

FRESHMAN ENGLISH STATEMENT ON
SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY

The writing you do in Freshman English courses must be your own. The English Department will not tolerate either plagiarism or collusion.

Plagiarism

The General Information Catalogue of The University of Texas defines plagiarism as:

...the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of it in one's own written work offered for credit.

You commit plagiarism if you

1. Fail to acknowledge the sources of any information in your paper which is not either common knowledge* or personal knowledge. You can acknowledge a source through footnotes, attribution lines ("As E. B. White observes in 'Once More to the Lake'...") or other forms of documentation approved by your instructor.

(*Common knowledge is the basic information within a field or discipline, as well as most historical dates and facts, and many ordinary observations. Even if you used a reference book to discover the dates of George Washington's presidency, for example, you would not have to acknowledge the source since those dates fall into the range of historical common knowledge. If you borrowed material that interpreted or commented on Washington's presidency, you would be expected to cite your source.)

2. Fail to acknowledge direct quotation either by using quotation marks or (for longer passages) indention. Without the quotation marks or indention, a passage copied directly from a source might be considered plagiarized even if it were followed by a footnote. The footnote acknowledges that you have a source, but it does not indicate that you have borrowed someone else's exact words. If you use the language of a source, word-for-word, you must use quotation marks or block indention:

White observes that, "This was the American family at play, escaping the city heat..."

or

White observes that

This was the American family at play, escaping the city heat, wondering whether the newcomers in the camp...

You commit plagiarism if you

3. Merely paraphrase the original words of your source. Some students think that they can avoid a charge of plagiarism by changing a few words in each sentence they copy, or by rearranging the shape of phrases, or the order of sentences in a paragraph. This is not true. When you take notes, you must be careful to put ideas in your own words, or to use direct quotation when you are relying on phrases borrowed directly from a source.

4. Borrow the ideas, examples, or structure of your source without acknowledging it. You can be guilty of plagiarism if you systematically borrow the ideas and organization of a source even if the language of your piece is substantially original. A student who, for example, reports on a major news event by using exactly the same ideas in the same order as they appear in an article in Time or Newsweek might be accused of plagiarism. (see Appendix A)

5. Take, buy, or receive a paper written by someone else and present it as your own.

6. Use one paper for two different courses, or re-use a paper previously submitted for credit, without the prior approval of the instructor or instructors.

Collusion

The General Information Catalogue defines collusion as:

...the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty.

You commit collusion if you

1. Allow someone else to write your papers.

2. Allow someone else to edit your papers, without your instructor's knowledge or permission. In recent years more and more students have resorted to private editing and tutoring services to help them through their freshman writing courses. While it is appropriate for tutors to counsel students in a general way and to comment on the problems in a specific paper, it is scholastically dishonest for students to employ tutors to correct, edit, or modify essays in any substantive fashion. The same reservations and restrictions apply, within reason, to any outside assistance you may receive from a parent, friend, roommate, or academic tutor. Any changes, deletions, rearrangements, additions, or corrections made in your essays should represent your own work. (see Appendix B)

If you need assistance in a freshman course beyond that which your teacher can offer in class or in conference, you can use either the English Department Writing Lab in Parlin 3 or RASSL. Tutors in both these facilities are trained to comment on essays and to offer advice without editing or rewriting papers. The English Department Lab is free; RASSL offers both paid and free tutoring services.

Penalties

If you have any questions or doubts about the way you are employing sources in a given paper, consult your instructor before handing it in. For additional explanations and examples of proper and improper documentation, see the attached appendices, the library handout entitled "Using the Library for Research" (pp. 5-7), or your rhetoric textbooks.

The penalties for plagiarism can be severe. In all demonstrable cases of plagiarism, the freshman English office recommends that its instructors fail the student for the entire course, not just for the paper. However, the penalty in a given case is at the discretion of the individual instructor. Your instructor must discuss any charge of scholastic dishonesty directly with you, and inform you of your right to a hearing before a designated University official and your right to appeal to the Dean of Students Office. In most cases, however, plagiarism cases are handled between students and teachers, or in the Freshman English Office.

