

Plagiarism statement of the Environmental Policy Group

1. Introduction and definition

The task of writing a paper or other assignment for a course sometimes lures students into using other's work, ideas, facts, texts, etc and represent it as their own. The goal of this statement is to distinguish between methods to do this in an appropriate way and methods that fall under plagiarism.¹ It is important for students to understand that plagiarism is considered as a very serious offense against academic norms and, hence subject to equally serious punishment.

"Plagiarism" is derived from the Latin *plagiarius*, 'plunderer', 'kidnapper'. It refers to intellectual theft, defined as "the false assumption of authorship: the wrongful act of taking the product of another person's mind, and presenting it as one's own"² "To plagiarize is to give the impression that you wrote or thought something that you in fact borrowed from someone. While some plagiarize deliberately by copying or buying papers or soliciting unauthorized help, most plagiarism is accidental, but it is usually dealt with just as harshly as intentional plagiarism."³ It is precisely to avoid discussion about what constitutes plagiarism and it's intentional character that we want students to understand the content of this document well.

The **sanction** in case of plagiarism is –based on WU policy (articles 35 and 36 of MSc Education/Examination Regulation):

- The examiner informs the student and reports to the secretary of the WU Examination Committee the case of plagiarism. The examiner may utilize a plagiarism scanner to prove the case.
- The commission will ask the student to express his/her view about the case.
- Depending on the magnitude of the fraud the appropriate sanction will be assessed: a warning; a fail for the exam; exclusion of the exam for a maximum period of one a year or a combination of these sanctions.

In the following pages, you will first find several examples of plagiarism, then examples of accepted use of sources and ideas and finally some guidelines on how to avoid plagiarism. We urge students to carefully read these pages and when in doubt talk to their instructors in order to prevent later problems.

2. Examples of plagiarism⁴

A. DIRECT PLAGIARISM

Source Material

From: *Emotion in the Human Face: Guidelines for Research and an Integration of Findings* by Paul Ekman, Wallace V. Friesen, Phoebe Ellsworth (New York: Pergamon Press, Inc), p.1. (Psychology source)

The human face in repose and in movement, at the moment of death as in life, in silence and in speech, when alone and with others, when seen or sensed from within, in actuality or as represented in art or recorded by the camera is a

¹ See Department of English Northern Illinois University, <http://www.engl.niu.edu/fycomp/plag.html>

² *MLA Style Manual*, 2nd ed. New York: MLA 1998, page 146.

³ US Naval Academy Plagiarism policy

⁴ This section is borrowed directly from the Northwestern University website on plagiarism. "The section was written by Jean Smith of the CAS Writing Program, with help from Bob Wiebe of the History Department. Contributors include Katrina Cucueco (Speech '96), Ryan Garino (CAS '98), Scott Goldstein (Tech '96), and Jean Smith and Ellen Wright of the Writing Program. The examples of plagiarism and comments are based upon *Sources: Their Use and Acknowledgement* (published by Dartmouth College)." (<http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/plagiar.html>)

commanding, complicated, and at times confusing source of information. The face is commanding because of its very visibility and omnipresence. While sounds and speech are intermittent, the face even in repose can be informative. And, except by veils or masks, the face cannot be hidden from view. There is no facial maneuver equivalent to putting one's hands in one's pockets. Further, the face is the location for sensory inputs, life-necessary intake, and communicative output. The face is the site for the sense receptors of taste, smell, sight, and hearing, the intake organs for food, water, and air, and the output location for speech. The face is also commanding because of its role in early development; it is prior to language in the communication between parent and child.

Misuse of source

(italicized passages indicate direct plagiarism):

Many experts agree that *the human face, whether in repose or in movement, is a commanding, complicated, and sometimes confusing source of information. The face is commanding because it's visible and omnipresent. Although sounds and speech may be intermittent, the face even in repose may give information. And, except by veils or masks, the face cannot be hidden. Also, the face is the location for sensory inputs, life-supporting intake, and communication.*

Comment

The plagiarized passage is an almost verbatim copy of the original source. The writer has compressed the author's opinions into fewer sentences by omitting several phrases and sentences. But this compression does not disguise the writer's reliance on this text for the concepts he passes off as his own. The writer tries to disguise his indebtedness by beginning with the phrase "Many experts agree that. ..." This reference to "many experts" makes it appear that the writer was somehow acknowledging the work of scholars "too numerous to mention." The plagiarized passage makes several subtle changes in language (e.g., it changes "visibility and omnipresence" to "it's visible and omnipresent"). The writer has made the language seem more informal in keeping with his own writing style. He ignores any embellishments or additional information given in the source-passage. He contents himself with borrowing the sentence about how only masks and veils can hide the face, without using the follow-up elaboration about there not being a "facial equivalent to putting one's hands in one's pockets." He also reduces the source's list of the face's diverse activities at the end of the paragraph.

