

# Plagiarism: A How-NOT-to Guide

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, to plagiarize is “to take and use as one’s own the thoughts, writings, or inventions of another.”<sup>1</sup> The *UNB Undergraduate Calendar* defines it as including the following:

1. Quoting verbatim or almost verbatim from a source (such as copyrighted material, notes, letters, business entries, computer materials, etc.) without acknowledgment;
2. Adopting someone else’s line of thought, argument, arrangement, or supporting evidence (such as, for example, statistics, bibliographies, etc.) without indicating such dependence;
3. Submitting someone else’s work, in whatever form (film, workbook, artwork, computer materials, etc.) without acknowledgment;
4. Knowingly representing as one’s own work any idea of another.<sup>2</sup>

The *St. Thomas University Calendar* provides the following examples of plagiarism:

1. Presenting another person’s ideas, words, or other intellectual property, including material found on the Internet, as one’s own.
2. Writing an essay, report or assignment, or a portion thereof, for someone else to submit as their own work.
3. Submitting an essay, report, or assignment when a major portion has been previously submitted or is being submitted for another course at St. Thomas or any other university without the express permission of both instructors.<sup>3</sup>

In academic writing, if you **copy or paraphrase another person’s words, or adopt their ideas or data, without giving credit by citing the source**, you are plagiarizing—whether you had intended to cheat or not. And universities do not take plagiarism lightly. The possible consequences range from an awkward confrontation with your instructor to expulsion from university. Therefore, the best approach is avoidance.

## Top 3 Tips for Avoiding Plagiarism

1. **Start your research early.** Expect the library research process for most research papers to take much longer than the writing process. Consult UNB Libraries’ *Info Search* guide (see [lib.unb.ca/instruction/InfoSearch.html](http://lib.unb.ca/instruction/InfoSearch.html)) for general research help.
2. **Get full citations.** Be sure you have all the bibliographic details (title, author, journal title, volume, issue, pages, etc.) when printing or emailing source documents, or when taking notes during your research. In your paper you will need to fully identify sources of direct quotes, paraphrases, and ideas.
3. **Use a standard citation style.** Each discipline typically uses its own accepted standard citation method, and has a detailed style manual which explains how to format citations. Ask your instructor whether one of these standard styles should be used:

*Social Sciences:* **APA** (*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*)  
*Humanities:* **MLA** (*MLA Style Manual*) or **Chicago** (*Chicago Manual of Style*)  
*Sciences:* **CSE** (*Scientific Style and Format*)

Citation style examples can be found at [lib.unb.ca/research/PlagiarismBibliography.html#Citation](http://lib.unb.ca/research/PlagiarismBibliography.html#Citation), along with a list of standard manuals and recommended general writing and research guides available at the Harriet Irving Library Research Help Desk for quick reference. Some of these manuals and guides can also be purchased at the Bookstore.

Also consider using **RefWorks**, which can automatically format citations in any standard style (see reverse).

# More Research & Writing Tips

**Use RefWorks or QuickBib to automatically format citations.** As you conduct your online research you can export citations to your own RefWorks database, and later use RefWorks to automatically format your bibliography using any of the standard citation styles. See [lib.unb.ca/instruction/RefWorks](http://lib.unb.ca/instruction/RefWorks) for details. If you are using library databases from CSA (Sociological Abstracts, Criminal Justice Abstracts, etc.), you also have the option of directly creating a formatted bibliography using QuickBib.

**Properly cite internet sources.** The standard citation styles include specific citation methods for electronic information sources. This includes e-journal articles, e-books, and other e-sources available from the library, as well as other types of websites. Remember to carefully evaluate any information you find, as explained in the library's *Info Search* guide (see [lib.unb.ca/instruction/InfoSearch.html](http://lib.unb.ca/instruction/InfoSearch.html)).

**Paraphrase properly.** If you summarize a passage of text, use your own words, and cite the source.

**Use direct quotes sparingly.** While the amount of quotation you should use depends upon your topic and your instructor's directions, avoid quoting secondary sources that do not add weight to your argument.

**Make your own argument.** While you need to cite all the sources you use in your paper, if most of the paper is made up of quotes, paraphrases, and ideas that need to be cited, you may not be doing enough of your own thinking. Learn to find your own voice in your academic writing.

**Keep in mind that facts that are "common knowledge" do *not* need to be cited.** For example, if you read an encyclopedia article that states that Newfoundland joined confederation in 1949, you need not cite that article in your paper. It is considered common knowledge, and can be found in many other sources.

**Know where to go for help.** Talk to your instructor, visit the Research Help Desk at the Harriet Irving Library, or make an appointment with the librarian for your subject area. UNB students can use the UNB Writing and Study Skills Centre (Keirstead Hall, Room 318 and the Harriet Irving Library, Room 116, [extend.unb.ca/wss](http://extend.unb.ca/wss)) and STU students can use the STU Writing Centre (Edmund Casey Hall, Room 102, [w3.stu.ca/stu/current\\_students/support/support.aspx](http://w3.stu.ca/stu/current_students/support/support.aspx)). Plus, check out these websites:

*You Quote It, You Note It!* - from Acadia's Vaughan Memorial Library  
[library.acadiau.ca/tutorials/plagiarism](http://library.acadiau.ca/tutorials/plagiarism)

*Using Sources* - from the Writing Center at Hamilton College  
[my.hamilton.edu/academics/resource/wc/Using\\_Sources.PDF](http://my.hamilton.edu/academics/resource/wc/Using_Sources.PDF)

*Plagiarism and How to Avoid It* - from The English Centre at The University of Hong Kong  
[ec.hku.hk/plagiarism](http://ec.hku.hk/plagiarism)

*Plagiarism: What It is and How to Recognize and Avoid It* - from Writing Tutorial Services, Indiana University  
[www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml](http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml)

*Guide to Plagiarism and Cyber-Plagiarism* - from the University of Alberta Libraries  
[www.library.ualberta.ca/guides/plagiarism](http://www.library.ualberta.ca/guides/plagiarism)

If you don't already have one, also consider purchasing your own general academic writing and research handbook—you'll likely need to consult it often. See [lib.unb.ca/research/PlagiarismBibliography.html](http://lib.unb.ca/research/PlagiarismBibliography.html) for examples of general handbooks/guides and standard citation manuals available for quick reference at the Harriet Irving Library's Research Help Desk.

---

## Notes

1. *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., s.v. "plagiarize."
2. *UNB Undergraduate Calendar* (Fredericton: UNB, 2010), sec. B.VII.A, <http://eservices.unb.ca/calendar/undergraduate/pdfs/>
3. *St. Thomas University Calendar* (Fredericton: STU, 2010), sec. E, [http://w3.stu.ca/stu/administrative/registrar/services/\\_content/regulations.pdf](http://w3.stu.ca/stu/administrative/registrar/services/_content/regulations.pdf)