

# Plagiarism in Academia

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<https://www.plagiarism.org/article/what-is-plagiarism>

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In other words, plagiarism is an act of fraud. It involves both stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterward.

# Understanding Plagiarism: Legal Perspective

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## 1 Can words and ideas be stolen?

According to [universal] law[s], the answer is yes. [...] [T]he expression of original ideas is considered intellectual property and is protected by copyright laws, just like original inventions. Almost all forms of expression fall under copyright protection as long as they are recorded in some media (such as a book or a computer file).

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## Attention!

Changing the words of an original source is not sufficient to prevent plagiarism. Retaining the essential idea without citation constitutes plagiarism, regardless of alterations to context or presentation.

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- Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided, however, by citing sources.
- **Simply acknowledging that certain material has been borrowed, and providing your audience with the information necessary to find that source, is usually enough to prevent plagiarism.**
- Anyone who has written or graded a paper knows that plagiarism is not always a black-and-white issue. The boundary between plagiarism and research is often unclear. Learning to recognize the various forms of plagiarism, especially the more ambiguous ones, is an important step in the fight to prevent it.



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- ② “The Photocopy”: The writer copies significant portions of text straight from a single source, without alteration.
- ③ “The Potluck Paper”: The writer tries to disguise plagiarism by copying from several different sources, tweaking the sentences to make them fit together while retaining most of the original phrasing.

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- ⑥ “The Self-Stealer”: The writer “borrows” generously from his or her previous work, violating policies concerning the expectation of originality adopted by most academic institutions.

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- ❷ “The Misinformer” The writer provides inaccurate information regarding the sources, making it impossible to find them.
- ❸ “The Too-Perfect Paraphrase” The writer properly cites a source, but neglects to put in quotation marks text that has been copied word-for-word, or close to it. Although attributing the basic ideas to the source, the writer is falsely claiming original presentation and interpretation of the information.

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- ④ “The Perfect Crime” Well, we all know it doesn’t exist. In this case, the writer properly quotes and cites sources in some places, but goes on to paraphrase other arguments from those sources without citation. This way, the writer tries to pass off the paraphrased material as his or her own analysis of the cited material.