What You Need to Know About Plagiarism

Do you know all about plagiarism? Consider the following common misconceptions:

- Reusing one of your own papers is not considered plagiarism.
- As long as you include a reference list at the end of your paper, you have not plagiarized.
- It is ok to use someone else’s work as long as you replace a few words and change the sentence around a bit.
- A source is plagiarized only if you forget to use quotation marks.
- Plagiarism counts only if it is intentional.
- “I didn’t mean to” is an acceptable excuse for plagiarism.

All of the above count as plagiarism. Students usually have a good idea of what it means to plagiarize, but there are some things you probably do not know. This tutorial will tell you what you need to know about plagiarism and how to avoid it.

Frequently Asked Questions: Plagiarism

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is an act of academic dishonesty. Whether intentional or unintentional, plagiarism violates the University Honor Code. It can be the result of attempting to recycle your own work from another course or semester, inaccurately citing the work of someone else, failing to give credit to someone else for his or her ideas or writing, failing to summarize or paraphrase a quote in your own words, or anything else that falsely represents any part of your work. In short, be honest with your reader and yourself. Know when and how to use APA or the required documentation style for your class or course of study, and be sure to accurately implement it.

What is Kaplan University’s official policy on plagiarism?

The following is the Plagiarism Clarification from the Academic Integrity Policy in the Kaplan University Catalog:

*All work done for the completion of a course must be your original work with appropriate citations or acknowledgements for any sources utilized in the completion of any coursework, project, or assignment. This includes, but is not limited to, discussion boards, computer programs, marketing plans, PowerPoint presentations, papers, and other assignments, including drafts and final versions.*

Plagiarism offenses include, but are not limited to, the following:
• Using the words, ideas, or other work from another student or the Internet without giving appropriate credit to the source
• Buying a paper off the Internet, from a term paper company, or from another student and submitting it as original work
• Submitting an entire paper or project, or parts of a paper or project, that you did not produce as though it is your original work

In essence, plagiarism is the theft of someone else’s ideas and work. Whether a student copies verbatim or simply rephrases the ideas of another without properly acknowledging the source, it is still plagiarism. In the preparation of work submitted to meet course requirements, whether a draft or a final version of a paper or project, students must take great care to distinguish their own ideas and language from information derived from other sources. Sources include published primary and secondary materials, electronic media, and information and opinions gathered directly from other people.

Copying documentation from another student or from any other source without proper citation is a form of academic dishonesty, as is producing work substantially from the work of another. Students must assume that collaboration in the completion of written assignments is prohibited unless explicitly permitted by the instructor. Students must acknowledge any collaboration and its extent in all submitted coursework. Students are subject to disciplinary action if they submit as their own work a paper purchased from a term paper company or downloaded from the Internet.

How can I integrate outside sources into a paper?

There are three ways to use a source within an essay. Understanding each of these will help you accurately integrate the ideas of others without plagiarizing. *Note - Each of the three ways to use a source must be accompanied by proper citation and bibliographic information:

1. **Directly quoting:** This refers to using a source without altering it in any way; the work is used word-for-word. It is critical that all directly quoted passages are enclosed in quotation marks.
2. **Paraphrasing:** You can also use a source by placing it in your own words. Paraphrasing simplifies or restates the main ideas of an author and is generally about the same length as the original or a bit longer.
3. **Summarizing:** Like paraphrasing, you can summarize a source by placing it in your own words. The difference is that it is a shortened version of the original; the author’s main ideas are abbreviated to highlight the main ideas only.

How do I give appropriate credit to sources I use in my paper?

Anything that you borrow from an outside source must be cited in two places: in the body of the text and on a references list at the end of the paper. Additionally, direct quotes must be enclosed in quotation marks. Failure to do any of these things constitutes plagiarism.

How do instructors check for plagiarism?

