

Plagiarism and Cheating: An Explanation to Help You

To have integrity means to be a moral, honest person; academic integrity, then, means to act honestly and ethically as a student. The Center for Academic Integrity, a group of 200+ colleges and universities, promotes campus-wide focus on academic integrity. As they explain in their booklet *The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity*, “[a]n academic community of integrity advances the quest for truth and knowledge by requiring intellectual and personal honesty in learning, teaching, research, and service.”

As a college student at Maysville Community and Technical College (M.C.T.C.), you are expected to read and abide by the rules and behaviors described in the *Kentucky Community and Technical College System [KCTCS]’s Student Code of Conduct* (read it online at <http://legacy.kctcs.edu/student/studentcodeofconduct.pdf>). To assist you in better understanding how to be academically honest (thus, getting the most from your time in college), we are providing this handout to supplement the college’s definition of “plagiarism” and “cheating” with specific examples.

In ENG 101: Writing I, you will read and discuss how to quote, summarize, paraphrase, and cite sources properly; this sheet is not exhaustive but is meant to be used as a starting point. **If you ever have questions, do not hesitate to ask your instructors or other employees; we are here to help you and are happy to do so, but it is your responsibility to ask.**

What are plagiarism and cheating exactly?

First, some definitions—here is how M.C.T.C. defines plagiarism and cheating:

2.3.1.1 *Plagiarism*

Plagiarism is the act of presenting ideas, words, or organization of a source, published or not, as if they were one’s own. All quoted material must be in quotation marks, and all paraphrases, quotations, significant ideas, and organization must be acknowledged by some form of documentation acceptable to the instructor for the course.

Plagiarism also includes the practice of employing or allowing another person to alter or revise the work that a student submits as the student’s own. Students may discuss assignments among themselves or with an instructor or tutor, but when the actual material is completed, it must be done by the student and the student alone. The use of the term “material” refers to work in any form including written, oral, and electronic.

All academic work, written or otherwise, submitted by a student to an instructor or other academic supervisor, is expected to be the result of the student’s own thought, research, or self-expression. In any case in which a student feels unsure about a question of plagiarism involving the student’s work, the student must consult the instructor before submitting the work.

2.3.1.2 *Cheating*

Cheating includes buying, stealing, or otherwise obtaining unauthorized copies of examinations or assignments for the purpose of improving one’s academic standing. During

examinations or in-class work, cheating includes having unauthorized information, and/or referring to unauthorized notes or other written or electronic information. In addition, copying from others, either during examinations or in the preparation of homework assignments, is a form of cheating.

2.3.1.3 Student Co-Responsibility

Anyone who knowingly assists in any form of academic dishonesty shall be considered as guilty as the student who accepts such assistance. Students should not allow their work to be copied or otherwise used by fellow students, nor should they sell or give unauthorized copies of examinations to other students. (*Kentucky Community and Technical College System Student Code of Conduct*)

Can you be more specific?

Yes! Any time you use ANY information—ideas, exact words or paraphrases, graphs, statistics, maps, cartoons, photos—that you did not think of or create and you do so without crediting the source then you are plagiarizing.

Plagiarism can be intentional (i.e. you meant to do it) or unintentional (i.e. you were in a hurry, did not make good notes when researching, etc.). Of course, it is understandable that you will make mistakes when trying to learn how to cite your sources in your English classes; however, you are expected not to make such mistakes in other classes, on the job, or even in English classes after a reasonable amount of time has been spent trying to teach you the proper way to cite.

For a quick reference, look at the following list, quoted from the University of Maine at Farmington's Writing Center:

Definite don'ts

- copying and pasting complete papers from electronic sources
- copying and pasting passages from electronic sources without placing the passages in quotes and properly citing the source
- having others write complete papers or portions of papers for you [including buying papers from any person or web site]
- summarizing ideas without citing their source

- pulling out quotes from sources without putting quotation marks around the passages
- . . . [improperly] paraphrasing - not putting the information in your own words [or sentence structure] (even if it's cited)
- quoting statistics without naming the source unless you gathered the data yourself
- using words and passages you don't understand and can't explain
- self-plagiarizing - using one paper for more than one class without the permission of your professors
- making up sources
- making up bibliographic or citation information (page numbers, etc.)
- using photographs, video, or audio without permission or acknowledgment
- translating from one language to another without properly citing the original source
- copying computer programs or other technical information without acknowledgment
- failing to acknowledge sources of oral presentation, slides, or Web projects
- failing to acknowledge sources of elements of nonverbal work: painting, dance, musical composition, mathematical proof. (University of Maine, "Definite")