Had the writer credited the authors of the Emotions book in this text or in a footnote, and enclosed the borrowed material in quotation marks, this would have been a legitimate use of a source.

B. THE MOSAIC

Source Material

From: *Language in Sociocultural Change* by Joshua Fishman (Stanford University Press, 1972), p.67. (Linguistics source)

In a relatively open and fluid society there will be few characteristics of lower-class speech that are not also present (albeit to a lesser extent) in the speech of the working and lower middle classes. Whether we look to phonological features such as those examined by Labov or to morphological units such as those reported by Fischer (1958) (Fischer studied the variation between -in' and -ing for the present participle ending, i.e. runnin' vs. running and found that the former realization was more common when children were talking to each other than when they were talking to him, more common among boys than girls, and more common among "typical boys" than among "model boys"), we find not a clear-cut cleavage between the social classes but a difference in rate of realization of particular variants of particular variables for particular contexts. Even the widely publicized distinction between the "restricted code" of lower-class speakers and the "elaborate code" of middle-class speakers (Bernstein 1964, 1966) is of this type, since Bernstein includes the cocktail party and the religious service among the social situations in which restricted codes are realized. Thus, even in the somewhat more stratified British setting the middle class is found to share some of the features of what is considered to be "typically" lower-class speech. Obviously then, "typicality," if it has any meaning at all in relatively open societies, must refer largely to repertoire range rather than to unique features of the repertoire.

Misuse of source

(italicized passages indicate direct plagiarism):

In a relatively fluid society many characteristics of lower-class speech will also be found among the working and lower middle classes. Labov's and Fischer's studies show that there is not a clear-cut cleavage between social classes but only a difference in the frequency of certain speech modes. All classes share certain speech patterns. The difference among classes would only be apparent by the frequency with which speech expressions or patterns

appeared. By this standard, then, Bernstein's distinction between the "restricted code" of the lower-class speakers and the "elaborated code" of middle-class speakers is useful only up to a point, since Bernstein mentions cocktail parties and religious services as examples of "restricted speech" groupings. "Typicality" *refers more to speech "range" than to particular speech features.*

Comment

While this passage contains relatively few direct borrowings from the original source, all its ideas and opinions are lifted from it. The writer hides her dependency on the source by translating its academic terms into more credible language for a novice in sociology. For example, the plagiarist steers clear of sophisticated terms like "phonological features," "morphological units," and "repertoire range." However, her substitutions are in themselves clues to her plagiarism, since they over-generalize the source's meaning. The writer seems to acknowledge secondary sources when she refers to Labov's and Fischer's studies, but she obviously has no first-hand knowledge of their research. If she had consulted these studies, she should have footnoted them, rather than pretending that both she and her audience would be completely familiar with them. She intertwines her own opinions with the source and forms a confused, plagiarized mass.

The writer should have acknowledged her indebtedness to her source by eliminating borrowed phrases and crediting her paragraph as a paraphrase of the original material.

C. PARAPHRASE

Source Material

From: *Cliff's Notes on The Sun Also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway

THE DISCIPLINE OF THE CODE HERO

If the old traditional values are no good anymore, if they will not serve man, what values then will serve man? Hemingway rejects things of abstract qualities courage, loyalty, honesty, bravery. These are all just words. What Hemingway would prefer to have are concrete things. For Hemingway a man can be courageous in battle on Tuesday morning at 10 o'clock. But this does not mean that he will be courageous on Wednesday morning at 9 o'clock. A single act of courage does not mean that a man is by nature courageous. Or a man who has been courageous in war might not be courageous in some civil affair or in some other human endeavor. What Hemingway is searching for are absolute values, which will be the same, which will be constant at every moment of every day and every day of every week.

Ultimately therefore, for Hemingway the only value that will serve man is an innate faculty of self-discipline. This is a value that grows out of man's essential being, in his inner nature. If a man has discipline to face one thing on one day he will still possess that same degree of discipline on another day and in another situation. Thus Francis Macomber in the short story "The Short, Happy Life of Francis Macomber," has faced a charging animal, and once he has had the resolution to stand and confront this charging beast, he has developed within himself a discipline that will serve him in all situations. This control can function in almost any way in a Hemingway work.

