Best Practices for Avoiding Plagiarism

The entire section below came from a research guide from Iowa State University. To avoid plagiarism, one must provide a reference to that source to indicate where the original information came from (see the "Source:" section below).

"There are many ways to avoid plagiarism, including developing good research habits, good time management, and taking responsibility for your own learning. Here are some specific tips:

- **Don't procrastinate with your research and assignments.**
  Good research takes time. Procrastinating makes it likely you'll run out of time or be unduly pressured to finish. This sort of pressure can often lead to sloppy research habits and bad decisions. Plan your research well in advance, and seek help when needed from your professor, from librarians and other campus support staff.
- **Commit to doing your own work.**
  If you don't understand an assignment, talk with your professor. Don't take the "easy way" out by asking your roommate or friends for copies of old assignments. A different aspect of this is group work. Group projects are very popular in some classes on campus, but not all. Make sure you clearly understand when your professor says it's okay to work with others on assignments and submit group work on assignments, versus when assignments and papers need to represent your *own* work.
- **Be 100% scrupulous in your note taking.**
  As you prepare your paper or research, and as you begin drafting your paper. One good practice is to clearly label in your notes your own ideas (write "ME" in parentheses) and ideas and words from others (write "SMITH, 2005" or something to indicate author, source, source date). Keep good records of the sources you consult, and the ideas you take from them. If you're writing a paper, you'll need this information for your bibliographies or references cited list anyway, so you'll benefit from good organization from the beginning.
- **Cite your sources scrupulously.**
  Always cite other people's work, words, ideas and phrases that you use directly or indirectly in your paper. Regardless of whether you found the information in a book, article, or website, and whether it's text, a graphic, an illustration, chart or table, you need to cite it. When you use words or phrases from other sources, these need to be in quotes. Current style manuals are available at most reference desks and online. They may also give further advice on avoiding plagiarism.
- **Understand good paraphrasing.**
  Simply using synonyms or scrambling an author's words and phrases and then using these "rewrites" uncredited in your work is plagiarism, plain and simple. Good paraphrasing requires that you genuinely understand the original source, that you are genuinely using your own words to summarize a point or concept, and that you insert in quotes any unique words or phrases you use from the original source. **Good paraphrasing also requires that you cite the original source.** Anything less and you veer into the dangerous territory of plagiarism."

Source: Vega García, S.A. (2012). Understanding plagiarism: Information literacy guide. Iowa State University. Retrieved from **http://instr.iastate.libguides.com/content.php?pid=10314**. [Accessed January 3, 2017]