Other Forms of Academic Cheating:

These include . . . but **are not limited to:**

1. consultation of textbooks, library materials, or notes in examinations where such materials are not to be used during the test;

2. consultation of cell phone text messages, PDAs, programmable calculators with materials that give an advantage over other students during an exam;
 3. use of crib sheets or other hidden notes in an examination, or looking at another student's test paper to copy strategies or answers;
 4. having another person supply questions or answers from an examination to be given or in progress;
 5. having a person other than oneself (registered for the class) attempt to take or take an examination or any other graded activity. In these cases all consenting parties to the attempt to gain unfair advantage may be charged with a [code of conduct] violation;
 6. deliberate falsification of laboratory results, or submission of samples or findings not legitimately derived in the situation and by the procedures prescribed or allowable;
 7. revising and resubmitting a quiz or exam for regrading, without the instructor's knowledge and consent;
 8. giving or receiving unauthorized aid on a take-home examination;
 9. facilitating academic dishonesty: intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate [the Student Code of Conduct];
 10. signing in another student's name on attendance sheets, rosters, Scantrons;
 11. submission in a paper, thesis, lab report, or other academic exercise of falsified, invented, or fictitious data or evidence, or deliberate or knowing concealment or distortion of the true nature, origin, or function of such data or evidence;
 12. procurement and/or alteration without permission from appropriate authority of examinations, papers, lab reports, or other academic exercises, whether discarded or actually used, and either before or after such materials have been handed in to the appropriate recipient; and
 13. collaborating with others on projects where such collaboration is expressly forbidden, or where the syllabus states the default being one's own work.
- (Kansas)

How do I cite sources?

Citation styles

As you write your paper and prepare your bibliography (a list of the resources you used), remember that every source you use in your paper [or homework assignment] **MUST** be cited [with in-text citations **and** a list of all those sources' full bibliographic information at the end of your essay or assignment]. This includes books, articles, websites, graphics, charts, etc.

If you do not cite your resources, you may be accused of plagiarism. Why else is it important to cite your resources?

- Citations give credit to the authors of the resources you used to write your paper. If you have used someone else's ideas, words, graphics, etc., it is important to give credit where it is due.
- Citations will allow the reader to identify and locate the sources you used. Perhaps a reader will want to read the book or article you cited for more information on the topic.
- Citations lend credibility and authority to your research paper or project.

. . . If you are not sure which citation style to use for your course, check with the faculty member who is teaching it.

When using	within your paper, you should use	The page at the end that lists all of the resources you used should be titled
MLA, (Modern Language Association)	in-text parenthetical references.	Works Cited.
APA, (American Psychological Association)	in-text parenthetical references.	References.
CBE: Name-Year System (Council of Biology Editors)	in-text parenthetical references.	References.

(University of Maine, "Quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing")

Anything else?

Plagiarism, strictly speaking, is the stealing of words, ideas, images, or creative works. Plagiarism, whether or not it is intentional, is looked upon as an academic crime.

Copyright violation is closely related to plagiarism, but it is a federal crime (U.S. Copyright Act 17 U.S.C. §§ 101 - 810). Copyright laws protect the rights of creators of any literary, graphic, musical, artistic, or electronic form. (Facts and ideas are not covered, only the expression of those facts or ideas fixed in a tangible form.) The laws, in effect, keep the right to copy those forms in the hands of the people who created them.

College students often are asked to synthesize what they read. From this synthesis often springs a research paper or project, one that cites sources and offers insight to the information. Sounds easy enough, but what happens when students consult multiple sources, learning a little from each one, is that the information becomes muddled, and the students don't always cite facts properly [which leads to] plagiarism.

Some students think it's difficult to improve on what a professional writer says, so the writer's words end up in the paper, presentation, or project, either quoted extensively, or with a few words changed to avoid direct quotes - also plagiarism.

Other students ask friends for help, which can lead to plagiarism. And some end up with bad information from poor sources, or, worse yet, copy and paste willy-nilly from Internet sites - plagiarism again.

Writing for the Web can be even more problematic, leading to copyright law violations. When students capture images or text from other websites or scan hard copy to include in a website without attribution or permission, the result can be a violation of copyright law. (University of Maine, "What is plagiarism?")

Works Cited

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