Instructors do not take pleasure in “catching” students plagiarizing. Every attempt is made to ensure the success of each student though educational resources like the Kaplan University Writing Center and this
tutorial. One tool that instructors use to prevent plagiarism is a third-party service called Turnitin. This extensive database protects your work from being stolen by someone else, and it shows which sources have been used within your paper. As long as you cite any outside sources, the report generated by this service is a testimony to your accuracy and skill in implementing APA or other required citation and formatting standards. On the other hand, accidental and intentional plagiarism is identified and highlighted by Turnitin.

What is the difference between accidental and intentional plagiarism?

Accidental plagiarism is the result of improperly using or inaccurately citing a source, while intentional plagiarism is outright dishonesty. However, plagiarism in any form is still plagiarism, and the consequences are the same whether or not it was intended. “I didn’t know that was considered plagiarism” is not a defense.

What are the consequences of plagiarizing?

The University Catalog defines plagiarism as a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy that may result in the following sanctions:

- **First offense of the Academic Integrity Policy**: Failure of the assignment in which the action occurred
- **Second offense of the Academic Integrity Policy**: Failure of the class in which the action occurred
- **Third offense of the Academic Integrity Policy**: Expulsion or permanent dismissal from the University

The charges are recorded in Kaplan University’s database and remain there permanently. All offenses you accumulate while completing a program will be carried over to any subsequent program, if and when you reenroll.

Procedures for processing violations of the Academic Integrity Policy are as follows:
1. The instructor notifies you of any charge of academic dishonesty brought against you.
2. The charge is submitted in writing by the instructor to the Provost’s Office.
3. The Provost’s Office sends you a copy of the Academic Integrity Policy and notification of the charge.
4. The Provost’s Office maintains a database of academic dishonesty charges.
5. Please see the University’s Academic Appeals Policy for information on how to appeal a charge of violation of the Academic Integrity Policy.

What is APA?

APA stands for the American Psychological Association. The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* establishes a national standard for the layout of an academic paper and gives a comprehensive method for referencing sources used in these types of papers. Generally, APA style is the method used for social science papers. At Kaplan, we find that APA style best suits our overall curriculum for most courses. These standards are not suggestions; they are the expectation.

What are the main components of an APA-formatted Paper?
There are three major elements in an APA-formatted paper. These include manuscript formatting, in-text citations (also called parenthetical references), and bibliographical references (i.e. a references list).

What is an in-text citation?

The first way to refer to an outside source is by using an abbreviated notation in the body of the paper. This is referred to as an in-text citation or parenthetical reference. It provides the reader with a basic understanding of the origin of the information by stating the last name of the author followed by the year of publication. When directly quoted, the page number and quotation marks around the borrowed information must also be included. A good method to ensure accuracy is to ask two questions when writing: (1) “Who said this?” (2) “When was it said?” Here are two examples:

Example 1: Canby (1924) captured the process of writing perfectly when he wrote, "Good writing is always a breaking of the soil, clearing away prejudices, pulling up of sour weeds of crooked thinking, stripping the turf so as to get at what is fertile beneath" (p. 135).

Example 2: Thinking and the writing process are connected in that "Good writing is always a breaking of the soil, clearing away prejudices, pulling up of sour weeds of crooked thinking, stripping the turf so as to get at what is fertile beneath" (Canby, 1924, p. 135).

We can tell the above are directly quoted because they are enclosed in quotation marks; they tell us who said it and when it was said, and they include the page number on which these quotes appear. All four of these elements must be included to accurately credit the original author of a passage that has been borrowed word-for-word. Sometimes, paragraph numbers are substituted for page numbers when using Internet sources when page numbers are unavailable.

Paraphrased or summarized passages must also include the author and year of publication, but they should not be enclosed in quotation marks. Including the page number is optional. As previously noted, they must be written in your own words. Below is an original text followed by two acceptable examples of paraphrasing and citation:

Original Text: “For the retiring ‘Silent Generation,’ now in their ‘60s and ‘70s, 9/11 is worrisome. Polls confirm that these World War II-era children have aged into the most war- and casualty-averse Americans, the most ardent supporters of the UN, and the biggest advocates of committee-scripted process” (Howe & Strauss, 2002, p. 31).