Misuse of source:

Hemingway tries to discover the values in life that will best serve man. Since Hemingway has rejected traditional values, he himself establishes a kind of "code" for his heroes. This code is better seen than spoken of. The Hemingway hero doesn't speak of abstract qualities like courage and honesty. He lives them. But this living of values entails continual performance the Hemingway hero is always having his values put to the test.

How can the hero be up to this continual test? Hemingway stresses the faculty of self-discipline as the backbone of all other virtues. Self-discipline places man's good qualities on a continuum. The dramatic change in Francis Macomber in "The Short, Happy Life of Francis Macomber" stems more from his new-found self-control than from any accidental combination of traits.

Comment

This illustrates plagiarism since the writer used the notion of the "Hemingway code hero" presented in Cliff's Notes as the sole basis for his own essay. He has absorbed his source's concepts, re-phrased them, and, perhaps, made them simpler. But there is a one-to-one relationship between the development of ideas in the Cliff's Notes and the plagiarists' rendition.

The first two sentences of the plagiarist's are directly borrowed from his source; the remaining sentences are more artfully disguised. The worst feature of this idea-copying is that it seems to be the end product of a close reading of

Hemingway's "Short, Happy Life," the writer makes it appear that his comments are based on this short story. The writing here would be acceptable if he had written the same paraphrase with the proper acknowledgement of his source.

D. INSUFFICIENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Source Material

From: Peter Laven, *Renaissance Italy: 1464-1534* (New York: Capricorn, 1964), pp. 130f.

The tenacious particularism of the Italian state gave rise to a wide variety of constitutional solutions and class structures throughout Italy. Even conquered territories and those swallowed up by bigger neighboring powers often managed to retain much of their internal organization as it had been. If power changed hands, the instruments and forms of power usually remained the same. Since the economic needs of such territories did not suddenly alter with a change of government or master, those classes which had been important before the change tended to continue to be important afterwards as well. Only when the nature of the change was economic and social might there have been a reversal in the relationships of classes; but even in this there was no sudden revolution in the structure of classes.

Misuse of source:

In his comprehensive study, *Renaissance Italy*, Peter Laven discusses the peculiar organization of Renaissance city-states:

The tenacious particularism of the Italian states gave rise to a wide variety of constitutional solutions and class structures throughout Italy. Even conquered territories and those swallowed up by bigger neighboring powers often managed to retain much of their internal organization as it had been.¹

This means that if power changed hands, the instruments and forms of power usually remained the same. Since the economic needs of such territories did not suddenly alter with a change of government or master, those classes which had been important before the change tended to continue to be important afterwards as well. Only when the nature of the change was economic and social might there have been a reversal in the relationships of classes; but even in this there was no sudden revolution in the structure of classes.

¹ Peter Laven, *Renaissance Italy*, p. 130-31.

Comment

This half-crediting of a source is a common form of plagiarism. It stems either from a desire to credit one's source and copy it too, or from ignorance as to where to footnote. The general rule is to footnote after rather than before your resource material. In this case, the plagiarist credits historian Peter Laven with two sentences and then continues using the author without giving acknowledgement. The writer disguises the direct plagiarism as a paraphrase by using the falsely-explanatory phrase "This means that ..." in the third sentence. This example of plagiarism is especially reprehensible because the writer seemingly acknowledges her source--but not enough.

3. How to do it right: examples of the good use of others' work⁵

In all academic work, and especially when writing papers, we are building upon the insights and words of others. A conscientious writer always distinguishes clearly between what has been learned from others and what he or she is personally contributing to the reader's understanding. To avoid plagiarism, it is important to understand how to attribute words and ideas you use to their proper source.

A. QUOTED MATERIAL AND UNUSUAL OPINION OR KNOWLEDGE

Source:

The teenage detective who was once a symbol of spunky female independence has slowly been replaced by an image of prolonged childhood, currently evolving toward a Barbie doll detective. ... Every few pages bring reminders

⁵ This section is borrowed directly from the Northwestern University website on plagiarism (<http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/plagiar.html>)

of Nancy's looks, her clothing, her effect on other people. ... The first entry in this series carries a description of Nancy: "The tight jeans looked great on her long, slim legs and the green sweater complemented her strawberry-blonde hair."

Jackie Vivelò, "The Mystery of Nancy Drew," *MS.*, November, 1992, pp. 76-77

Use and Adaptation of the Material:

Nancy Drew has become a "Barbie doll" version of her old self. She has become superficial and overly concerned with her looks. She is described in the new series as wearing "tight jeans [that] looked great on her long, slim legs."¹ She has traded her wits and independent spirit for a great body and killer looks.²

¹ Jackie Vivelò, "The Mystery of Nancy Drew," *MS.*, November, 1992, p. 77.

