

Florida State University Honor Code Statement

Academic Honor Code: “The Academic Honor System of The Florida State University is based on the premise that each student has the responsibility to: 1) Uphold the highest standards of academic integrity in the student’s own work, 2) Refuse to tolerate violations of the academic integrity in the academic community, and 3) Foster a high sense of integrity and social responsibility on the part of the University community.”

English Departmental Statement

Plagiarism is grounds for suspension from the university as well as for failure in this course. It will not be tolerated. Any instance of plagiarism must be reported to the Director of First-Year Writing and the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Plagiarism is a counterproductive, dishonest behavior that is unacceptable in courses intended to aid the growth of individual writers.

Plagiarism is included among the violations defined in the Academic Honor Code, section b), paragraph 2, as follows: “Regarding academic assignments, violations of the Academic Honor Code shall include representing another’s work or any part thereof, be it published or unpublished, as one’s own.”

A plagiarism education assignment that further explains this issue will be administered in all first-year writing courses during the second week of class. All students will be responsible for completing the assignment and asking questions regarding any parts they do not fully understand.

Plagiarism Definition

In *The Curious Researcher*, Bruce Ballenger defines plagiarism as “using others’ ideas or words as if they were your own” (130). Plagiarism can range in scope from accidentally forgetting to place quotation marks around a borrowed sentence, to careless paraphrasing, to deliberately trying to pass off someone else’s paper as your own. Plagiarism is always a serious violation of The Florida State University Academic Honor Code and English Department policy. As a university student you have many educational opportunities and obligations. Plagiarism should never be an option. When you plagiarize, you deny yourself the opportunity to express your own ideas in an academic forum and exhibit your own learning. You are also failing in your obligations to be an active member of an educational community.

What is Plagiarism?

- **Deliberate Plagiarism:**
Handing in a paper (as your own work) that you have bought, had a friend write, or copied from another student or the Internet is considered blatant plagiarism and will not be tolerated.
- **Forgetting to Use Quotation Marks**
Any word, phrase, sentence, or passage copied from a source must be placed in quotation

marks. Leaving out the quotation marks constitutes plagiarism. Writers should weave quotes into their own writing and give proper citation to the original author.

- **Blatant Borrowing:**

Copying or downloading a phrase, a sentence, or a longer passage from a source and passing it off as your own by omitting quotation marks and a source citation constitutes plagiarism.

- **Sloppy Paraphrasing:**

Paraphrasing someone else's ideas without acknowledging a source with proper citation constitutes plagiarism. Paraphrasing involves putting a passage from published material into your own words. Paraphrased material is often shorter than the original passage, and if cited properly, can be a legitimate way to emphasize points in one's paper. It also helps writers control the temptation to quote too much. In addition, the mental process of successful paraphrasing helps one grasp the full meaning of the original material.

- **Other Forms of Plagiarism:**

Omitting a source citation from a paraphrase because of carelessness constitutes plagiarism, as does omitting a source citation for another's idea.

Material is probably “Common Knowledge” if:

- You find the same information undocumented in at least five other sources.
- You have good reason to believe it is information that your readers will already know.
- Your material is known by individuals within your field of study or cultural group.

Interviewing

When you use information through an interview (or a conversation) with someone, these words and ideas must be cited. Interviews can be conducted in person, through e-mail, on the phone, and through post mail.

Citation Practice

Consider the following situations and discuss whether each example is plagiarism, non-plagiarism, or academic dishonesty.

- Robby is writing an essay about a significant personal experience, and he chooses to write about the time his truck was broken into. He decides to make up the following quote to use in his introduction to describe his passion for cars and trucks:

A Gear Head is a person who devotes all of their available time and money to work on an automobile. The time and money is intended to make the vehicle perform tasks far greater than the same vehicle in stock condition is capable of completing. A Gear Head's vehicle is often capable of displays of power, speed, or other technical tasks. My name is Robby Pyle, and I'm a gear head.