Example 1: As expected, people who are now in their middle 60s and 70s, who remember World War II from their childhoods, are passionately against war, and they believe in the power of the United Nations and other bureaucracies to solve world conflict (Howe & Strauss, 2002).

Example 2: According to Howe and Strauss (2002), people who are now in their middle 60s and 70s, who remember World War II from their childhoods, are passionately against war, and they believe in the power of the United Nations and other bureaucracies to solve world conflict.

In addition to an in-text citation, a complete listing of a source’s publication information must be included at the end of the paper in the references list. Finally, extensive examples of in-text citations can be found under “Research, Citation, and Plagiarism” on the Kaplan University Writing Center homepage.
What is a references list?

Once a writer has given the basic information about a source in the in-text citation, complete bibliographic information for the source must also be provided starting on a separate page. There are a few reasons for this. Most importantly, it indicates that all sources have been accurately researched, which marks the writer as worthy of the reader’s attention. Additionally, it provides a list for further reading and research. Many times a reader will come to an essay looking for information on a given topic. The references list is a good resource for him or her to look more deeply into the topic and to look at the complete sources used in a paper. With the complete publication information, he or she has everything needed to find that article or book. It is also critical to note that a references list is not sufficient by itself. You must also include quotation marks around direct quotations used in the text and include in-text citations for all sources used (directly quoted, paraphrased, or summarized).

It is important to use all available resources (e.g. this resource and the Kaplan University Writing Center) to be sure that you accurately and adequately represent your sources. Following is a sample section of a reference list that adheres to APA 6th Edition formatting conventions:

What about programs that automatically format papers according to APA standards?

These programs are helpful with manuscript formatting, but many struggle with accurate citation integration. Also, APA formatting is complex and often updated. These programs often lack the latest APA style changes. There is no substitute for your own effort and critical thinking skills. Therefore, these types of tools should be used sparingly and cautiously.

How can the Writing Center help me with APA formatting and avoiding plagiarism?
You can access the Writing Center from the KU Campus or Kaplan homepage by clicking “My Studies” then “Academic Support Center.” The Writing Center offers multiple modes of assistance for all Kaplan University students:

1. **Writing Tutor**: You may speak with a live tutor Saturday through Thursday during specified hours.
2. **Q & A Center**: You may submit a writing question 24 hours using the submission form. You will receive a response within 24 hours on weekdays or 48 hours on weekends.
3. **Writing Reference Library**: The Writing Center contains documents, videos, interactive tutorials, podcasts, and workshops that offer very specific help with writing.
4. **Paper Review Service**: You can submit an entire essay for feedback. While this is not a plagiarism detection service or a guarantee of higher grades, tutors can help you understand areas of your work that need attention. Submit papers as a Word .doc or .docx file using the submission form. Replies normally take 48 to 72 hours.
5. **Workshops**: You can attend live workshops during specified times, or you can browse and watch recorded workshops, or download workshop resources.
6. **English Language Learner Support**: Students who have a first language other than English may receive personalized tutoring services and resources that support writing and language development.
7. **Writing Fundamentals**: Students who are struggling with basic college writing skills can contact specialized tutors who will create an organized plan of study and provide resources to improve student writing skills.

How can I learn more about properly using APA formatting and avoiding plagiarism?

In addition to this FAQ, the Kaplan University Writing Center (KUWC) is the best place to begin. Specifically, the KUWC Writing Reference Library contains a segment called “Research, Citation, and Plagiarism.” Within this link, there are useful documents available for your review such as Basic Citation Guidelines and Common Citations in APA Format. After reviewing these documents, you are welcome to ask further questions using the Q & A Center or Live Tutoring. Finally, your instructor is always available for assistance by email or during his or her office hours.