphs
- essays
- research papers
- visual aids
- business letters
- speeches
- poems
- conversations
- films
- reports
- songs
- novels
- newspaper articles
- Web sites
Plagiarism in Different Environments

Plagiarism can happen in different environments:

- Conversations at Work
- Published Communications
- Academic Settings
We could sell more of the new product if it were offered in really bright colors, like red.

That’s a great idea of yours, Joe! I’ll tell our boss about it when I meet with her later today.
Plagiarism at Work

We should make the new product in really bright colors, like red, yellow, or green.

That idea of yours is really great! You are one of our company’s most creative employees.

You stole my idea!!!
Joe suggested that we make our product in bright colors, like red. I love the idea of red, but we could use other bright colors, too.

Joe’s idea is really creative, and your summary of his idea is well done. I also like your added suggestion about the other colors.

Thanks for giving me credit for my idea.
“Plagiarism” has been defined as “the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work” (Dictionary.com).

In this definition of “plagiarism,” quotation marks have been placed around the borrowed words. The source of the words, Dictionary.com, is stated at the end of the quotation in an in-text parenthetical citation.

Work Cited

In this example of a bibliography page, the additional information explains to readers and/or listeners about the “work” that has been “cited” in the parenthetical citation.
Employees who plagiarize in published communications, as well as in other mediums, will hurt their credibility and could be fired:

- A CBS news producer was fired (“CBS”).
- An editor for a Florida magazine was fired (Stableford).
The CCRI *Student Handbook* defines “plagiarism”:

“The term ‘plagiarism’ includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.”

A student who plagiarizes can be suspended or expelled:

“[V]iolations of academic integrity may result in suspension or expulsion from the College” (“Policy on Academic Dishonesty”).
Plagiarism: Wrong, Unethical, and Illegal

Plagiarism is wrong, unethical, and illegal in work, academic, and other settings.

- Plagiarism will affect a person’s credibility and can hurt a career, as is demonstrated by what happened to a New York Times reporter.

- Someone who plagiarizes can be sued, as is illustrated by a case heard in the Court of Appeals in Connecticut (Coster v. Duquette).
Avoiding Plagiarism by Correctly Using a Documentation System

- Whenever we borrow words, ideas, pictures, symbols, musical notes, structures, or other items, we need to document (give credit to) the source of each borrowed item.
- A quotation, paraphrase, or summary is used to convey borrowed information or words.
- To connect borrowed information or words to a source(s), one of these documentation systems can be used:
Plagiarism Practice Exercises

- New Mexico State University has quizzes and other resources.
- Penn State has plagiarism exercises and quizzes.
- Purdue University has information and a plagiarism exercise.


More Information

The Writing Center at the Community College of Rhode Island has more online resources.
Contact Information

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