



Avoiding Unintentional Plagiarism: video tutorial

<http://www.screencast.com/t/cGOqGCglPF>

Transcript

Introduction: Welcome to this tutorial on Avoiding Unintentional Plagiarism from the University of Reading Study Advice team. The tutorial is designed for you to go through at your own pace and you can pause it at any time.

Slide 1: Now we know you work hard on your assignments and obviously wouldn't deliberately plagiarise.

Slide 2: So you wouldn't use someone else's words directly without accurately acknowledging their authorship such as blatantly cutting and pasting someone's words into your own work.

Slide 3: And you wouldn't use ideas from someone else's work without accurately acknowledging the source.

Slide 4: Nor would you collude with another student to copy or produce the same work.

Slide 5: And you definitely wouldn't pass off someone else's original work as your own, such as buying an essay online.

Slide 6: But it is possible to plagiarise unintentionally if you are not clear why references are needed and how to reference correctly.

Slide 7: For example if you have ever been in that situation where you have the perfect quotation but no idea where it came from; you are staring at your notes but not sure which are your own ideas and which are the author's; or you are confused about what needs to be referenced in your assignment. So, if you are uncertain about how to make good clear notes, if you don't find out how to cite references correctly or if you don't

fully understand the role that references play in your academic writing at university, you can be at risk of unintentional plagiarism.

Slide 8: Also if you use references to replace your ideas as opposed to supporting your own thinking you can be at risk of poor academic practice. Your assignment becomes a patchwork of other people's words as opposed to your own.

Poor academic practice is when you have referenced sources correctly but you may have: relied heavily on only one or two sources as opposed to reading widely; included too many direct quotations or paraphrases from other people without analysing them and showing how they contribute to your own answer to the question; or inadequately paraphrasing by only substituting a few words of the original text.

Slide 9: Both plagiarism and poor academic practice can lead to serious penalties which may range from a loss of marks or receiving zero for that assignment up to a formal misconduct hearing. But these can be avoided if you understand why you are using references to support your ideas and how to do this correctly and accurately.

Slide 10: The key to avoiding unintentional plagiarism is having good study practices:

Read your feedback carefully – if your referencing has been criticised find out what you are doing wrong and put it right before your next submission – if in doubt, ask someone such as your tutor or a Study Adviser for help. A 'second offence' may be treated much more severely even if it is for another marker.

Develop good note-making practices – always keep track of the full details of where you found information as you go along. Have a system for clearly identifying your own thoughts, the ideas of the authors, and direct word-for-word quotations. And use every opportunity to practice writing ideas in your own words – it is almost impossible to paraphrase successfully if you do it line by line, so read a longer section, think about it, and write your own explanation.

Find out when you need to use a citation – acknowledge every idea you get from your research – which includes paraphrases, diagrams, pictures, and not just direct quotations.

Understand how to use references to support your discussion, not replace it. For more on how to use your research to back up your ideas, see this tutorial on 'Targeted Reading and Use of Evidence'.

Summary: To summarise, you need to treat referencing seriously, but if you have good study practices such as accurate note-making, know why and when to reference not just how to reference, and follow your referencing guide consistently, you will have no worries about unintentional plagiarism.

