

What is plagiarism

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



With advent of technology and access to information and data, plagiarism is today prevalent at every level; starting from high school and university papers to publication of scientific research articles in well known journals, writers today face ethical problems while writing materials expressing someone else's thoughts, works or views without proper citation and attribution. According to the US Office for Research Integrity, plagiarism is one the most committed research fraud next to fabrication and falsification (Godlee, 2007). In fact plagiarism is not bounded solely to the academic domain. It is even found in articles found in newspapers and magazines; for example in 2010, renowned New York Times reporter and Pulitzer winner was Chris Hedges was found to plagiarize directly from another reporter's work (Ketcham, 2014).

At the college level where we are exposed to so many research articles and writings and are often expected to present writings of our own, it becomes almost impossible not to succumb to the temptation of using materials that we may have read or seen somewhere. This is where most students and scholars go wrong. Students are not aware of the fact that even paraphrasing without citation is very much unethical and therefore most end up plagiarizing owing to ignorance of rules of ethical writing.

The habit of abiding to plagiarism rules needs to be instilled from a young age. Students need to be first made aware about the existence of “ plagiarism” and its rules and should be firstly given warnings about plagiarizing in their own papers. They should be encouraged to read articles but also acknowledge them in case they are using the same for their own

work, hence students must also be introduced to citation approaches. This initial introduction at least ensures that all students are equally aware of plagiarism and therefore any student found indulging in plagiarism later on would have done it out of choice rather than ignorance. Students found to plagiarize should be punished according to the degree of plagiarism detected. The punishment should become harsher with subsequent instances by the same person. Even though homework might seem less important than research articles, students and scholars found to indulge in any kind of plagiarism need to be treated equally and hence punishment should be same for usage of plagiarized material.

With new information being added to the World Wide Web each second it is humanly impossible to keep a tab of plagiarism. However it is technology itself which is also making detection of plagiarism easier. Educational institutions need to make sure that their own students do not engage in acts of plagiarism since this may later on take form of a habit and affect future publications. Therefore, institutions need to use plagiarism detection softwares. Many of the developed softwares such as CrossCheck, IThenticate and eTBLAST are available at very low costs or no cost at all to education institutions (Garner, 2012, p95). It is also true that controlling of plagiarism requires a holistic and multi-stake approach (Bretag, 2013) and institutions should install reminders in the campus regarding the issue.

Not abiding by the rules and using someone else's works and words is not only a breach of academic integrity alone but is also an insult to one's own capability. The vast expanse of information in front of students allures them and they ignore their own ability to think and be creative in any form and

hence educational institutions should guide the students and protect them from such wrong acts early in life.

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