

In developing basic research skills, you need to be clear about what is your own work, and what is the work of other writers. Your own written work does not have to be absolutely unique, but it must be *original* - i.e. the product of your own reading and thinking. It will include ideas and material from other people's work, and when it does so, you need to make it clear that this is the case. If you do not reference, summarize, or paraphrase other people's work properly, this may be seen as *plagiarism*. Plagiarism is not acceptable in most western academic cultures.

TASK 1 Using case studies to identify plagiarism

- 1 Read the definition of plagiarism and the selected guidelines on avoiding plagiarism which follow. Check that you understand everything.

plagiarize (n) to copy another person's ideas, words, or work and pretend that they are your own

Selected guidelines for avoiding plagiarism

- 1 When you use material from another source, make sure you reference it. (see 6 Referencing styles)
 - 2 If you use the same words as the original source, make sure you put them in quotation marks.
 - 3 Make sure you don't hand in a similar piece of work twice - always write something new.
 - 4 Be honest - don't pretend you came up with an idea if you know it is from someone else.
 - 5 A piece of work should be your own, unless it is a group project, so don't ask for too much help - or rewriting - from someone else.
 - 6 Don't cut and paste material from other sources, e.g. online texts.
 - 7 If you are not sure whether something you write may be plagiarized, ask for advice.
 - 8 When you hand in work, check that the work really is all your own.
- 2 Read the two case studies, and decide whether each student has plagiarized, and in what way. Refer to the selected guidelines above.

Case A: Jacques

Jacques is looking at various sources in the library for an assignment. He finds a book hidden away, which hasn't been borrowed for years. In it is a passage highly relevant to his assignment, so he copies it down word for word. This extract forms a major part of his essay. Jacques uses the same words as the source, but without using quotation marks. Jacques feels he adds a lot to it with his own evaluation. Just before handing in the essay, Jacques has doubts about his work, and whether it is plagiarized, so he quickly adds the reference at the end.

Case B: Juan

Juan is searching online for material for his essay. He finds a new website which has lots of interesting and relevant material. He makes careful notes, and rewrites the ideas in his own style. It doesn't seem likely that anyone will have found the website, so Juan decides not to include the reference to the website at the end of his essay.

- 3 Think of at least two ways of avoiding plagiarism.

Example: Always note down the reference for anything you read and may use later.