

# HSC: All My Own Work

## Plagiarism

### Introduction

This module explains plagiarism and its implications for HSC students.

### Module Outline

Content

1. What is plagiarism?
2. What is the difference between intended and unintended plagiarism?
3. What strategies can be employed to avoid plagiarism?
4. How is plagiarism detected?
5. What are the implications for plagiarism of accessing information from the internet?

Summary

FAQs

Resources

Quiz

# Plagiarism - screen 1

## What is plagiarism?

'Plagiarism is when you pretend that you have written or created a piece of work that someone else originated. It is cheating, it is dishonest, and it could jeopardise your HSC exam results.'

(Board of Studies, HSC Assessments and Submitted Works, Advice to Students, 2006)

### Consider this situation

Your best friend rang you last night. She is really upset because she hasn't done her assessment task for PDHPE. She doesn't know what the question means. She can't do it in time. She asks you to email your finished assessment task.

If you give your friend your assessment task, she could be accused of plagiarism if she uses it. It's the night before it's due, chances are that she will.

The big issue is your academic honesty and her academic honesty.

You should tell her, 'Just do it.' Otherwise it is cheating and you are part of it.

## Why does plagiarism matter?

**Because it is cheating. It is unethical and dishonest.**

**Because you are not developing the skills and knowledge that are important for your learning development and life ahead.**

**Because authors own their own words and ideas.**

- Authors own their words and ideas. They are not yours to take.
- When you research the writings of others, you must acknowledge the fact that you have used them.
- If you do not acknowledge which authors' words and ideas you have used, then you are taking them as your own.

**Because there are penalties**

Plagiarism is a serious and punishable academic offence.

### Board of Studies' penalties

If you plagiarise in submitted works, you may receive zero marks for the task, and you may lose that course from your HSC award. (Board of Studies, HSC Assessments and Submitted Works, Advice to Students, 2006)

### School penalties

- If plagiarism is detected your school may refuse to certify your project as 'authentic work'.
- Your teachers must be satisfied that the work you are presenting is your own, particularly in tasks that require work to be done at home.
- Any help you have received must be acknowledged.
- Schools may use procedures similar to the Board's rules.

Assessment gives students opportunities:

to research deeply

- to connect with different points of view
- to learn how to develop a personal point of view and to express it clearly.
- If you are plagiarising, you are not gaining any deep knowledge.

## What are the most common forms of plagiarism?

- copying, buying, stealing or borrowing someone else's work in part or in whole and presenting it as your own
- using material directly from books, journals, CDs or the internet without acknowledging the source
- submitting work that contains a large contribution from another person-such as a parent, tutor or another student-who is not acknowledged
- paying someone to write or prepare material that is associated with a task, such as process diaries, logs and journals. (Board of Studies, HSC Assessments and Submitted Works, Advice to Students, 2006)

## Why does plagiarism happen?

Sometimes plagiarism is outright and intentional cheating.

Sometimes it is a result of ignorance

Sometimes it is because of poor academic skills, for example:

- Lack of planning - leaving it too late to finish your work
- Poor note-taking
- Poor record-keeping of the resources used.

### Which is the best explanation in each of the following?

#### Plagiarism is:

- Copying and pasting information from the internet.  
Partly right. This is a limited idea of plagiarism. It doesn't explain the connection with using other people's ideas, nor the ways of legally copying and pasting from the internet.
- Using the ideas of others as if they were your own.  
Right. This is a definition that describes plagiarism in any context.
- Copying and pasting information from the internet, then changing the words.  
Partly right. This could be paraphrasing. Citation is required.

#### Why does plagiarism matter?

- Because it is dishonest - it is stealing other people's ideas.  
Right. That's why plagiarism matters!
- Because it carries a penalty.  
Partly right. This is only part of why people should not plagiarise.
- Because it wastes time and prevents you from learning anything.  
Partly right. While this is true, the essential nature of plagiarism is the theft of other people's ideas.

