

Expel Plagiarism before it gets you Expelled

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Abstract

This paper reminds the scholars who are serious about their education, to stay away from plagiarism and also how to avoid accidental plagiarism in their academic works. The motivating factors of plagiarism are briefly explained. Different types of plagiarism are detailed out. Various measures such as citation, three step process, digital check are suggested to avoid both intentional and accidental plagiarism.

Key Words *Online sources, Templates, Intentional plagiarism, Exemplar, Citation.*

INTRODUCTION

The disruptive influence of the internet is un-doubtably being felt more so than ever before in academic institutions such as schools, colleges and universities. The internet can serve as a disruptive influence in this field because it has made it much easier for modern students to cheat and deceive their academic tutors by passing off other author's work as their own. For example, in the context of essay or report writing, a student can copy and paste large sections of content from online sources. This occurs very regularly primarily because it is both quick and easy for students to do. In the modern world where the work/life balance of students is becoming ever more restricted, the speed with which they can plagiarize with online content is a key motivating factor behind them doing it. Equally, students have a much higher awareness of the importance of attaining the best grades possible in their academic studies because the degree market is becoming more saturated than ever before. Therefore students often feel pressured into plagiarizing to ensure that they attain higher grades than their counterparts and thus increase the attractiveness of their candidacy to future employers.

There is also now a rapidly growing and developing issue of students purchasing exemplar answers over the internet and submitting it as their own work. In the context of plagiarism, it is not in itself an act of plagiarism for a student to source an exemplar answer on which to base their work. It becomes plagiarism however when the student submits the entirety of the exemplar answer without writing their own essay or report based on the structure of the template. In effect, the concept is much the same as handing in essays and reports that have been completed by a member of a student's peer group rather than by the student herself/himself. In recommendation, the student should consider the following steps in relation to 'best use' of template answers:

1. In all cases, visit the source texts which the exemplar author has used to gain a fuller understanding of the theories and principles discussed.
2. Always avoid direct use of content; it is an exemplar not a submission copy.
3. Consider noting down significant arguments forwarded by the exemplar author and search for them elsewhere in the field. This will enable you as a student to gain authors perspectives and use it as a baseline to formulate your own, unique critical argument.
4. Use it only sparingly, you should view it only as a starting point in the process of formulating your own answer after all this is what your academic tutor is interested in.
5. Never submit it in its entirety believing that because you have paid for it, that it is now your work. This is absolutely not the case as it has been written by another author. The ideas and arguments contained within it are not representative of your work but that of another individual.
6. In the event that the essay becomes too difficult to interpret or rework, take a note of the chapter headings and search for these in the available literature. This will serve as effective baselines for you in trying to develop your own critical argument regarding the subject matter.

The above set of sequential steps will hugely assist you as a student in better understanding how to optimize the knowledge gain potential inherent in essays and assignments purchased over the internet. They must never, in any case, be submitted under the impression that they are indicative of your own words, ideas and critical judgments regarding the topic which you have based your essay and/or academic report on.

How to Avoid Plagiarism

If you are a student at a university, then it is imperative that you avoid plagiarism in your work; otherwise, you may face sanctions that could see you fail your assignment, be suspended from your academic institution, or even be expelled. There are some very clear rules to follow in order to ensure that you don't plagiarize the work of other people, but there are also some more nuanced elements that must be understood. For example, one must certainly not copy any text, word for word, without citing it, that is include quotation marks and provide a source for the work. This is a very easy thing to understand and something that most students grasp and comprehend. However, there are some more ambiguous aspects of plagiarism that can equally get you into trouble, such as offering information that is not common knowledge and not providing a citation. This is less clear, as one person might think that certain information is common knowledge, and another might not. Therefore, if in doubt, then it is probably better to provide a source. Thus, it might not be necessary to include a source to refer to the First World War of 1914-1918, as this is a really well known historical event. Nevertheless, it might be wise to include a source if referring to the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, which arguably served as the catalyst for this global war, as this is perhaps less well known. As such, it is important to develop an understanding of what is acceptable and what is unacceptable in academic writing, and in order to do this, reading academic papers and journal articles can be of help.

Being Aware of and Identifying Different Types of Plagiarism

It is probably useful to make a list of all kinds of plagiarism so that you can be aware of each of these types when writing your work, and so these include:

- **Copying text word-for-word without including quotation marks or a source**
 - **Paraphrasing somebody else's work without including a source**
 - **Paying somebody to create a piece of work for you on a given subject**
 - **Using words or ideas from a previous essay that you have written yourself**
 - **Using work or ideas from another student's essay**
- **Using sections from different sources and stitching them all together, and presenting them as an original work without reference to these sources**
- **Using 'find and replace' functions in software such as Microsoft Word, to alter a few words from a text that you have copied word-for-word**
- **Using an incorrect source or fabricating one that doesn't exist to add credibility to an idea**
 - **Using a reference but not properly representing the ideas of the original work**
- **Using a very specific structure for a piece of writing that has been used by another author, and just slightly amending the content**
 - **Using a thesaurus to rewrite a passage, but failing to offer a source for the work**
 - **Using another student's essay without their consent, and passing it off as your own work**
 - **Submitting similar or identical work in different courses, modules, or assignments**

