WHAT IS PLAGIARISM?

**Deliberate Plagiarism**
- Rewriting from books or articles
- Copying & pasting from web pages and online sources to create a patchwork writing
- Buying, downloading, or borrowing a paper

**Accidental Plagiarism**
- Not knowing when & how to cite
- Not knowing how to paraphrase or summarize
- Not knowing what "common knowledge" is
- Recycling an old paper
Plagiarism

Plagiarism, “the act of taking the writings of another person and passing them off as one’s own” (plagiarism, 2015), can also occur by representing the words or ideas of another as your own work. Examples include:

- Copying another person’s actual words without the use of quotation marks and citation to attribute the words to their source.
- Presenting another person’s ideas in your own words without acknowledging the source.
- Using information that is not common knowledge without acknowledging the source.
- Submitting downloaded term papers or parts of term papers, paraphrasing or copying information from the Internet without citing the source, and “cutting and pasting” from various sources (including your own papers) without proper attribution.

Want to avoid plagiarizing? Follow the guidelines presented here.

Quotation: Whenever you copy something directly from another text, put it in quotation marks. Then document the source according to the standard documentation style in your discipline (APA citation style, MLA citation style, etc.).

**Example:** According to USA Today (2013), “scientists are 95% to 100% sure human influence has been the dominant cause” of global warming (p. 08a).

TIP: Indicate quotations with quotation marks when you are taking notes during your research, so that you don’t forget and think that you wrote the passage yourself.

Paraphrase: If you reword another person’s ideas, putting them into your own words, you must still acknowledge the source of the information.

**Example:** USA Today noted that mankind is the largest source of global warming (2013, p. 08a).

Take the time to check your paraphrase against the original text to be sure you have not accidentally used the same phrases or words, and to also check that the information is accurate. Remember that the source of each idea you use must be cited separately; it’s not enough to simply refer to an author once if you have used his or her ideas throughout your paper.

TIP: Read and review what you want to paraphrase carefully, and then write out the idea in your own words.

Common Knowledge: You do not need to document the source of facts that can be said to be widely accessible (such as you may not know the total population of the world, but you would be able to find the answer easily from numerous sources) or if the facts are likely to be known by a lot of people.

**Example:** The Declaration of Independence was written in 1776.

However, you must document facts that are not generally known.

**Example:** Benjamin Franklin, at age 70, was the oldest person to sign the Declaration of Independence, according to the website of the National Archives.

**Example:** Many Americans believe that Thomas Jefferson was the sole author of the Declaration of Independence. But he was one of five members of a committee who wrote the historic document (Axelrod, 2000, p. 164).

TIP: When in doubt, ask yourself if what you are saying is agreed on by many readily available sources. If so, it is common knowledge. If the information is disputable, then your readers will want to know where you are getting that version of the facts and therefore you need to cite your source.