

Plagiarism Awareness

Student's Name

Institutional Affiliation

## Plagiarism Awareness

Plagiarism is a problem that exists in many universities and institutions around the world. Simply stated, plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as your own, without giving them credit. Plagiarism can come in different forms, but they are all essentially stealing. There are many excuses as to why people plagiarize, but ultimately plagiarism is an inexcusable behavior which everyone should avoid because it harms not only the original author, but the individual as well.

Plagiarism comes in several forms. Most common is copying and pasting content without citation. This is easy to do since most material now exists in electronic form (Harris, 2015). However, it is also easy to notice. By using a plagiarism detector, one can easily find plagiarism if it is there. Another common form of plagiarism is buying work from someone else and using it as your own. So called "paper mills" are companies where a person can hire a writer to do an assignment for them (Harris, 2015). However it is done, plagiarism is still morally wrong and should be avoided.

Writing is a detailed process, so it is understandable that students and professionals accidentally plagiarize from time to time. However, accidental plagiarism it looks much different than intentional plagiarism. According to Jonathan Bailey, an example of accidental plagiarism is when an author tries to paraphrase a cited source, but does not rewrite the text correctly (2016). Such a mistake is easy to understand as accidental plagiarism, because the author tried to give credit but failed to do it correctly. Another example of accidental plagiarism is when the author does not cite a certain fact, because they think it is already common knowledge (Bailey, 2016). Such a case is harder to call "accidental" because there is no attempted citation. Such mistakes

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are more often due to negligence rather than intent, but negligence of the rules is no excuse for breaking them.

As for intentional plagiarism, it is usually quite easy to notice. In such cases, whole sentences or paragraphs may be copied and pasted with no attempt to paraphrase, so a direct comparison easily reveals the original author. One famous recent example of intentional plagiarism is the Melania Trump case, in which she or her speech writer used phrases taken directly from a speech by Michelle Obama (Baily, 2016). Since it is very difficult to explain how someone else's work ended up in your own, intentional plagiarism is obvious once you see it.

When someone is caught plagiarizing they usually make excuses. Some of the most common excuses for plagiarism are, "I didn't know it was wrong, I didn't mean to, it was my first time" (Flemming, 2018). Such excuses are simply not convincing for several reasons. Firstly, ignorance of the law is no excuse. Just because a person does not know about a specific law does not mean they are free to break it. Secondly, it is difficult to prove that someone did not intend to plagiarize. Those plagiarized phrases from another author's work came to be in the accused person's paper somehow; they did not appear there by themselves. Lastly, the excuse that, "it was my first time" is hardly tenable. If a person breaks the rules they are likely to do so again and again until they are caught. When it comes to plagiarism, someone claiming to be a first-time offender rarely is.

Plagiarism is not only unfair to the author whose work was stolen, but to the individual committing the act as well. If a person is caught plagiarizing, their reputation will undoubtedly suffer. Universities usually expel students at the first sign of plagiarism and a professional may lose their job for it (Harris, 2015). Besides these obvious consequences, there is also the consequence for the individual. By plagiarizing they are only hurting themselves. By not doing

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the real work they are not gaining the necessary experience for improvement in the future. If a person makes plagiarism a habit, they may become dependent on it and not be able to do the work by themselves. In conclusion, plagiarism exists in several forms with just as many excuses, and it should be avoided not only for the author's sake but for the sake of the individual as well.

### References

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