As you can see, this is quite an extensive list, and involves much more than simply copying content word-for-word without offering a source. This can therefore be both intentional and unintentional, or it can be done willingly or accidentally. Nevertheless, regardless of this, any work identified as being a work of plagiarism will be punished according to the regulations laid out by the university or educational institution. Therefore, it is important to make a note of these different kinds of plagiarism, and to ensure that you do not break any rules in respect of this. However, beyond this, there are also various things that you can do to avoid plagiarism, or at least to provide some insurance against it, and this is something that shall now be looked at in a little more detail.

Things You Can Do To Avoid Plagiarism

So what can you do to ensure that plagiarism is not present in your work? Well, this should be a three-step process, which includes diligence: (1) before writing your work, (2) during writing your work, and (3) after your work has been written. What this means is that in the first stage, when doing your research and taking notes, you must ensure that any notes are accompanied with the correct references, and that such notes provide an accurate representation of the author's ideas if you intend to use this in your work. Thus, it might be very easy to look back on your notes and convince yourself that these were your ideas if there are no sources accompanying them, and especially if you take a lot of notes, like many students do. However, if you do take a lot of notes, and you are not especially well organized, then this can prove to be quite dangerous, as you might inadvertently create a piece of work that is riddled with plagiarism. So, you need to be diligent in this research stage, and make sure that your note taking is done carefully and with the correct references accompanying it. Obviously, when you begin actually writing your work, you also need to ensure that your work is correctly cited and referenced, and that all of the ideas that are not referenced are your own. Finally, when you have completed your work, or at

least a draft of it, you must carefully check through the piece, and make sure that no citations or references have been left out by accident. Moreover, if you do feel that you have missed something, then you must go back and try to locate the source of the words or idea, or to cut it out if you cannot find it (as this can sometimes be difficult). Thus, by the time you print your work ready for submission (or finalize it if it is a digital submission), you must be confident that everything in your work has been correctly cited and referenced, using the referencing style that has been requested in your assignment specifications. Furthermore, if you are not sure about anything, then you must refer back to your course handbook, to read the particular rules and regulations of your specific university or educational institution.

In addition, as an added layer of insurance against plagiarism in your work, before submitting your piece, you might also use some dedicated plagiarism software, such as Viper, which allows you to digitally check the content of your work against all online content, or anything stored within the software databases. By doing this, you can generate a report that shows you the percentage and type of plagiarism present in your work, and if such percentages are too high, then you could address these concerns before handing in your piece. While this is only a safeguard against digital content, it does provide an added layer of security before submitting your work – and provides a systematic effort towards ensuring that you have not inadvertently plagiarized the work of any other authors. There are a number of services that offer plagiarism detection for a price, with Viper being just one of these services. However, with a little investment, one can largely mitigate any chance of being punished for plagiarism later, and such an investment could save a lot of time and stress in the long run. While you may be able to do a basic check of sections of content by using search engines such as Google or Yahoo, this kind of check does not have the same sophistication as dedicated plagiarism platforms do, which provide a range of features. For example, for just £3 per 5,000 words, Viper not only checks content against over ten billion sources – which includes e-books, PDFs, academic papers, and online journal across the World Wide Web – but it also does this very quickly, and matches direct content and provides a plagiarism score and offers a detailed report. This then, provides excellent value and at an affordable price. In the twenty-first century, if someone is serious about their education, then it makes sense to make such small investments to guard against plagiarism, and especially since a university education has become so expensive these days. For example, if you are already spending £15,000-£50,000 on your university education, then it makes sense to take some insurance out against this investment, by spending just a few pounds per assignment, to make sure that you will not get in trouble for plagiarism, and risk losing your place at your educational institution, along with the money that you have put into your education heretofore. Really, this should be a no-brainer, but many students still do not use plagiarism detection software or online platforms like Viper, and this means that accidental instances of plagiarism do still occur. Ultimately, universities are now using such plagiarism detection platforms themselves, and so it makes sense to find out what they will before you hand in your assignment – as you do not want any nasty surprises after it is too late. So it is advised that thorough checks of any work be made prior to submission, and plagiarism detection platforms can be a great tool in your arsenal for carrying out such checks. Therefore, such an option is very much advised.

Conclusion

Writing a subjective paper requires students to pull something out of themselves, to search through their own ideas on a subject. Plagiarisms do not exist where the originality and genuineness are respected and rewarded, not in documents but in performance. Avoiding plagiarism entails self respect as an academician and scholar who pursue truth genuinely. From the self respect comes the respect for other. The genuine scholars not only respect and value not only the knowledge, but the process and the pain taken by the author of the knowledge. Being genuine is basic to academic research.

Références

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