

Week 1: Introduction to Academic Writing

Lesson 3: Originality, Integrity, and Plagiarism in Academic Writing

Course Video 2: Plagiarism in Academic Writing

Transcript

Hello everyone. Welcome to this video. In this video, we'll talk about plagiarism in academic writing. It's a major issue for almost all academicians across the world. This is something of importance to you, me, and people around here. So let's talk about what constitutes plagiarism? What is plagiarism? So the first thing that comes to my mind is simple definition is if you copy somebody's work without giving him or her credit, that's plagiarism. You are right. That's the definition. That's the simplest possible definition of plagiarism. You take something from some source or copying somebody's work and claiming it as your own. That means you're not giving credit to the person who created the content. That's plagiarism. There are other factors or other aspects of plagiarism which includes, for example, if you have published, it could be published work, it could be unpublished work, it could be in electronic form, in printed form. So it could include a wide range of materials and things like images, graphs, charts, write-ups, movie clips, audio video clips, so many things. So if you use them and do not give them, give credit to the person who created those things, you are plagiarizing. And that's not a nice thing to do. In academic writing, it becomes a serious problem and the consequences are unthinkable. You will lose your job, life, almost everything in life if you are plagiarizing, if you're caught plagiarizing rather. And because plagiarism is something that has one kind of meaning in our context, may have another meaning in another context. So something that you think that is there in India, that is considered to be plagiarism in India, may not be plagiarism in another place or something that is considered to be plagiarism in the US may not be plagiarism in India. The consequences may vary, but plagiarism remains plagiarism. If you say that I have no knowledge of laws related to plagiarism, that's why I plagiarize, maybe that will be considered to be unintentional plagiarism. But when you know the laws and you are plagiarizing, that will be intentional. So when you go to the US and download movies, like people do in different parts of, in the third world countries, that will be considered unintentional because they are not aware of copyrights. So plagiarism can be intentional, can be unintentional. And they may include, like I told you, ideas, words, information, images, audio, video, clips, poems, tables, figures, lyrics, all those things put together. Now let us think about what are the forms of plagiarism that we have to deal with. When you are paraphrasing, which is very common in academic writing and you are aware of it, and that most researchers, they generally paraphrase content and mention in their writing. So if you do not know how to paraphrase well, you may end up using words from the original source and not follow, sometimes you may not follow citation norms, you will be considered plagiarizing. So if you want to avoid plagiarism, one way is to learn paraphrasing really well, master paraphrasing and learn the laws of citation, the norms of citation. If you know that, then you are safe. And sometimes people use partially some words they take from the original source and partially they paraphrase, that is also plagiarism. So plagiarism is not yes or no, it is more of a continue, how much plagiarism is there. So you can say that it can vary from 0 to 100 percent. Then using materials from internet without

giving credits, you think that it is available on internet, it is for free, I can use, I do not have to give anybody credit and that is not true, you have to give credit even if the material is available on internet for free. Then verbatim and long quotation, verbatim means you are taking as it is, whatever they have written from a source and using it in your own writing. Or you are using longish quotations, very long ones and giving credit to the author, even that can be considered plagiarism. If you take two pages from a book and mention one place, you say that I have cited the author, I do not think that is acceptable, it is not acceptable, it is plagiarism, think about these things. And then next one is self-plagiarism. Let us say you are a wonderful writer, you wrote something of very high importance and later you come back and check, I have written this beautiful piece, I will take a piece of it and use it in my next paper again, that is self-plagiarism. You are using your own work, but you are also repeating what you have already mentioned, that is self-plagiarism or it is called auto-plagiarism, which is a problematic thing and even some high profile researchers have found to be practicing self-plagiarism, quite problematic. The next one is use of materials written by professional agencies. They are available online, they are available for free and you take them from blogs or other sites without citing them properly, without getting permission from them and all that, that can also lead to problematic situations. So, do not use materials used by professional agencies unless you have permission and you are following the norms. Then collusion, which is kind of a criminal activity because people come together and they make a plan, hatch out a plan to cheat someone, maybe in this case a teacher probably, if you are submitting an assignment, you come together, how we can plagiarize and not get caught. If you do that, that is collusion, that is a serious crime. Let us think about how we can avoid plagiarism in academic writing. So, first thing that you need to know is to know about the law related to intellectual property rights, intellectual property rights, we will talk about more in detail later. Intellectual property right has to do with something that you create using your mind, something of intellectual nature, something not physical but intellectual. For example, if you write a poem or come up with an idea and talk about it. So, if you know intellectual property laws, what you can do, what you cannot cite, what you can cite, how much of it you can cite, if you know the laws well, then you can avoid plagiarism. Then you learn how to paraphrase and summarize well. Sometimes you learn paraphrasing but you don't master it. But if you master it, you are safe. If you master summarizing, you are safe. So, try to learn and master paraphrasing and summarizing. Learn to read and understand a piece of text, then learn to paraphrase and summarize text. Then familiarizing yourself with referencing styles, because there are several style sheets which are available to you like APA, MLA, Chicago manual style, several style sheets. So, you need to familiarize yourself with the kind of style sheet that is required in the discipline from which you belong. Think about those. Then citing sources accurately. Let us say if somebody has created some materials in 2020, you mentioned 2020, page number properly and according to the style sheet. If you cite properly, cite sources accurately, you are safe. Otherwise, there is problem. Then think about keeping track of sources used in the work. I told you earlier that you need to keep track of anything that you are citing, keep a track of those. If you do that, you are safe because you will be able to cite them. Then knowing the quotation norms, the length of quotations, that is also very important for you. Lastly, think about learning to create academic texts independently. That's the best way to avoid plagiarism. In this video, we talked about what

plagiarism is, how plagiarism can be avoided, what are the things you can do to completely stay safe and right with integrity and honesty. Thank you.