

Academic Integrity, Plagiarism and Predatory Publishing

Yesoda Bhargava

Academic Practice

- Good academic practice takes time and effort to get right.
- It's worth remembering, you are part of the academic community, not working in isolation.



- **HONESTY:** acknowledging what is your own work and what ideas you have sourced from others, as well as what is your independent work and what is the product of legitimate collaboration.
- **TRUST:** ensuring that others can trust that the work you produce is your own, and that the data and findings you produce are the product of well-conducted research.
- **FAIRNESS:** knowing that the grades and award you achieve will be the product of hard work within the rules of the University and that you have not employed unfair means to gain an advantage.
- **RESPECT:** you respect the hard work and contribution of your fellow students and members of the wider academic community by acknowledging their research and ideas in your work.
- **RESPONSIBILITY:** you take responsibility for ensuring you understand the academic conventions you need to follow in order to demonstrate the authenticity of your work, for example by managing your research and accurately using a referencing system.

If you do not uphold the best practice values of academic integrity, you may be accused of academic misconduct.

[Source](#)

Plagiarism

- **Time management:** Students sometimes plagiarise when they feel under pressure. Planning out all your work several weeks in advance and working steadily, rather than putting it off as long as possible and then rushing, will help avoid stress and its potential pitfalls.
- **Note taking:** is important part of planning and thinking. Students often go wrong with plagiarism because they copy something directly from a book into their notes and then forget that it is not in their own words. Copying out text word-for-word won't help you gain anything from your reading. Your lecturers want to know that you can understand what you have read so you need to ensure that you put things in your own words. Doing this at the note-taking stage will ensure that you don't accidentally plagiarise while writing your essay.

[Source](#)

Tips for good note taking

- Use key words, phrases and abbreviations.
- Don't simply write summaries of each source - **look for relevant points**.
- **Try to take critical notes, in your own words.**
- Question what you read: **is this a reliable source?**
- Carefully document where information is from and writing down full citation details: author(s), title, date of publication, place and name of publisher, page number(s). This will save time later on when you are writing your essay and need these details for in-text and bibliography references.
- If writing out a quotation you'll use later, try using a different colour pen. Or if using electronic devices, put quotation marks around the quote to avoid later confusion.

[Source](#)

Paraphrasing, summarising and synthesis

- Use your own words to express your argument, even if the idea has come from a book or journal.
- Remember, referencing the source of the information in a footnote or in-text citation is not enough on its own to indicate that you are using someone else's words.
- Either quote directly (using quotation marks) or better yet, paraphrase or summarise the individual source, or synthesise the information from several complementary sources together.
 - Eg: A recent poll suggests that EU membership “would be backed by 55 percent of Danish voters” in a referendum (Levring, 2018, p. 3).
 - As Darwin (1859) puts it, “natural selection acts solely by accumulating slight, successive, favourable variations . . . it can act only by very short and slow steps” (p. 510).
- In academic papers and essays, you should avoid relying too heavily on quotes. When you want to refer to information or ideas from a source, it’s often best to paraphrase. This shows that you have fully understood the text and ensures your own voice is dominant.

[Source](#)

Referencing

- When you write your essays, you are taking part in an academic debate about your subject. As part of this, you will use and build upon the ideas of other people, evaluating and critiquing them. It is important that you acknowledge other people's work by referencing them appropriately.
- This shows respect to other scholars in your field and it also provides evidence to back up the arguments that you are making in your own work.
- However, you do not need to reference common knowledge: commonly known facts, available from multiple sources (e.g. encyclopaedias and textbooks) and which are not in dispute, constitute common knowledge and do not need a citation. For example:
 - The name of the UK Prime Minister
 - The date of birth of Darwin
 - The structure of the parliamentary system

[Source](#)

Predatory Publishing

- A predatory publisher is an opportunistic publishing venue that exploits the academic need to publish but offers little reward for those using their services. <[Source](#)>
- Predatory Journals take advantage of authors by asking them to publish for a fee without providing peer-review or editing services. Because predatory publishers do not follow the proper academic standards for publishing, they usually offer a quick turnaround on publishing a manuscript. <[Source](#)>

How common are predatory journals?