#### A reference list, which shows where you have found your information, is necessary because:

- Teachers like to give you some references to start your research.  
Wrong. The reference list is the list of sources you consulted in your work, not anyone else's list.
- It lists the sources cited and shows your intention not to plagiarise other people's ideas.  
Right. This is exactly why you have to write a reference list.
- It is a requirement of the school and the Board of Studies.  
Partly right. This is true, but it's not the main reason for writing a reference list. You write a reference list to provide the sources you cited and to show your intention not to plagiarise.

## Plagiarism - screen 2

What is the difference between intended and unintended plagiarism?

### Consider this situation:

You have just completed your composition for your Music assessment. It's been a lot of work and you're very pleased with it. You have composed a number of songs and the tunes are very catchy. However, when your teacher hears one of them for the first time she remarks that it is an exact copy of a folk song recorded during the 1970s. You don't remember hearing this song and are shocked to discover that your parents have a copy of the album at home. It may have been years since anyone played it at your house.

Students can plagiarise unintentionally. This can happen when they are unaware of what plagiarism is or don't know or understand that they are plagiarising. These students may have:

- misunderstood about plagiarism
- failed to include reference details when making notes
- left out the reference in their assignment by mistake
- incorrectly referenced the material
- really believed that the work produced was original.

Intended or deliberate plagiarism means that a student has decided to cheat. Such a student might have chosen to:

- quote, paraphrase or summarise words or ideas or copy tables, graphs etc, while also choosing not to provide a reference to show where the original ideas, words or data came from
- copy or use another student's work, and submit it as their own work
- submit an assignment which has been written for them by someone else
- submit an assignment which has been downloaded from the internet.

Note: if your assignment is taken, with or without your knowledge, and used by another student, both of you may be accused of plagiarism.

### Consider these situations

Are the following cases examples of intended or unintended plagiarism?

A student downloads an assessment task from a website. The essay question is exactly what he has been asked. So, because of shortage of time, he uses it.

Intended: Correct! The student has deliberately decided to use the ideas of others as his own, without acknowledgement.

Unintended: Incorrect. This is a clear case of deliberate plagiarism. There might be excellent material on this website that can be used to consolidate your research, but not to directly copy and paste.

A boy completes his research assignment ready to submit. One of his parents makes changes to the work without the student's knowledge. The student prints the amended version and hands it in as his own work.

Intended: Incorrect.

Unintended: Correct. The student really believed that the work submitted was his own. However, this situation will still be treated as plagiarism.

Students pay tutors to do assignments and hand them in as their own work.

Intended: Correct. There is clear evidence here of an intention to cheat.

Unintended: Incorrect. These students have a very dishonest approach.

A student allows her sister, a theatre director, to help her prepare a monologue for performance in HSC

Drama. She allows her sister to make all the decisions for the performance including character interpretation, use of the stage space and costumes and props. She does not acknowledge any assistance in her logbook and when her teacher remarks on her rapid improvement in the quality of her performance in rehearsals at school, she fails to mention the help she had from her sister.

Intended: Correct. There is clear evidence here of an intention to cheat.

Unintended: Incorrect: Even if this student was unaware that she should acknowledge the help of her sister, she is required to be aware of this.

A younger sister uses an older sister's assignment by copying and pasting and changing the font, and calls it her own.

Intended: Correct. There is clear evidence here of an intention to cheat.

Unintended: Incorrect: Even if a student works on this assignment to personalise it, there is a basic intention to cheat.

You have been working on your paintings for your Visual Arts Body of Work. You have used a number of motifs from an Aboriginal artist's work which you saw on a trip to the Northern Territory but have done so unconsciously. It doesn't occur to you that you should record the source in your journal.

Intended. Incorrect.

Unintended. Correct. You didn't know that what you were doing was wrong. Nevertheless, this is still plagiarism.