² Vivelò, pp. 76-77

Explanation:

The writer has paraphrased most of the material, and she has borrowed a few of the author's words. She has also discovered that the paraphrased ideas are unusual (not found in other sources). Therefore, the writer has placed quotation marks around the author's words and has credited the author twice--once directly after the quoted material and once at the conclusion of the author's ideas.

B. INTERPRETATION

Source:

One recent theory, advanced by the physicist Gerald Hawkins, holds that Stonehenge was actually an observatory, used to predict the movement of stars as well as eclipses of the sun and moon. Such a structure would have been of great value to an agricultural people, since it would enable them to mark the changing seasons accurately, and it would have conferred seemingly supernatural powers on the religious leaders who knew how to interpret its alignments.

Stanford Lehmbèrg, *The Peoples of the British Isles: A New History*, vol. I, (Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1992), p. 9.

Use and Adaptation of the Material:

If Stonehenge was an astronomical observatory which could predict the coming of spring, summer, and fall, this knowledge would have given tremendous power to the priestly leaders of an agricultural community.¹

¹ Stanford Lehmbèrg, *The Peoples of the British Isles: A New History*, vol. I, (Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1992), p. 9

Explanation:

The writer has appropriately cited this material since the writer is in debt to someone else for the analysis, even though the writer has not used any direct quotations.

C. PARAPHRASED MATERIAL

Source:

As a recent authority has pointed out, for a dependable long-blooming swatch of soft blue in your garden, ageratum is a fine choice. From early summer until frost, ageratum is continuously covered with clustered heads of fine, silky, fringed flowers in dusty shades of lavender-blue, lavender-pink, or white. The popular dwarf varieties grow in mounds six to twelve inches high and twelve inches across; they make fine container plants. Larger types grow up to three feet tall. Ageratum makes an excellent edging.

How to Grow Annuals, ed. Sunset Books and Sunset Magazine (Menlo Park, CA: Lane Books, 1974), p. 24.

Use and Adaptation of the Material:

You can depend on ageratum if you want some soft blue in your garden. It blooms through the summer and the flowers, soft, small, and fringed, come in various shades of lavender. The small varieties which grow in mounds are very popular, especially when planted in containers. There are also larger varieties. Ageratum is good as a border plant.¹

¹*How to Grow Annuals*, ed. Sunset Books and Sunset Magazine (Menlo Park, CA: Lane Books, 1974), p. 24.

Explanation:

The writer has done a good job of paraphrasing what could be considered common knowledge (available in a number of sources), but because the structure and progression of detail is someone else's, the writer has acknowledged the source. This the writer can do at the end of the paragraph since he or she has not used the author's words.

D. USING OTHER AUTHORS' EXAMPLES

Sources:

The creative geniuses of art and science work obsessively. ... Bach wrote a cantata every week, even when he was sick or exhausted.

Sharon Begley, "The Puzzle of Genius," *Newsweek*, June 28, 1993, p. 50.

Albert Einstein published nearly 250 papers in his life, but a sizeable percentage of them were ignored or even proven wrong.

"What Produces Scientific Genius?" *USA Today*, June 1989, p. 11.

Use and Adaptation of the Material

If there is a single unifying characteristic about geniuses, it is that they produce. Bach wrote a cantata every week. Einstein drafted over 250 papers.¹

¹Sharon Begley, "The Puzzle of Genius," *Newsweek*, June 28, 1993, p. 50; "What Produces Scientific Genius?" *USA Today*, June 1989, p. 11.

Explanation:

Instead of finding an original example, the writer has used an author's example to back up what the writer had to say; therefore the writer has cited it.

E. USING OTHER AUTHORS' CHARTS AND GRAPHS

Chart

Source: Accretion Chart for Illinois tax on OID bond, prepared by John Lindsay, Principal Financial Securities, Inc., 6/12/95.

Use and Adaptation of the Material:

As the following chart indicates, investment in an OID (Original Issue Discount) bond is taxable by the State of Illinois on the accretion and interest.¹

¹Accretion Chart for Illinois tax on OID bond, prepared by John Lindsay, Principal Financial Securities, Inc., 6/12/95.

Explanation:

Instead of creating an original chart or graph, the writer has used one from an outside source to support what the writer has to say; therefore the chart or graph has been cited. If the writer had created an original chart, some of the facts might need citations (see example VIII).

