Plagiarism

What is Plagiarism?

Merriam-Webster defines plagiarism as “the act of using another person’s words or ideas without giving credit to that person” (retrieved September 12, 2011 from: http://www.learnersdictionary.com/search/plagiarism).

It is a simple matter to avoid plagiarism. Anytime you use information that is not your own, you must provide the reader of your assignment with the source of your information. This includes telling the reader in the body of your assignment AND in the Works Cites page where your information came from.

    Tip 1: If you use information from websites you still need to cite where you got the information.

It is NOT plagiarism to cite information that is considered common knowledge, for example, Martin Luther King Jr.’s birth date, nursery rhymes, or urban legends.

Examples of Plagiarism

1: Outright copying of the original excerpt into your paper: Do not take all or part of a quotation without informing the reader of where you got the information. Do not take all or part of information on a website without informing the reader of where you got the information.

2: Substitution of words: Rearranging words, omitting words, or changing a word here and there is plagiarism if you do not inform the reader where you got the information.

3: Paraphrasing: Paraphrasing is plagiarism. Even when you paraphrase it is imperative that you give credit for the source of your information.

How to Avoid Plagiarism

Keep track of the sources you have consulted. Try highlighting information from an article in blue, while your own thoughts are not highlighted. This may remind you to make sure anything you use highlighted in blue is properly cited.

What is the best way to avoid plagiarism?

➤ Use your own words and ideas.
➤ Give credit for copied, edited/adapted, or paraphrased materials.
➤ Paraphrase but be careful not to simply rearrange or make slight wording changes.
➤ You should cite every piece of information including facts, figures, statistics, and/or multimedia materials.
➤ Enclose quotations with a quotation mark (depending upon length and citation format protocol) followed by a parenthetical reference.
➤ When using information from a web page, print it out. This will give you the URL and the date you printed it, making it easier to cite and find the page later if need be.

People come up with many excuses for not citing sources of information correctly:

➤ I read the article and then put it in my own words.
➤ I listed the book in my works cited page.
➤ If it is on the web anyone can use it.

➤ Plagiarism is Plagiarism whether it is accidental or not.