# Plagiarism - screen 3

## What strategies can be employed to avoid plagiarism?

### Consider this situation

You are really into your Design and Technology project and have another big research assignment due. You decide to copy and paste the information from various websites and join it all up with your own ideas for the assignment. You deliberately didn't include references for the websites you've copied from and only list some books and an encyclopedia article which you read, but didn't take any information from. Now, you're worried!

You know you've plagiarised.

You just hope your teacher doesn't realise.

### What are the issues in this situation?

Honesty - your academic integrity is at stake. You should be more concerned with this than the risk of being caught.

Lack of knowledge of plagiarism detection methods - it is much easier for teachers to detect plagiarism than many students realise.

Wasting time on the whole assignment, instead of learning from it - your learning depends on you doing your own work.

You are being unfair to other students.

### The consequences could be:

- zero marks
- shame and humiliation
- an absence of genuine learning.

### You should:

- be honest
- manage your time better
- make sure you know about referencing and citation
- know the differences between quoting, summarising and paraphrasing
- use the Information Process to plan, organise and carry out your research effectively and on time
- learn to paraphrase correctly.

### Plagiarism can be avoided by acknowledging the sources used by:

- writing in-text references or footnotes in the body of your work to acknowledge quotations, summaries, paraphrases and copies
- writing a reference list
- writing a bibliography.

### What's the difference between quoting, summarising and paraphrasing?

Quoting is using the author's words exactly. (Enclose the author's words in quotation marks if it is a short quote, or set it off as an indented paragraph if it is a long quote.)

A summary selects and condenses the main idea of a text.

Paraphrasing is putting someone else's idea(s) into your own words. A paraphrase covers the points the author has made, while changing the words.

All three must have citations and must be listed in your reference list.

### Consider this situation

Here are the words of the original source:

'Some people cheat because they don't understand the seriousness of what they are doing and tell themselves it does not matter. Some people cheat accidentally because they do not understand plagiarism.'  
(Board of Studies NSW, HSC Assessments and Submitted Works, Advice to Students, 2006)

**Which of the following paraphrases would be considered plagiarism?**

People cheat because they don't think it is serious or that it matters. Other people cheat accidentally because they don't know about plagiarism.

Q: Plagiarism?

A: Plagiarism - no citation

People cheat because they don't understand that it is serious or that it matters. Others cheat by accident because they don't understand plagiarism. (Board of Studies NSW, HSC Assessments and Submitted Works, Advice to Students, 2006)

Q: Plagiarism?

A: Not plagiarism because the passage is paraphrased correctly and there is a citation.

According to the Board of Studies NSW (2006), some people are either unaware that it is a serious matter to cheat or they cheat accidentally because they do not understand plagiarism.

Q: Plagiarism?

A: Not plagiarism because the passage is paraphrased correctly and there is a citation.

# **Plagiarism - screen 4**

## **How is plagiarism detected?**

### **Consider this situation**

You've decided to use Wikipedia to help you with a task on Cleopatra. You find out that 'Cleopatra' is Greek for 'father's glory,' and her full name, Cleopatra Thea Philopator, means 'the Goddess Cleopatra, the Beloved of Her Father.'

'Cleopatra VII of Egypt', Wikipedia,

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cleopatra>

If you take this sentence and put it in Google, you will see how easy it is to locate its source and to detect plagiarism. Google Search

### **How is plagiarism detected?**

It is easier to detect plagiarism than many people think. Sometimes it's obvious:

- through lack of citation
- through lack of bibliographic depth
- through changes in the tone of writing
- if you've never written like this before
- if assessment tasks are very different in quality from supervised work.

### **Teachers may:**

- check your reference list
- search online for suspected plagiarism
- ask questions about your research to confirm that you have the indicated level of knowledge.

Teachers are usually experts in their subject matter and very likely will have used the same sources as you when setting the assessment task. They will be aware of the sources you use.

Plagiarism is obvious when two assignments submitted are either identical or very similar to each other.

