

## WHY SHOULD YOU CARE ABOUT PLAGIARISM?

It all comes down to fairness, integrity & honesty. In an academic environment, it is important that people are evaluated fairly on their own work. In a broader context, for academic work to be of value and to be trustworthy, it must be honest work.

- *if you submit a physics essay that you wrote and another student in your class submits an essay written by Einstein and declares it as his/her own work*
  - this student has an unfair advantage over you and your other classmates.
- *a group of students work on a project that is supposed to be done individually*
  - the 'group' has an unfair advantage over you and your other classmates.
- *if you submit your essay and it includes the ideas and words of others but you don't give credit by citing or referencing the source/s*
  - it looks like you have deliberately stolen the work of others even if that wasn't your intent.

Often, plagiarism occurs **accidentally**. Work that has missing or incorrect citations can give readers/instructors the impression that you are claiming to be solely responsible for the material.

***In order to preserve the integrity of a Mount Royal education, high standards must be maintained.***

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## GUIDE TO AVOIDING PLAGIARISM



MOUNT ROYAL  
COLLEGE

Respect

Integrity

Community

## WHAT IS PLAGIARISM?

For our purposes, plagiarism is most clearly defined as submitting or using someone else's **ideas, words, images, computer code, music, etc.** as though they were your own.

## PLAGIARISM CAN INCLUDE:

- copying or paraphrasing material from books, articles, the web or other sources without citing it properly
- copying work from another student
- working as a group on projects where individual work is required by the instructor
- buying or copying entire papers or projects done by others
- altering information or data
- using misleading references

## ARE THERE PENALTIES FOR PLAGIARISM?

- students who commit plagiarism are subject to penalties ranging from having to rewrite an assignment, receiving a grade reduction, receiving a mark of zero, or even failing the course
- serious cases may result in suspension and repeat offences may result in expulsion
- MRC takes plagiarism very seriously; to learn more about academic misconduct access the **Code of Student Conduct** at: <http://mtroyal.ca/codeofstudentconduct>

## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO AVOID PLAGIARISM?

### 1 Ask your instructors

- what citation/documentation style they require – APA, MLA, and Chicago are the most common, but other styles exist
- whether group work or individual work is expected for each assignment
- how much assistance you can get from other students – proofreading, ideas, etc.
- how much assistance you can get from Learning Skills, the Library, etc.

### 2 Keep track of your sources

- more information about your source is better than not enough
- some sources may not have an author or date – get as much information as you can about each source
- guides to citation and documentation in APA, MLA, Chicago, and the MRC Department of Humanities Documentation Guide for Assignments in History Humanities styles, can be found at: <http://library.mtroyal.ca>
- **NOTE: \*\*\* Many citation format guidelines are open to interpretation. For this reason your instructor is the final authority on the subject of citation for any given assignment so WHEN IN DOUBT, ASK! \*\*\***

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

When you use ideas that are not your own, you need to indicate that they are not yours even if you have altered the info into your own words, **“the idea belongs to someone elses.”**

Citing and documenting material requires attention to detail. It can seem overwhelming at first but once you understand what has to be done and why - **it does become easier!**

#### Important terms:

**Citing:** a notation within the text identifying where ideas/words came from.

**Documenting:** noting, usually at the end of an assignment, the complete information for each source you used (may be called: Works Cited, References, List of Sources, or Bibliography).

**Quoting:** using the exact words from another source.

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

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

For examples of citing, documenting, quoting and paraphrasing, check the guides available in print, from:

- the Library
- the Learning Skills Centre
- the Office of Student Conduct
- or online at: <http://library.mtroyal.ca>

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

Help with citation and documentation is available from your instructor, from the Learning Skills Centre <http://www.mtroyal.ca/learningskills> and from the Info Desk in the Library.