Avoiding Plagiarism

What is plagiarism?

For our purposes, plagiarism is most clearly defined as submitting or using the ideas, words, images, code, music, or other work of others as though it were your own.

Often, plagiarism occurs **accidentally**. Work that has missing or incorrect citations and documentations can give the reader/instructor the impression that you are claiming to be solely responsible for the material. **When you use ideas that are not your own, you need to indicate that to your reader, whether or not you change the words.**

What does plagiarism include?

- Copying or paraphrasing from books or other sources without citing it properly.
- Copying work from another student.
- Working as a group on projects where the instructor requires individual work.
- Buying or copying entire papers or projects done by others.
- Altering information or data.
- Using misleading references.
- Resubmitting previously evaluated work of your own without the consent of your current instructor (e.g., submitting work, even if you have revised it, that you have previously submitted in a different course).

What is the penalty for plagiarizing?

- Students who commit plagiarism are subject to penalties ranging from having to rewrite an assignment, to receiving a grade reduction, to receiving a mark of zero, or even to failing the course.
- Serious cases may result in suspension; repeat offences may result in expulsion.
- For information on how seriously plagiarism is treated at Mount Royal, check the Code of Student Conduct (http://www.mtroyal.ca/wcm/groups/public/documents/pdf/code_student_conduct.pdf)

How can you avoid plagiarism?

1. **Ask each instructor the following:** • What citation/documentation style should you use - APA, MLA, etc.?
   - Is the assignment to be done individually or as a group?
   - How much help/assistance can you get from other students – proofreading, ideas, etc.?
   - How much help can you get from Student Learning Services, the Library, etc.?

2. **Keep track of your sources as you do your research.**
   - More information about your source is better – get as much as you can.
   - Use the documentation manuals available at the Library or bookstore, the MR guides (e.g., APA, MLA, and Chicago handouts and other resources available online (http://www.mtroyal.ca/Library/HowDoI/CiteSources.htm); the Mount Royal Department of Humanities' Documentation Guide for Assignments in History [based on Chicago Manual of Style and Turabian].

Type of Source	What You Need to Know
Whole book	Author, title, place of publication, publisher, date of publication
Chapter/essay/article in a book	Author and title of chapter/essay/article, editor, title of the whole source, place of publication, publisher and date of publication, volume number (if applicable), pages
Journal article (print)	Author and title of article, name of journal, volume, number, and date of the issue of the journal, pages
Newspaper article (print)	Author and title of article, name of newspaper, date, page number(s)
Journal article (electronic database)	Author and title of article, name of journal, volume, number, and date of the issue of the journal, name of the database you used, date you found the article, page number(s); check guides for specific format requirements.
Newspaper article (electronic database)	Author (if available) and title of article, name of newspaper, date, name of the database used, date you found the article); check guides for specific format requirements
Basic web page	As much of the following as you can find: author of the page (person or organization), title of the page, date of most recent update, address of the page (http://....), date you found the page
Journal article (from the web NOT from a database)	Author and title of article, name of journal, volume, number, and date of the issue of the journal, address of the page, date you found the article

3. Communicate clearly what is your work and what is the work of others.

Citing and documenting material requires attention to detail. With practice, it becomes easier. Words to know –

Citation: noting in the text where ideas/words come from somewhere else

Documentation: listing, usually at the end of an assignment, the complete information for all the sources you have used. Sometimes it's called Works Cited (MLA), References (APA), or Bibliography (Chicago).

Quotation: using the exact words from another source, enclosed in double quotation marks

Paraphrasing: using an idea from another source and putting it in your own words.

Both **quotations** and **paraphrases** need to be **cited** and **documented**.

4. Get help if you are unsure how to identify the work of others.

- Your instructor, people at the Info Desk at the Library, and the Writing and Learning Strategists in Student Learning Services can help you with citation and documentation.
- Guides for the various styles (with examples) can be found [here](#)