In some schools, teachers check students work using plagiarism detection software, such as Turnitin. This is particularly useful in checking for cases of collusion between students.

### **Schools may also:**

- ask students to submit early drafts and process diaries to support a final product
- focus on in-class writing instead of project work
- have students do oral tasks to confirm that the work submitted is their own.

# **Plagiarism - screen 5**

## **What are the implications for plagiarism of accessing information from the world wide web?**

### **Consider these situations**

You decide to download an essay from the internet which answers the same topic that you have been set as an assessment task.

You compile a research assignment by copying and pasting numerous sections of your assignment from different web sources. Because this is a 'new' piece of work, you don't see it as plagiarism as you have found the information and made informed selections from it.

You have been part of an online discussion board. Many of the contributors have posted some really useful information that you use for an assessment task. As it's an online group, you believe your teacher will never know it's not your own work.

What are the implications in terms of plagiarism?

- all of these examples show plagiarism
- some people believe that the internet is creating a new attitude to ownership of ideas and writing, but, the principles and practices of ethical scholarship still apply.

What should you do?

- Be honest.
- Use websites ethically.
- Reference websites in the same way as any other source.

### **WARNING!**

#### **Information overload**

- It is tempting to plagiarise internet material to deal quickly with information overload.
- The quantity of information available has led to new difficulties with summarising and synthesising such large quantities of information.

#### **Information quality**

- The quality of information on the internet is hard to judge.
- Standards that have always been applied to information quality in books and encyclopedias (print and online) also apply to internet sources.
- We cannot assume the information on the internet has been checked for accuracy, reliability, lack of bias, currency and authoritativeness.

#### **The temptation to plagiarise**

- Resist the temptation. The temptation to plagiarise from the web is much greater than laboriously taking notes and copying from a print source. However, the principles of good scholarship are the same, plagiarism is cheating.

# Summary of this module

## Key information

What is plagiarism?

'Plagiarism is when you pretend that you have written or created a piece of work that someone else originated. It is cheating, it is dishonest, and it could jeopardise your HSC exam results.'

(Board of Studies, HSC Assessments and Submitted Works, Advice to Students, 2006)

Plagiarism is dishonest. It is a legal, moral and scholarly requirement that you must acknowledge the ideas of others when you use them to build your own insights and understanding.

Plagiarism detection methods are getting more and more sophisticated.

As an HSC student, you are seeking an academic qualification of high standing. Part of gaining this is learning academic conventions which demonstrate the depth of your research and your intention not to plagiarise.

## Issues

Why does plagiarism matter?

- Because it is cheating. It is unethical and dishonest.
- Because you are not developing important skills and knowledge.
- Because authors own their words and ideas.
- Because there are penalties.

Why does plagiarism happen?

- Sometimes plagiarism is outright and intentional cheating.
- Sometimes it is a result of ignorance of bibliographic and citation skills.

How is plagiarism detected?

1. Sometimes it's very obvious. Different writing 'styles' in an assessment task are a sure sign of plagiarism.
2. If a reference list and citations do not appear, markers may suspect plagiarism.
3. Teachers check the reference list with the references sourced in the body of your work.
4. Teachers are usually experts in their subject matter. They will probably be aware of the sources you use.
5. Plagiarism is obvious when two assignments submitted are either identical or very similar to each other.
6. Teachers check students' work using plagiarism detection software, such as Turnitin. This is particularly useful in checking for cases of collusion between students.

What are the implications for plagiarism of accessing information from the internet?

- The same scholarship principles apply no matter what the source of the information that has been used. The only difference is that the form of acknowledgement for web based sources is different.
- Students might plagiarise because they are less rigorous in their application of scholarship principles and practices.

## Strategies/handy hints

What strategies can be employed to avoid plagiarism?

- Be honest and ethical. Acknowledge sources appropriately.
- Learn to manage your time better so that you leave enough time for all your assessments.
- Learn to paraphrase correctly.
- Use the Information Process to plan and organise your research.

