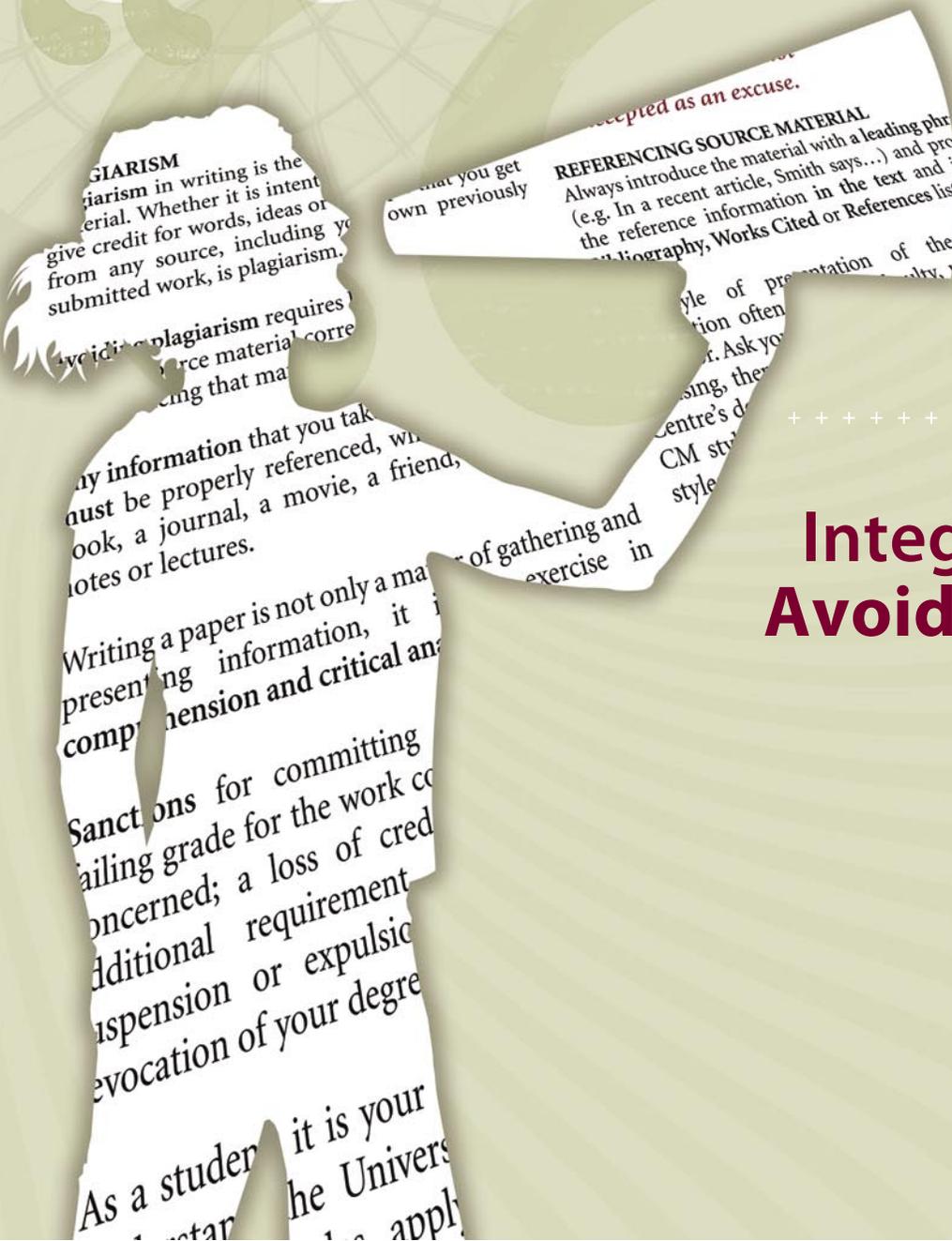


# Says who?



## Integrity in Writing: Avoiding Plagiarism



uOttawa

L'Université canadienne  
Canada's university

**Academic Writing Help Centre**  
**Student Academic Success Service**

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

**Academic integrity** is respect for the intellectual community in which you are participating as a student and the standards governing it. This means that you are accountable for the honesty and the quality of the work that you submit.

The rights of **intellectual property** must be respected by properly acknowledging the original author's ownership of any words, phrases and ideas that are used in academic writing.

## PLAGIARISM

**Plagiarism** in writing is the incorrect use of source material. Whether it is intentional or not, failing to give credit for words, ideas or concepts that you get from any source, including your own previously submitted work, is plagiarism.

**Avoiding plagiarism** requires learning two skills:

- using source material correctly and
- referencing that material.

**Any information** that you take from another source **must** be properly referenced, whether it is from a book, a journal, a movie, a friend, or from class notes or lectures.

Writing a paper is not only a matter of gathering and presenting information, it is an exercise in **comprehension** and **critical analysis**.

