Plagiarism
...and how to avoid it
The bad news

- In U.S., plagiarism is a serious offense
- Possible consequences of plagiarism
  - Failing grade on paper
  - Failing grade for course
  - Loss of student visa status in extreme cases
The good news

- Plagiarism is avoidable if you
  - Understand what plagiarism is
  - Understand what citation is
  - Look at your writing like your reader does
Plagiarism – What is it?

• Submitting a paper you didn’t write yourself
  • Everyone knows this is cheating!
Plagiarism – What is it?

- Submitting a paper you didn’t write yourself  *Cheating!*

- Copying from sources and pretending you wrote it yourself
  - We all know this is cheating, too!
Plagiarism – What is it?

- Submitting a paper you didn’t write yourself *Cheating!*
- Copying from sources and pretending you wrote it yourself *Cheating!*
- Using a source and saying it is a different source
  - Also cheating (even if an accident)!
Plagiarism – What is it?

- Submitting a paper you didn’t write yourself Cheating!
- Copying from sources and pretending you wrote it yourself Cheating!
- Using a source and saying it is a different source Cheating!

- You use author’s ideas and words without giving author credit
  - This is main source of plagiarism!
  - Confusing – even for Americans!
  - Let’s learn to avoid this!
“Talking” to your reader

- Make clear who said/thought what
  - Sometimes you use the exact same words as author
  - Sometimes you paraphrase author
  - But always, you make it clear which words/thoughts are author’s, which are yours

- Readers understand because you follow certain conventions (agreed upon ways of doing things)
Writing conventions

• When borrowing author’s exact same words
  • Cite your author
  • Use quotation marks around borrowed words

• Even when paraphrasing author’s information
  • Cite your author

• Always, when reporting author’s information
  • Cite your author
Cite your author!

- Cite? What does “cite” mean?
  - According to President Obama, the economy… He goes on to say…
  - Lee (2007) argues that inflation will…
  - The army’s actions were “incomprehensible and reprehensible” (Adams & Morten, 232).
- All bold words above are examples of citation.
  - Different disciplines/professors require different citation styles – be sure to ask
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What the reader sees</th>
<th>What it means to the reader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>citation + quotation marks</td>
<td>The passage is someone else’s information in that person’s exact words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>citation + NO quotation marks</td>
<td>The passage is someone else’s information expressed in your own words (i.e., a paraphrase or summary).</td>
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What are you telling your reader?

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- Example
  The link between cell phone use and grade point average needs further investigation.
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**Example**
Survey results found that cell phone use is “negatively predictive of overall grade point average” (Svinicki 19).
Example
Survey results found that increased cell phone use corresponds to lower grade point average (Svinicki).
To be clear...

- Plagiarism can happen when your citation (or lack of it)
  - Tells your reader one thing, but you meant something else

- Example: you paraphrase an author’s words but you do not cite the author
  - You just told your reader that it is YOUR idea
  - But in reality, it is the AUTHOR’s idea
  - Maybe you forgot or misunderstood the convention, but still…it is plagiarism

- Let’s take a quiz
Is this plagiarism?

- Excerpt from article by Svinicki
  Survey results from 1500 college students about their cell phone use found that increased use was negatively predictive of overall grade point average.

- Student’s sentence
  Svinicki’s research on cell phone use found that increased use was negatively predictive of overall grade point average.
Yes! This is plagiarism!

- Excerpt from article by Svinicki
  Survey results from 1500 college students about their cell phone use found that increased use was negatively predictive of overall grade point average.

- Student’s sentence
  Svinicki’s research on cell phone use found that increased use was negatively predictive of overall grade point average.

- **Red text** should be inside quotation marks because they are the author’s exact words!

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- **Excerpt from article by Svinicki**
  Survey results from 1500 college students about their cell phone use found that increased use was negatively predictive of overall grade point average.

- **Student’s sentence**
  Survey results found that increased cell phone use corresponds to lower grade point average (Svinicki).
No. This is NOT plagiarism.

- **Excerpt from article by Svinicki**
  Survey results from 1500 college students about their cell phone use found that increased use was negatively predictive of overall grade point average.

- **Student’s sentence**
  Svinicki’s research cell phone use found that increased use was negatively predictive of overall grade point average.

- The student paraphrased Svinicki’s information and cited Svinicki.

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Why does plagiarism matter?

- U.S. education system values independent thinking
  - You need to differentiate between author’s ideas and your own reaction to them
  - Professors value independent thinking even more when it draws upon research into the ideas of others – citation shows you did such research
- U. S. law stresses intellectual property rights
  - By citing author’s ideas, you respect ownership of work and ideas
How to protect yourself

• Know what plagiarism is

• Learn how to cite, paraphrase, and quote

• Ask your TA, your professor, Student Writing Support for help

• You are in a different culture – don’t be afraid to ask how things work
Resources

• Handbooks teach citation, paraphrase, grammar
  • available in U bookstore, online, U libraries
Resources

• Student Writing Support
  • Free face-to-face help with your writing projects
  • http://writing.umn.edu/sws/

• Online tutorials
  • The best is Indiana University’s https://www.indiana.edu/~istd/
  • SWS Tutorials http://writing.umn.edu/sws/quickhelp/sources.html
  • U Library Tutorials https://www.lib.umn.edu/instruction/tutorials
Resources

- Citation software
  - Refworks, Zotero, Mendeley – free through University Library
  - Automatically creates reference entries in citation method of your choice (MLA, APA, AMA, etc.)
  - Attend free library workshops for Refworks and Zotero
You will do fine…

• Don’t be scared – just be aware

• Ask questions

• Ask for help if you need it – students and staff love to tell you how things work

• Enjoy your exciting new experience abroad
• A special thanks to Katie Levin in Student Writing Support (SWS) for her “What Are You Telling Your Readers?” approach to plagiarism