# **FAQ - Frequently Asked Questions**

## **Q: What is plagiarism?**

A: 'Plagiarism is when you pretend that you have written or created a piece of work that someone else originated. It is cheating, it is dishonest, and it could jeopardise your HSC exam results.'

(Board of Studies, HSC Assessments and Submitted Works, Advice to Students, 2006)

## **Q: Can students be penalised if they plagiarise unintentionally?**

A: Yes. It is the responsibility of all students to understand what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it.

## **Q: How can plagiarism be avoided?**

A: Students can avoid plagiarising by acknowledging the sources they have used. Using the Information Process will assist students to avoid plagiarism.

## **Q: How easy is it to detect plagiarism?**

A: Teachers are very skilled in detecting plagiarism. They may require students to confirm their knowledge of a topic orally if they suspect plagiarism.

Plagiarism detection methods are becoming more and more sophisticated as technology is used to expose malpractice.

## **Q: Are there different rules regarding plagiarism when information is accessed from the world wide web?**

A: No. The same scholarship principles apply no matter what the source of the information that has been used. The only difference is that the form of acknowledgement for web-based sources is different.

# HSC: All My Own Work

## Module 3 - Plagiarism

### 1. What is plagiarism?

True or False?

1. Plagiarism is a type of cheating.
2. A student can risk his or her HSC if there is plagiarism in a submitted work for an HSC exam.
3. Schools can impose their own penalties if a student has plagiarised.
4. A student who submits a work that has a large contribution from a family member does not need to acknowledge that contribution.
5. Plagiarism isn't really very serious, it is more of a game that students play with their teachers.

### 2. What is the difference between intended and unintended plagiarism?

Use the following words to fill in the blanks:

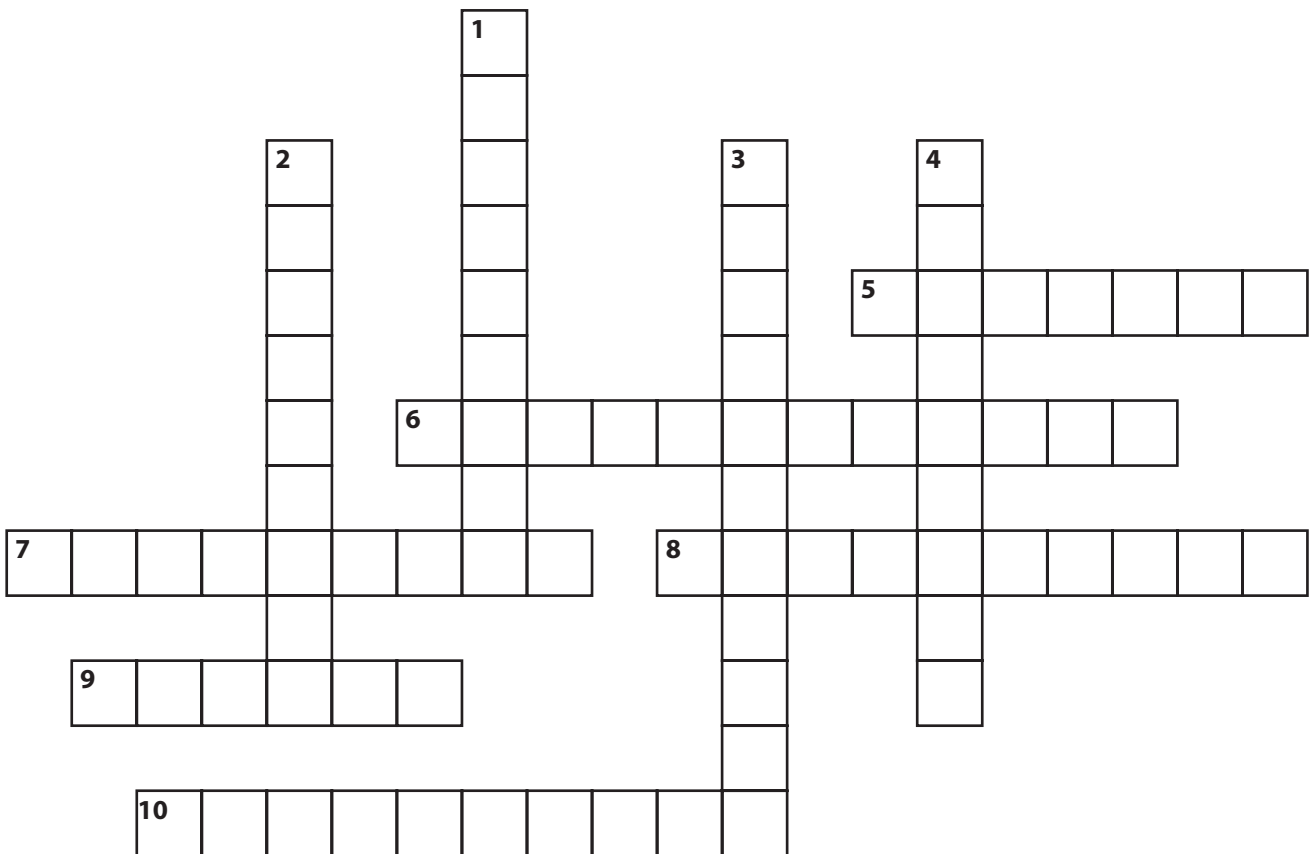
assignment	acknowledging	unintended	deliberate	accusation
------------	---------------	------------	------------	------------

