

Plagiarism

(1) Definition

- Plagiarism means presenting as one's own work, the opinions or the words of someone else. Plagiarism is the transfer of material from a source to a paper without digestion and integration in the writer's mind, and without an acknowledgment in the paper.
- Plagiarism occurs when one uses the exact language of someone else without putting the quoted material in quotation marks and giving its source. Plagiarism also occurs when the student presents as his own the ideas of someone else, even when expressed in the student's own words. The use of professionally researched and written reports, and the re-use of former students' old term papers and assignments, are clear-cut cases of plagiarism.
- Plagiarism is dishonest because the plagiarist offers for credit what is not his own. Plagiarism defeats the whole purpose of education—the improvement of the student's powers of thinking and expression.
- Please note that you are permitted to use the ideas of other people; indeed, the normal process of scientific development depends upon the communication of ideas from one person to another. However, whenever you use an idea that was originally suggested by someone else, you must give credit to the originator of the idea.

(2) Avoiding plagiarism

- If you take a quotation word-for-word from another source, put double quotation marks around the words to indicate that the wording is the original author's and cite the source.
- If you borrow ideas, arguments, data, or other information from another source, cite the source even if you put the material in your own words.
- Some people plagiarize without bad intentions, thinking that the author of a source "says it better than I could say it." While that may be true, if it is your paper you are supposed to have written the words yourself. **Keep in mind that your intention is immaterial to whether you have committed plagiarism.**

(3) Working through some examples

- Original wording in Bybee (2000), p.1:
"In particular, the frequency with which individual words or sequences of words are used and the frequency with which certain patterns recur in a language affects the nature of mental representation and in some cases the actual phonetic shape of words."
- Misuse of source (1):
The frequency of usage of individual words or word sequences and the frequency of certain patterns in a language affect the nature of mental representations and possibly the actual phonetic shape of words.

The student copied words and phrases from the original without acknowledging their source. Although the student has rearranged some phrases and made minor stylistic changes, this version still follows the basic wording and structure of the original while the student repeats ideas as if they were his or her own.

- Misuse of source (2):

The frequency with which individual words or sequences of words are used and the frequency with which certain patterns recur in a language affects the nature of mental representation and in some cases the actual phonetic shape of words (Bybee 2000).

The student took the entire sentence from Bybee word-for-word without putting it in quotation marks, implying that it was in his/her own words.

- Correct usage (1):

Bybee (2000) claims that both the mental representation and surface realization of a word may be affected by the frequency of occurrence of the word and the frequency of phonological patterns that the word instantiates.

The student has substantially rephrased the original wording from Bybee and shown that (s)he has understood the point made by Bybee. In the meantime, Bybee (2000) was credited.

- Correct usage (2):

Bybee claims that “the frequency with which individual words or sequences of words are used and the frequency with which certain patterns recur in a language affects the nature of mental representation and in some cases the actual phonetic shape of words” (Bybee 2000, p.1).

The student put the quote from Bybee in quotation marks, indicating that these were not his/her own words. The exact place where the quote was taken was also provided. Of course, if your entire paper is composed of such quotes, it is still unacceptable—you need to have written ideas of your own for it to be a research paper.

- For both correct usages, you need the following in the *References* section:

Bybee, Joan (2000). *Phonology and language use*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.