F. USING CLASS NOTES

Source: Lecture Notes

- A. Born in USA--Springsteen's 7th, most popular album
- a. Recorded with songs on Nebraska album--therefore also about hardship
 1. Nebraska about losers and killers
 - b. About America today--Vietnam, nostalgia, unemployment, deterioration of family
 - c. Opening song--many people missed the Vietnam message about how badly vets were treated.
- class notes--Messages in Modern Music A05
Professor Mary McKay--March 10, 1995

Use and Adaptation of the Material:

As Professor McKay has pointed out, many of the songs in *Born in the USA* (Springsteen's seventh and most popular album), including the title song, were recorded with the songs on *Nebraska*. Consequently, *Born in the USA* is also about people who come to realize that life turns out harder and more hurtful than what they might have expected. However, while *Nebraska* deals with losers and killers, *Born in the USA* deals more locally with the crumbling of American society--its treatment of returning Vietnam veterans, its need to dwell on past glories, its unemployment and treatment of the unemployed, and the loss of family roots. This is apparent from the opening song of the album "Born in the USA" in which Springsteen sings from the perspective of a Vietnam Veteran.¹

¹Mary McKay, "Messages in Modern Music" A01 (Northwestern University) March 10, 1995.

Explanation:

The writer has acknowledged that these ideas (which are not commonly held or the writer has not investigated to find out if they are commonly held) come from a lecture.

G. DEBATABLE FACTS

In the campaigns of 1915 Russian casualties have been conservatively estimated at more than 2 million. Gordon Craig, *Europe Since 1815* (Dryden Press, 1974), p. 370.
By the end of the summer [of 1915] in addition to military casualties totalling 2,500,000 men, Russia had lost 15 percent of her territories...
L. S. Stavrianos, *The World Since 1500* (Prentice Hall, 1966), p. 438.

Response to the Material

Estimates of the number of deaths in Russia during 1915 range from over two million¹ to two and a half million.²

¹ Gordon Craig, *Europe Since 1815* (Dryden Press, 1974), p. 370.

² L. S. Stavrianos, *The World Since 1500* (Prentice Hall, 1966), p. 438.

Explanation:

The writer found different facts in different sources; therefore the "facts" needed to be documented.

H. UNUSUAL FACTS

Source:

There also has been a dramatic shift in the percentage of our students whose mothers work outside the home. Approximately 80% of our entering students in 1994 have mothers who are employed outside the home. In 1967, more than half of our students' mothers were full-time homemakers.
"Characteristics of Northwestern Students: Data from the Cooperative Institutional Research Project," Northwestern University, 1994 p. 2.

Use and Adaptation of the Material:

At Northwestern University, the rise in the number of mothers working outside the home has been dramatic--moving from less than half in 1967 to about 80 percent among the freshman class of 1994.¹

"Characteristics of Northwestern Students: Data from the Cooperative Institutional Research Project," Northwestern University, 1994 p. 2.

Explanation:

The writer found this fact in only one source and wants his reader to know where to find it.

4. Guidelines to avoid and prevent plagiarism⁶

- Take carefully documented notes. Identify your sources by name of author, title of work, place and name of publication, date, and page numbers.
- Enclose all borrowed words in quotation marks, and set off longer borrowed passages in an indented block.
- Avoid mere paraphrasing, substituting your own words or synonyms for the original work without giving proper credit to your source.
- Do not plagiarize your own work by copying from it or submitting it more than once for credit unless specifically authorized by your professor.
- Document all figures, charts, statistics, graphs, tables, opinions and conclusions taken or adapted from any source, including electronic media such as CD-ROMs, diskettes or tapes, online resources like the World Wide Web, or computer services such as Nexis and Dialog. *Resist the temptation to cut and paste without attribution.*
- Do not use translation software to produce a foreign-language text for submission as your own work. Not only does this constitute misrepresenting another entity's work as your own, it also will be recognizable to your instructor as a machine-produced text.
- Do not document facts of common knowledge such as familiar proverbs or well-known quotations ("We shall overcome"), but you must indicate the source of any appropriated material that readers otherwise could mistake for your own. **If in doubt, ask. If still uncertain, err on the side of caution** (*borrowed from USNA statement*).
- Within a text, particularly in case of repeated reference to the same source, identify its origin briefly by name or title and page number, enclosed in parentheses, and provide complete documentation of all your sources in an alphabetized list of "Works Cited" at the end of your paper.

⁶ US Naval Academy Plagiarism Policy