1. \_\_\_\_\_ or accidental plagiarism happens when a student is not aware that he or she is plagiarising.
2. Intended or \_\_\_\_\_ plagiarism means that a student has decided to cheat.
3. Submitting an \_\_\_\_\_ that has been downloaded from the internet is a clear case of plagiarism.
4. Quoting without giving a reference could lead to an \_\_\_\_\_ of plagiarism.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ sources appropriately is a sure way to avoid plagiarism.

### 3. What strategies can be employed to avoid plagiarism?

Complete the following crossword from this list of words by using the clues provided below:

honest	plagiarism	quotation	summarise	paraphrase
bibliography	acknowledge	copying	footnotes	reference



**DOWN**

- 1 Selecting and condensing the main idea of a text (9)
- 2 A \_\_\_\_\_ list contains all the sources of information that have been quoted or referred to in a piece of work (9)
- 3 Indicate that a piece of information comes from someone else's work by citing its source (11)
- 4 This is where you use an author's words exactly (9)

**ACROSS**

- 5 Using others' work as your own, word for word, without adequate acknowledgement or attribution (7)
- 6 A list of all the sources used in the preparation of a piece of work (12)
- 7 One method of citation made at the foot of a page (9)
- 8 The theft of the words and ideas of others (10)
- 9 Your academic integrity depends on how \_\_\_\_\_ you are (6)
- 10 This is a method of covering the points an author has made, while changing the words (10)

#### 4. How is plagiarism detected?

Use the following words to fill in the blanks:

software	reference	footnotes	fairly	plagiarised
----------	-----------	-----------	--------	-------------

- 1. A marker can often tell if a student has \_\_\_\_\_ because of changes in the tone of writing.
- 2. A \_\_\_\_\_ list can help you avoid plagiarism.
- 3. Referencing can be done using \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_, such as Turnitin, can be used to detect plagiarism.
- 5. If you have been accused of plagiarism you must be treated \_\_\_\_\_.

#### 5. What are the implications for plagiarism of accessing information from the internet?

True or False?

- 1. You don't need to acknowledge sources when you copy from the internet.

2. It is easy to judge the quality of information on the internet.
3. Good scholarship principles apply to copying and pasting.
4. It is okay to download whole essays from the internet and use them.
5. It is very important to be careful about citation when copying and pasting from the internet as it is very easy to plagiarise.