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**How to avoid plagiarism: five top tips.**

**Introduction**

Understanding plagiarism is key to being a successful student. No student wants to be accused of plagiarism as the consequences can be serious and far reaching. The majority of us never intend to plagiarise but can end up doing so without realising, however, ignorance is no excuse. This video will bring you five tips to help you avoid plagiarising.

**So what is plagiarism?**

Well, according to Cardiff University, plagiarism occurs when work which is submitted for assessment contains the words or ideas of others without the original source being properly attributed or acknowledged. This includes passing off work that is being produced by fellow students as your own or words or ideas that are found in textbooks, in articles, on the web or in any other format.

The one problem here is that this information is plagiarised.

To make this legitimate we would need to add this acknowledgement [*see slide*].

You may be asking why plagiarism is such an important issue, well here’s Dr. Nathan Roberts to explain:

[*Quote from Dr Nathan Roberts*]

All academic disciplines at Cardiff University will have very strong expectations about how students use and draw on the work of others in their field so it’s incredibly important to all of us that students get the opportunity to learn about how to reference properly and how to avoid plagiarism.

We know that plagiarism is granted a lot of seriousness among students as well because they tell us all the time that they feel it's incredibly unfair if

another student takes a shortcut and doesn't use the proper tools of the trade... they should do! It’s for that reason as well that the University has something called the unfair practice procedure which students can fall foul of if they do inappropriately draw on the work of others in their assessed work and the consequences of that can be quite serious - they can be awarded a mark of zero for their assessment, their module or even for the entire year so that's a real sign, I think, of how serious the University takes the issue.

[*Dr Nathan Roberts finishes*]

So what measures can you take to avoid plagiarism? Here are our top five tips:

**Tip one: Perfect your paraphrasing**

Paraphrasing is when you put the ideas of another author into your own words.

This is a core academic writing skill which we all need to acquire. Good paraphrasing from a wide range of sources shows that you have understood and engaged with the academic discussion around your topic and enables you to build your own arguments on existing knowledge.

To avoid plagiarism when paraphrasing, it is essential that you do not include too many words from the original text. This [*see slide*] is an example of plagiarism because although the source has been correctly referenced, the student has borrowed the author’s words and tried to pass them off as their own.

The same principle applies when you are paraphrasing multiple sections from the same text. Take a look at this example from a website [*see slide*]. Here you can see that the original source has been completely re-written in the student’s own words yet the meaning remains intact.

To help you paraphrase appropriately when taking notes, always try to summarize the text in your own words rather than follow the original too closely. If you copy directly ensure you indicate this in your notes.

When you are discussing a source, ensure that your wording and sentence structure clearly distinguishes between when you are paraphrasing another source and when you are using your own words. If your paraphrasing spans more than one sentence indicate this by using another citation or wording such as “furthermore Martin suggested…” as in this example [*see slide*].

**Tip two: Follow quotation conventions**

There will be occasions when it's appropriate to quote directly from an original source rather than to paraphrase, perhaps the author is providing a personal view; you wish to comment upon or analyse a piece of text; the phrase is unusual and would have less impact if paraphrased; the quotes substantiates your argument; the quote is well-known or iconic.

In this case you would need to copy the original source word for word and then insert double quotation marks at the beginning and the end followed by the correct citation.

In the case of a longer quotation, indent the quote from the left hand side and provide a citation. This time there is no need to include double quotation marks.

Remember it is important to use quotes sparingly in your work to ensure that your own voice speaks through in the essay. Where possible paraphrase your original sources.

**Tip three: Don't rush your referencing**

When you’re hurrying to meet a deadline it's easy to make mistakes in your referencing by missing out important information. Before you hand it in, make sure you have provided an in-text citation for everything you have quoted and paraphrased then check that each citation has a full reference in your bibliography,

correctly written in the style required by your school.

These principles apply no matter which referencing style you are using.

**Tip four: Cite second-hand sources correctly**

Where possible you should aim to quote or paraphrase from the original source as this will be the most authentic version, however, sometimes you may need to cite an author whose work you have not personally read but whose work is summarized or quoted by the author of the publication you have consulted.

This is called secondary referencing and there's a way of handling this correctly.

In this example, [*see slide*] the Barnes source was unobtainable and so the student has referenced a later book by Gottfried which includes Barnes’ original quote. In the references list the student has correctly entered the full details of the Gottfried source as you would only reference resources which you have actually

consulted.

**Tip five: Be an individual.**

If you are required to submit an individual assignment such as an essay, you must ensure that it is your own work. Be careful about working too closely with others to research and write your assignment as collusion with others is a form of plagiarism. Work which is too similar to others on your course will be picked up by the academic marking of your work or the plagiarism detection software “Turnitin” which is used extensively across the university.

Also bear in mind that you can't submit content that you have already submitted in a previous assignment as this would constitute self-plagiarism.

So, following all these tips will help to ensure that you produce work which conforms to the university's academic integrity guidelines, is well structured and researched, includes arguments which are strongly supported by existing evidence, is written in a style which clearly allows your own voice to come through and most importantly does not commit plagiarism.

**Conclusion**

We hope you have found this short video useful. For more advice on avoiding plagiarism consult the following sources [*see slide*] or talk to your subject librarian.