

Plagiarism: How to Avoid It!

1. Know the definition of plagiarism at Northern Highlands.

The Northern Highlands Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as “appropriating another’s work and using it as your own without appropriate attribution and citation.”

Check with your teachers to determine whether collaboration with other students is permitted and what your teachers expect of your Works Cited page. Remember that all ideas and work that are not your own must have citations.

2. Take good notes.

Develop strategies such as note cards or spreadsheet files that will help you keep track of sources, authors, URLs, and other important information as you work.

3. Paraphrase carefully.

Try not to use more than one or two important words from the original source when you paraphrase material (and remember to cite that source even if your material isn’t in quotation marks).

4. Learn to attribute correctly.

At Northern Highlands we use the Modern Language Association format for citing outside sources. Your teachers will give you all the appropriate formatting information.

5. Leave plenty of time.

Don’t get caught behind a deadline—most plagiarism occurs when students feel desperate or rushed.

6. Make sure you understand the assignment.

Ask questions in advance that will help you avoid the feeling of being “lost” or overwhelmed.

7. Research wisely.

Use your research skills for more than a quick web search. Learn how to use search engines and the library to find the best possible sources for your projects.

8. Create your Works Cited page as you work.

Type your Work Cited page as you find sources rather than waiting until the final draft of your paper. There are many websites that can help you format a Work Cited quickly and easily.

9. Double-check your paper.

Use a search engine or free plagiarism detection software to check your own papers before you hand them in.

10. Take the assignment personally.

Try to make assignments important to you. Where possible, tweak topics or arguments to put your own spin on them. Look for what you can learn from the project, not just for the grade you’ll receive.

This document was written by Barry Gilmore of Heinemann Publishers and adapted by Northern Highlands for the use of its students.