Plagiarism is the representation of another author's language, thoughts, ideas, or expressions as one's own original work.[1][2] In educational contexts, there are differing definitions of plagiarism depending on the institution.[3] Plagiarism is considered a violation of academic integrity and a breach of journalistic ethics. It is subject to sanctions such as penalties, suspension, expulsion from school[4] or work,[5] substantial fines[6][7] and even imprisonment.[8][9]

Generally, plagiarism is not in itself a crime, but like counterfeiting fraud can be punished in a court[10][11] for prejudices caused by copyright infringement,[12][13] violation of moral rights,[14] or torts. In academia and industry, it is a serious ethical offense.[15][16] Plagiarism and copyright infringement overlap to a considerable extent, but they are not equivalent concepts,[17] and many types of plagiarism do not constitute copyright infringement, which is defined by copyright law and may be adjudicated by courts.

Plagiarism might not be the same in all countries. Some countries, such as India and Poland, consider plagiarism to be a crime, and there have been cases of people being imprisoned for plagiarizing.[18] In other instances, plagiarism might be the complete opposite of "academic dishonesty"; in fact, in some countries the act of plagiarizing a professional's work is seen as flattering.[19] Students who move to the United States and other Western countries from countries where plagiarism is not frowned upon often find the transition difficult.[20]

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