

# Originality

It is expected that your writing is *your* writing. *Plagiarism* refers to the action of taking the words or ideas of another person and using those words or ideas like they are yours. This is viewed differently in different cultures. In some cultures, copying what another person wrote is a way to honor the original writer. In American educational settings, plagiarism is not viewed this way. Plagiarism in the United States is viewed as stealing another person's work. There are very serious consequences for stealing another person's words or ideas and using them in your writing. You should never plagiarize **any** part of **any** assignment in **any** of your classes.

There are many ways to plagiarize. You should be familiar with them so that you don't do it accidentally. Some examples of plagiarism include copying text word-for-word (or with a few changes) from something without citing the author, copying too much from one source, and improperly crediting the source. Compare the quote to the examples of plagiarism in the following box.

## Example: Types of Plagiarism

### Original Quote:

"Frida's medical history was notoriously tragic. She was born in 1907 with an undiagnosed scoliosis. At the age of six, she contracted polio (or a polio-like illness) that affected the muscles of her right leg." (Launer, 2018, p. 369).

### Plagiarized Version: Copy and paste without source information

Frida Kahlo was a strong woman who overcame many difficulties. For example, Frida's medical history was notoriously tragic. She was born in 1907 with an undiagnosed scoliosis. At the age of six, she contracted polio (or a polio-like illness) that affected the muscles of her right leg. Her art was very influenced by her health problems. She is an awesome example of resilience.

### Plagiarized Version: Paraphrase the idea without source information

Frida Kahlo is famous for being so sad. Her scoliosis was undiagnosed at birth. When she was about six years old, she got polio or something like it. Her right leg was impacted by the disease.

You should never copy a quote and change just a few words (with or without the source information).

Even if you include the source information and you have only changed a few words, this is not correctly paraphrasing and still considered plagiarism.

When you include research in your essays, you need to properly quote, summarize, or paraphrase as well as include the proper citation. Each of these skills will be explained in this book.

## Exercises

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### Exercise 1: Plagiarism Discussion

In a small group or with a partner, discuss the questions below:

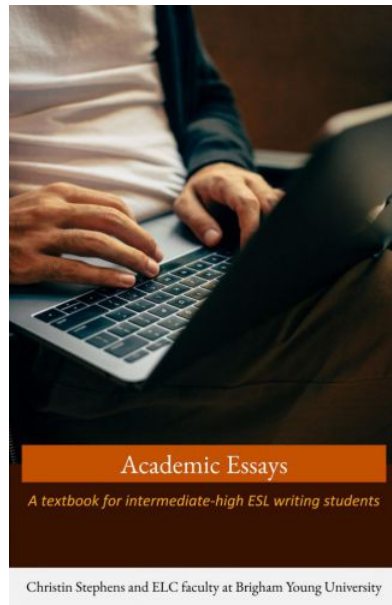
1. Why do you think academic culture in the United States is so concerned about plagiarism?
2. Think about your past educational experiences.\* Is plagiarism something that your teachers were concerned about? How does that compare to the information in this chapter?
3. The paragraph above mentions that there are different ways to include research: a quote, a summary, or a paraphrase. What do you know about these different writing techniques? Which one do you think would be the most useful? Which one would be the most difficult?

\*As with many aspects of cultures, a difference does not mean one way of doing things is *better*. Culture simply means *the way we do things here*. We often have to adjust our actions or words to fit a context. The concern or lack of discussion of plagiarism in different cultures is just an interesting difference to be aware of and to adjust for. Students growing up in the United States have to be specifically taught how to avoid plagiarism as well.

## Sources

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Launer, J. (2018). Frida Kahlo and her doctors. *Postgraduate Medical Journal*, 94(1112), 369-370.  
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