- As of 2015, there were an estimated 996 predatory publishers (including 447 publishers of standalone journals) that published over 11,800 journals. Of those, roughly 8,000 journal titles were active and published a total of approximately 420,000 articles. For comparison, this is roughly the same size, in both journal titles and articles published, as the legitimate open-access publishing industry. Not all of these predatory journals are in biomedicine fields, but biomedicine is a major area for predatory publishers, and the prevalence of predatory journals varies between specific fields. (Shen and Bjork)

Common characteristics of predatory publishers

- Their primary goal is to make money (i.e. there will be fees).
- They do not care about the quality of the work published (i.e. no or little editing or peer-review).
- They make false claims or promises (i.e. claims of impact factors and indexing).
- They engage in unethical business practices (i.e. not as advertised).
- They fail to follow accepted standards or best practices of scholarly publishing (various).

Model of predatory publishing

- Predatory publisher exploit a new publishing model by claiming to be legitimate open-access operation. Online predatory publishers take advantage of the **Gold Open Access** model. Under this model publication charges provide publishers with income instead of subscriptions.
- Predatory publishers make false claims (such as quick peer-review) to lure unwary authors into submitting papers. While sending a predatory publisher a manuscript may see it "published" there is no guarantee that it underwent peer review, is included in indexes like Web of Science and Scopus, or that it will be available in a month much less in five years.

What's the harm?

- Predatory publishers do authors a disservice by claiming to be a full-service publisher. Remember, as an author you are providing a valuable product and legitimate publishers provide valuable services to protect your work.
- **Your work may be subject to sub-par peer-review**
- **Your work could disappear**
- **Your work will be hard to find**
- **Embarrassment**

[Source](#)

Evaluating Open Access Journal Publishers

- Many junk open access journals send invitations to publish in future issues or serve on editorial boards. Before submitting an article or agreeing to a seat on an editorial board, investigate the reputation and legitimacy of the journal.

[Source](#)

Assess whether a journal or publisher is predatory

- Visit the journal's website. Some publishers' sites appear professionally created and managed, however closer inspection may reveal poor design, or typographical or grammatical errors that would not appear on a reputable publisher's site.
- While you are at the journal's website, review the journal's scope. Most questionable journals have scopes so broad that they will publish articles on nearly any topic.
- Check the names and credentials of members of the journal's editorial board, and verify that they are experts in the field the journal covers. If you have any questions about the journal, contact members of the editorial board for more information.
- Examine articles that appear in the journal and judge their caliber. Predatory publishers are not interested in producing journal articles that demonstrate excellent research or that offer compelling arguments, and rarely engage in screening or quality control.
- Check the peer-review policy. Unscrupulous publishers promise a quick peer-review turnaround. Considering the peer-review process used by reputable journals can take months, a publisher that states their peer-review system takes as little as 5 days is either rushing the process or not doing any peer-review at all.
- Check for the author's publication fee schedule. Legitimate journal publishers make this information easy to find on their website.

Contd..

- Sometimes, what appears to be an indicator of journal quality is actually meaningless. Consider the following:
- The journal is indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, or other literature indexes/databases. Some questionable journals are indexed in these products even though the vendors responsible for their content claim they screen to exclude these publications.
- The journal lists its impact factor. The impact factor provided by the journal may not be the impact factor as reported by Thomson Reuter's trusted *Journal Citation Reports (JCR)*. Companies will provide bogus journal rankings and impact factors such as the "UIF (Universal Impact Factor)," "JIF (Journal Impact Factory)," and "GIF (Global Impact Factor)" if a journal is low quality and cannot get ranked by *JCR*.
- The journal appears in *Ulrich's Periodical Directory* or other serials directories, has an ISSN number, or assigns DOIs to articles. None of these journal indicators deals with quality, and many disreputable journals are listed in serials directories and have ISSNs.

Checking reputation of a journal

- Is the journal open access? If so, it is listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals? [Search the Directory of Open Access Journals](#). Be sure to limit your search to Journals only. The DOAJ carefully vets open access journals for inclusion so if the journal is not listed in DOAJ, it means it may be questionable.
- Has the journal been identified by others as predatory? Is it listed on the [Cabell's Predatory Reports](#)? Google your journal title with the word predatory. You may be able to easily find news stories about the journal and its predatory practices. You can also check [Cabell's Predatory Reports](#) to see if the journal is listed.
- [Finally, ask a librarian!](#)

Newspaper articles worth reading

- Why India is striking back against predatory journals
- The Negative Side of Medical Journals
- What Can We Do About Junk Science?
- Predatory journals: no definition, no defence
- Predatory Journals: The Need for Academic Honesty in Public Conversations



Ultimately, junk science can be dispelled only if individuals think like scientists:
Evaluate all the evidence and try to disprove your own preconceptions.