

Plagiarism

Certain misconceptions about plagiarism are common. This explanation is intended to dispel such misunderstanding and to make clear what constitutes plagiarism under Mississippi State University regulations.

A person who uses as part of his or her own writing the words, ideas, arguments, or data of another person, group, or organization without acknowledging what he has borrowed is guilty of plagiarism:

1. Quoting material from a particular source without indicating the source and without citing the quoted material as a quotation constitutes plagiarism.
2. Using an essay or a portion of an essay written by another person constitutes plagiarism.
3. Summarizing or paraphrasing the ideas or arguments of another person without acknowledging the source constitutes plagiarism. It is a common misconception that the mere alteration of every third or fourth word or the alteration of the verb tense or the omission of occasional phrases of the original source frees the borrower from plagiarism; it does not.

Generally known facts (A day is 24 hours long; George Washington was the first president of the United States; Abraham Lincoln was assassinated) do not normally need acknowledgment because they are available in unvarying form from innumerable sources and have simply become common knowledge. A student who is in doubt as to whether information is common knowledge should consult his or her instructor.

The penalty for plagiarism includes failure of an assignment, failure of a course, or dismissal from Mississippi State University.

For a more detailed discussion of the subject, see "Plagiarism" in *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th edition. New York: MLA, 2009. 51-61.

I have read the statement entitled "Plagiarism," and I understand it.

Name (please print legibly)

Date

Signature

MSU Honor Code:

As a Mississippi State University student, I will conduct myself with honor and integrity at all times. I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I accept the actions of those who do.

Signature