Robby's essay continues from here.

How can Robby make sure his opening definition is not misunderstood as plagiarism?

- Your teacher assigns an essay that requires you to write about a life changing experience. Immediately, your parents' divorce comes to mind. Lucky for you, you already have an essay on that exact subject *and* you even got an A on that essay senior year of high school.

Is it acceptable to just change the date and title to reflect your current 1101 class and then hand it in as a final draft?

- Your friend suddenly is interested in being much more than friends. It is obvious because he keeps giving you little gifts and doing things for you like driving you to class so that you don't have to worry about parking and being late. When you complain to him that your 1101 teacher has assigned a 4-6 page short story for your third paper and that you do not know how to write a short story and that you will never write a short story so why bother even trying, he offers to contact one of his friends to help you out. He says, "This guy loves writing short stories. I know he won't mind sharing some of his work. He's got tons." Later that night you receive an email with a 5-page short story attached. You read it. It's good. You especially like the title: *Nothing Counts for Nothing*. The writing doesn't read like any of your previous work, but hey, it's fiction after all, and it's not supposed to sound like you anyway, right?

Do you delete the email--including the short story Word attachment--or do you download the file, open it, make some changes, print it out, and hand it in tomorrow as your first draft of the assignment?

- You are writing a paper about your love for Eminem's music. Amazingly, two nights before your paper is due, you see a *VHI* interview with Eminem and want to include part of the interview in your paper. You don't quote from the interview, because you can't remember the exact phrasing of the questions or the answers, but you include what you've learned from the interview in your paper.

Do you cite, and if so, how?

- You are writing a personal research essay, and you can't seem to remember when you first learned to read. You decide to call your grandmother to ask if she remembers, because you spent every afternoon at her home as a child. She talks to you for an hour, and you decide to focus your essay around the details she provides. But it is your essay and you were involved in the conversation, so you decide not to cite your grandmother as a source.

Is this plagiarism?

- Sarah hands in a draft of her feature article about marriage rituals which includes the following paragraph: Engagement rings come in all shapes, sizes, and most importantly, carats. An engagement is the symbol of the promise of a future together, which is sealed with the giving and accepting of a ring. Most common today is the diamond engagement ring. This sort of ring has been around since the 1400s and was first found in Medieval Italy. Ben Knowles contradicts this idea by claiming, “the true origin of engagement ring began with the opal.” Another sort of ring, known as the Gimmel ring, was a three-part ring which had two clasped hands on it.

Where did Sarah go wrong?

Ways to Avoid Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

1. Make sure you understand the assignment, which includes recognizing what kind of writing you will be doing. Note what kinds of sources you might need: primary texts, a survey, an interview. All of these are types of sources you may encounter in ENC 1101. If you have questions about the assignment, ask your instructor. The earlier in the process you ask questions, the better your chances of avoiding plagiarism.
2. You should choose a topic that interests you or that you are curious about. Being close to a topic makes the paper feel more like your own and gives you ownership of the writing process. Within the parameters of an assignment, ENC 1101 gives you the freedom to choose specific topics you wish to write about. Utilize the opportunity to educate yourself and make discoveries about the things that interest you.
3. Keep a responsible drafting schedule. Begin thinking about the assignment early. Start each draft with enough time to let your ideas grow and expand. Starting early allows you time to recognize, address, and resolve problems that may arise with the assignment before due dates approach. Give yourself time to do the work and ask questions so you won't be tempted to borrow material. Drafting allows time for your peers and your instructor to respond to your writing.
4. Know and practice the rules for MLA citation. Refer to *The McGraw-Hill Handbook* to guide you through using MLA documentation format. Use citations in your paper from the beginning of the process; don't wait until the final draft. Even if you're unsure of how to format a citation, try it or at least mark its place in your text. Any source you use must be cited in the text and appear in the Works Cited page. If you have a hard time with citations, ask your instructor about the things you don't understand.