What is plagiarism and why should you avoid it?

Posted By Stella Kaye On January 30, 2014 @ 12:14 am In Educational Philosophy | [Comments Disabled](http://www.educationspace360.com/index.php/what-is-plagiarism-and-why-should-you-avoid-it-39239/print/#comments_controls)

The definition of plagiarism is to take the ideas or works of an individual and pass them off as one’s own. Here is a detailed look at plagiarism and its implications from an academic standpoint: [good practice regarding plagiarism.](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/goodpractice/about/)

You may feel that plagiarism is quite harmless because the producer of the work has already been paid, but this is distorted thinking.

Genuinely creative people will usually be appalled that anyone would wish to do this as they themselves only desire recognition for the things they have created.

Copying someone else’s ideas is thus not something they would ever contemplate. Plagiarism nowadays has more repercussions and far reaching consequences than ever before with the advent of the Internet. If you copy someone else’s writing and post it on the Internet as written by you, sooner or later you will be found out. It is a serious matter that most reputable writing sites will check as standard.

One may argue that there is nothing new under the sun and that everything is merely a rehashed, updated version of something that came before, but to copy someone else’s work is pure unadulterated plagiarism for which there is no excuse.

Plagiarism is more often than not associated with the written word. It is of course highly plausible that two authors may devise a similar plot to their novels at the same time, but to completely rip off the works of another author – however obscure or even dead – is a complete “no-no.” Incorporating the views and opinions of others into your own work is fine, and the use of citations and quotation marks is the normal way to do this, but deliberately making identical or paraphrased copies of the works of others is deplorable.

How can anyone call themselves creative if they can’t come up with something truly original to bestow on the world? Creating an original work is always time-consuming; whether you are a writer, painter, musician or artist, you will not only be devoting inordinate time and energy to your creative works, you will likely be putting your life and soul into such projects too. This is what true creativity is all about, so when someone comes along and copies your work and takes credit for it you will feel robbed – even raped – and quite rightly so.

Anyone considering plagiarism as a quick fix way to solve a problem, think again, because as well as stealing the work of another you are not doing yourself any favours either. You may have copied and pasted and dutifully fulfilled your assignment commitments, but you will not have learned anything from this pointless exercise. You will not have made any progress. Like someone who has copied the paper of another in an exam you will not have been true to yourself. Not only have you plagiarised the works of the rightful owner of the work, but you have in fact cheated yourself and hindered your own progress.

Release your own creativity that you are surely capable of if you believe enough in yourself. By all means, listen to great music, read great works of literature and go to the art gallery to view fine works of art, and then you will find that they may inspire you to great things by sowing the seeds of creativity in your own mind and providing you with the inspiration to create original works yourself. This way you will never consider plagiarism as an option ever again. If you research a subject thoroughly and can speak with confidence about it, there is no need to plagiarize. A keen thirst for knowledge will help you overcome any temptations to plagiarise the work of another.

Permission should always be requested from the rightful owner whenever their works are to be incorporated into works of your own, and it is prudent to make sure you are aware of all copyright laws before you do this.

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