

Research Essays & Reports APA Formatting

Teacher Handbook

Chinook Learning Services
Tuxedo Park Campus
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Plagiarism Handbook

Begin with the end in mind.

What is the final product you are hoping to see?

- Is it a research paper/essay or is it a research report?
- Are you asking students to cite within the essay/report as well as provide a reference page?

Research Essay/Paper	Research Report
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thesis statement guides the essay.• Student is the expert who provides support for his own ideas.• In-text references/citations give credibility to the essay.• Transitions are used.• References page included at end.• APA format is used.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headings• Most of the information is factual.• Information is summarized into main ideas.• Interpretive component, where student gives own opinion/analysis, may be included.• In-text references/citations might be included.• References page included at end.• APA format is used.

Research: verb or noun?

Research (v)

Researching is the act of becoming an expert on a topic by finding and studying information on it. As we research we come to our own conclusions about the topic. Researching is also looking to other credible sources for support for ideas you already have. This researching work is big part of the writing assignment.

Research (n)

Research is a word we use to describe the information that we add to our essay/report. Once we have some ideas, and have even written our first draft, we are ready to add research (support). In this definition of the word, research is the words of other authorities that give our ideas credibility.

Defining Plagiarism

In short, plagiarism occurs when a student has taken words or ideas that they found from another source and used those words or ideas in their research essay/report, **without giving credit to the source.**

Even if the student paraphrases or summarizes someone else's ideas, he needs to give credit to that writer using proper APA formatting, particularly if the information is not a well known fact. Students who plagiarize will often claim they were not clear about this.

Note:

Teachers and students should understand there is a difference between **well-known facts about a topic**, and **information that is not well-known, or debatable.**

Well-known facts (as long as they are paraphrased) usually don't have to be given credit. Imagine how many citations there would be if a student cited everything factual they learned.

However, if the information is **not** widely known, like an opinion, or if the writer is presenting new or obscure research in a field, their sources must be cited (given credit).

Example: A student is writing an essay about the causes of divorce. It is common factual knowledge that the divorce rate in North America is approximately 50%. He would not have to cite a source for this well known fact. Later, however, in his essay, he adds someone's claim that the divorce rate has risen because women are working outside the home. This is not a common well-known fact, and it could be debatable, too. He must cite his source, so the reader knows where this idea came from.

If this claim about women's working causing a rise in divorce rates was in fact his own idea, than it would still be wise to find a source that could back up his idea.

Chinook Learning Services has a variety of support for teachers. In the appendix of this handout you will find the following:

- A formal document that outlines the expectations for academic honesty called *Chinook Learning Services Academic Honesty Policy* (appendix i).
- A *Plagiarism Test* that can serve as a point of discussion around the topic (appendix ii).
- A reading exercise called *Intellectual Honesty and You* that works on vocabulary and comprehension (appendix iii).
- Also, our librarian, Niki Coles, has a website that she uses to teach plagiarism.

SAIT, Mount Royal College, and the University of Calgary all have documentation about plagiarism on their websites. Students might be interested in knowing that an understanding of plagiarism is important in all of our academic institutions.

Here are the website pages for each institution that deal with plagiarism:

SAIT <http://library.sait.ca/avoidingplagiarism.asp>
University of Calgary <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/2009/k-2.html>
Mount Royal <http://library.mtroyal.ca/plagiarism.php>
and Mount Royal Student Brochure
http://www.mtroyal.ca/wcm/groups/public/documents/pdf/plagiarism_brochure_2008.pdf

Identifying Plagiarism

Teachers can easily detect the change of voice that occurs when students use someone else's words. In addition, the flow of the essay/report is interrupted and may seem very choppy or disjointed.

Some additional visual and content clues include

- inconsistent font and font sizes;
- mixed citation styles;
- content is not lining up with the assignment;
- grammar and vocabulary are "too good".

Google it!

If a teacher suspects plagiarism they can try putting the suspected phrase into a search engine and see if it comes up.

Putting quotation marks " ___ " around the phrase means that you want to find the exact sentence. However, if nothing comes up, then try the phrase without the quotation marks. Google will search for a phrase on the web that is closest to it (maybe the student paraphrased it a bit).

- Caution: Searching for hard evidence can be a huge time-waster, and a teacher doesn't have to find hard evidence to confront a student about plagiarism. Just pointing out the inconsistencies is often enough.

Get Support

Talk to Phyllis if you suspect that a student has plagiarized. Decide on the next step:

- Will they fix the parts they plagiarized?
- Will the student choose a new topic and begin again?
- Will they lose marks?

Helping students avoid plagiarism from the start

1. Before starting the research students should understand the task: essay or report?
 - They need to know if they are expected to have their own ideas, and what the purpose of their research is.
2. If they will be citing within the essay, have students watch the Mount Royal online PowerPoint about “citing”, so they understand what it is and when to use it:
<https://breeze.mtroyal.ca/visualizingcitation>
3. As they research, have students cut and paste the information they think would like to use in their assignment and start a Word document called “Notes”.
 - While they are using this method for note-taking, they should keep a record of all the **websites, article names, dates, and author names**. These notes become invaluable when it comes time to cite or write the Reference page.
4. Teach them the difference between a well-known fact and information that is not well-known or could be debatable.
 - i.e. **Fact:**
A giraffe has seven bones in its neck.
(no need to cite within the essay, but source is usually included in References list.)

Information that is not well-known or debatable:
Giraffes are not as intelligent as zebras.
(here the student must cite the source, or, if this is their opinion, they should find a source to back them up.)

