

CLARK COLLEGE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM

Much of your college education will involve learning what others have written and then integrating those ideas into your own thinking. But in academic writing any ideas or language not credited to another are assumed to be that of the author. The problem of plagiarism comes in when you fail to give credit for those ideas that are not originally yours. The word *plagiarism*, which comes from the Latin word for "kidnapping," refers to the unacknowledged use of another's words, ideas, or information. Your instructor will introduce you to strategies to avoid plagiarism, the conventions for using and acknowledging sources, and good note-taking procedures. Your instructor will also help you to gain confidence in your own writing so that you do not feel a need to borrow the words of others. The following is a guide to help you avoid plagiarism.

What you need not acknowledge

Anything written entirely in your own words that meets one of the following criteria:

1. **Common knowledge.** If most readers like yourself would likely know something, you need not cite it.
2. **Your own ideas, discoveries, and reasoning.**

What you may acknowledge in order to add credibility to your work, show evidence of your research, and provide a resource for your readers

1. **Facts available from a wide variety of sources but especially well addressed in a particular source.** If a number of textbooks, encyclopedias, or almanacs include the information, you need not cite it. However, if your own discussion of the material is informed by a particular source of this information, or if you want to provide a lead for readers to follow, you may want to cite the source.

What you must acknowledge:

1. **Any direct quotation.** You must place the exact words quoted in quotation marks (even if the words articulate information that is common knowledge).
2. **Paraphrases and summaries that provide background information, present facts not commonly known, and explain various positions on your topic.**
3. **Arguable assertions.** If an author presents an assertion that may or may not be true, you must cite the source.
4. **Statistics, charts, tables, and graphs from any source.** You must credit all graphic material, even if you yourself create the graph.

The purchase of research papers or the employment of a person or agency to prepare such papers is considered by the English Department to be plagiarism. You may get help in writing your paper, but there are limits to the amount of help you can honestly receive. For instance, if your instructor so prescribes, others may read your paper and point out weaknesses, but they must not rewrite the paper for you. Your instructor will define other uses and limitations of outside help as he or she deems appropriate.

Also note that the English faculty will also consider it an act of dishonesty to resubmit or to rewrite any paper that you have accomplished in any earlier or concurrent course for a new grade without gaining the explicit permission of your instructor. Discovery of your having done so will also result in failure of the course.

We members of the English Department cannot overemphasize the fact that plagiarism is an extremely serious violation of academic honesty and that it can lead to most serious consequences.

The standard departmental penalty for plagiarism discovered in any English course will be failure of that course. Please see The Clark College Code of Student Conduct to note that the Dean of Students can authorize additional penalties for "Academic cheating or plagiarism or aiding or abetting cheating or plagiarism."