**Sanctions** for committing plagiarism include a failing grade for the work concerned or in the class concerned; a loss of credits for the year or an additional requirement of 3 to 30 credits; suspension or expulsion from your faculty; or revocation of your degree.

As a student, it is your responsibility to know and understand the University's policies on academic fraud. The rules apply whether the offence is intentional or not.



***“I didn't know” will not be accepted as an excuse.***

### PLAGIARISM COMES IN MANY FORMS:

- Using an author's words or ideas without proper reference
- Failing to put quotation marks around words taken from a source
- Doing work for someone else, or having someone do it for you
- Unauthorized collaboration
- Falsifying or inventing information or data
- “Cutting and pasting” from the Internet

### THERE ARE MANY ADVANTAGES TO LEARNING HOW TO AVOID PLAGIARISM:

- Acquiring the ability to construct a paper and integrate sources properly
- Developing critical thinking skills
- Taking ownership of your own ideas by making a clear distinction between others' ideas and your own analysis
- Creating a good impression of yourself as a writer
- Preventing unintentional academic fraud

## THE CORRECT USES OF SOURCE MATERIAL

There are three different methods of using source material:

### 1. Quoting

- The purpose of quoting is to support your own argument.
- Take the exact words of an author and place them between quotation marks.
- Quoting is different from paraphrasing or summarizing because it uses only the words of the original author.

#### Important:

- Be accurate in transcribing the original; there is no reason for mistakes appearing in quotes.
- Use quotes sparingly.

### 2. Summarizing

- The purpose is simply to give a brief account of what an author says, without going into the specific details or examples.
- Condense the meaning of a larger text into a more concise format, using your own words.
- When summarizing, follow the same order of ideas as the original.

#### Important:

- Remain true to the original author's intent.
- Use only what is most important or relevant from the text.
- Put any of the author's key terms in “quotation marks” or *italics* to show that they are not your own.

### 3. Paraphrasing

- The purpose is to reword what an author says in order to support your own argument.
- Condense material into a concise format, using your own words.
- Use your own style without changing the meaning of the original text.

#### Important:

- Be selective. Use only what you need for your own purposes.
- Put any of the author's key terms in “quotation marks” or *italics* to show that they are not your own.

## REFERENCING SOURCE MATERIAL

Always introduce the material with a **leading phrase** (e.g. In a recent article, Smith says...) and provide the reference information **in the text** and in the **Bibliography, Works Cited** or **References** list.

The style of presentation of the reference information often varies by faculty, program and professor. Ask your professor which style you should be using,

then consult the Academic Writing Help Centre's documents on referencing (APA, MLA and CM style) or their resources on other referencing styles.

**N.B. All images, statistics, charts and tables, including their format, cannot be used without proper reference. The same is frequently true for software and specific computer codes.**



## SOURCES THAT DO NOT HAVE TO BE REFERENCED

**Your own ideas** do not have to be referenced. Anything that you conclude from your research or that you think up on your own counts as your own idea.

The exception to this is work that you have previously submitted. This must be referenced like any other source.

If your idea is similar to another author's, make it clear in your writing that you thought of this idea on your own, but you later discovered it in another source (e.g. Similar conclusions are found in...).

**Common knowledge** does not have to be referenced. If the information meets the following criteria, it can usually be considered common knowledge:

- It appears in **several sources** without reference.
- It is **not controversial**. This means that the information is generally considered as **fact**.
- It takes up only a **minor part** of your paper. If it is part of your thesis or main arguments, or it is the basis of your research, it must be referenced.

If you have any doubts as to whether the information constitutes common knowledge, cite the source or consult your professor.

## COLLABORATIVE WORK

There are two types of collaborative work, and each has its own difficulties regarding plagiarism.

1) **Authorized Group Work:** in which the professor assigns more than one person to complete a project as a team. Each member of the team is equally accountable for the final product. If one of your partners commits plagiarism, you are responsible and you may be sanctioned equally.

2) **Unauthorized Group Work:** in which students work together on a project without the permission of the professor. Sharing data and copying another's work, even a small section, are considered plagiarism. Each student involved may be sanctioned.

## IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

As your level of study increases, the importance of being responsible for your work and the information you use in it, including the sources of that information, also increases. This issue becomes especially crucial in two situations:

1) **Having your thesis edited** can lead to complications. There is a fine line between what is

acceptable and what is not. Ask your professor or supervisor what level of editing is allowed.

2) **Working collaboratively with a professor** has its own unique challenges. An agreement should be reached before the work begins about who will take the credit for the work accomplished. Your ideas are entitled to the same protection as any other author's.

For more information on plagiarism, referencing and academic writing:

**The Academic Writing Help Centre**  
110 University St., 562-5601  
[www.sass.uOttawa.ca/en/awhc/](http://www.sass.uOttawa.ca/en/awhc/)  
[cartu@uOttawa.ca](mailto:cartu@uOttawa.ca)

*For information concerning sanctions and penalties for plagiarism, contact your faculty.*

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