



Avoiding Plagiarism

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In the *MLA Handbook* (7th edition) Joseph Gibaldi writes:

Derived from the Latin word *plagiarius* (“kidnapper”), *to plagiarize* means “to commit literary theft” and to “present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source” (*Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*). Plagiarism involves two kinds of wrongs. Using another person’s ideas, information, or expressions without acknowledging that person’s work constitutes intellectual theft. Passing off another person’s ideas, information, or expressions as your own to get a better grade or gain some other advantage constitutes fraud. Plagiarism is sometimes a moral and ethical offense rather than a legal one since some instances of plagiarism fall outside the scope of copyright infringement, a legal offense. (52)

Writers unintentionally plagiarize when they forget to acknowledge external sources properly. For example, writers who do not enclose direct quotations in quotation marks or who neglect to provide a parenthetical citation of a direct or an indirect quotation have committed **unintentional plagiarism**. Many academic institutions do not discriminate between intentional and unintentional plagiarism, imposing serious penalties upon writers who commit either offense. You can avoid unintentional plagiarism and its accompanying penalties by taking careful notes, by maintaining an organized writing process, and by learning how to acknowledge your sources properly.

Quotations

Any and all **quotations** must be acknowledged appropriately, whether they are long or short quotations, direct or indirect quotations, quotations quoted in another source, etc.

Facts and Information

Facts and information derived from any and all sources must be acknowledged appropriately, including ideas, lines of argument, conclusions, conjectural information, turns of phrase, etc.

Long Quotations

In the *MLA Handbook*, Gibaldi writes:

Using another person’s ideas, information, or expressions without acknowledging that person’s work constitutes intellectual theft. Passing off another person’s ideas, information, or expressions as your own to get a better grade or gain some other advantage constitutes fraud. (52)

Facts and Information Derived from a Source

Even if the plagiarist does not necessarily contravene copyright laws, plagiarism still has certain moral and ethical implications (Gibaldi 52).

The word *plagiarism* comes from a Latin term meaning “kidnapper” (Garibaldi 52)

Short Quotations

“Plagiarism,” Gibaldi writes, is both “a moral and ethical offense” (52).

Information That Is Conjectural or Open to Interpretation

Plagiarism, according to Gibaldi, may not always constitute copyright infringement (52).

Indirect Quotations

Gibaldi suggests that plagiarism is a twofold offense, as it involves both fraud and theft (52).

Ideas, Arguments, or Conclusions Derived from a Source

Even if the plagiarist does not necessarily contravene copyright laws, plagiarism still has certain moral and ethical implications (Gibaldi 52).

Quotations Originally Quoted in Another Source

Plagiarism is the “present[ation] as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source” (qtd. in Gibaldi 52)

Apt Turns of Phrase

Gibaldi refers to plagiarism as “intellectual theft” (52).