APPENDIX A: On Quoting and Paraphrasing

If you begin with a selection such as this one:

At the upper end of the hall, above the fireplace, but near it, stood the scaffold, twelve feet square and two feet and a half high. It was covered with black cloth; a low rail ran round it covered with black cloth also, and the Sheriff's guard of halberdiers were ranged on the floor below on the four sides to keep off the crowd. On the scaffold was the block, black like the rest; a square black cushion was placed behind it, and behind the cushion a black chair; on the right were two other chairs for the Earls. The axe leant against the rail, and two masked figures stood like mutes on either side at the back. The Queen of Scots as she swept in seemed as if coming to take part in some solemn pageant.¹

¹ James Anthony Froude, "The Execution of Queen Mary," in The Bedford Reader, edited by X. J. Kennedy and Dorothy M. Kennedy (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), p. 33.

--you can quote directly from it, using appropriate citations and quotation marks or (when the quotation is long) indention.

Example 1.

James Anthony Froude describes the hall where Mary would be executed: "At the upper end of the hall, above the fireplace, but near it, stood the scaffold, twelve feet square and two feet and a half high. It was covered with black cloth; a low rail ran round it covered with black cloth also, and the Sheriff's guard of halberdiers were ranged on the floor below on the four sides to keep off the crowd."¹

--you can report the information in your own words, acknowledging Froude as your source.

Example 2.

Froude, for instance, describes the scaffold where Mary would die, a black-draped platform twelve feet square. Two executioners stood near it, awaiting the entrance of the queen. On the scaffold were only a few objects, a cushion, three chairs, and the menacing block--all in solemn black.¹

--but you cannot simply change a few words or phrases and call the material your own, even if you acknowledge a source. The following passage based on Froude's original would be considered plagiarism--with or without a footnote.

Example 3.

At the upper end of the big room, above the hearth, but close to it, stood the scaffold, three yards square and two and a half feet tall. It was covered with a black drape; a low railing ran round it covered with black material too, and the Sheriff's men with halberds were positioned on the floor below on the four sides to keep the spectators away.

--nor can you call the work your own if you change the language in the original passage but closely follow its organization, ideas, and examples. Most teachers would consider the following passage too much like Froude's original to be considered acceptable as a student's work. Compare this version in which the student merely repeats Froude's ideas in the order he presents them to example 2 where the student summarizes the passage, reordering and rethinking it:

Example 4.

The scaffold, twelve feet by twelve feet, and two and a half feet high, was erected at the upper end of the room, close to but above the hearth. Draped in black the scaffold was surrounded by a small railing also covered with black

cloth. To prevent the crowd from getting too close, the Sheriff's guard were marshalled around the scaffold. The block itself was on the scaffold, in black. Behind it was a black cushion and behind it three black chairs, one for Mary and the two others for the Earls. Against the rail could be seen an ax and the two silent executioners on either side at the back of the scaffold. Into this room, Mary Queen of Scots entered as if attending part of a solemn parade.¹

APPENDIX B: On Allowable Tutoring

The Freshman English Statement on Scholastic Dishonesty says that "corrections made in your essays should be your own work." This means your readers can tell you the kinds of errors you make, but cannot correct them for you. Here are two examples:

1. An example of the editing you may not have done for you:

Lyndon Baines Johnson was the first President of the United States, born and reared in Texas. He climaxed a political career that spanned four decades when he took the office of President in 1963. Lyndon Johnson believed that "If you try hard enough you can do anything." Despite ~~believing in self-initiative,~~ Lyndon Johnson's meteoric rise to political success was characterized by promotions and endorsements from many powerful men in the establishment. This is not to say that Johnson did not play a large part in his own political advancement, but that he did so by using connections, an uncanny ability to manipulate people and a very questionable election, to rise to the peak of political success in America.

Although he professed faith in self-initiative, Lyndon Johnson rose to political success on the promotions and endorsements of many...

2. An example of the tutoring you may have done:

sp Lyndon Baines Johnson was the first President of
x x the United States, born and reared in Texas. He climaxed,
a political career that spanned four decades when he took
x the office of President in 1963. Lyndon Johnson believed,
x that "If you try hard enough you can do anything". Despite
believing in self-initiative Lyndon Johnson's meteoric
sp rise to political success was characterized by promotions
and endorsements from many powerful men in the establishment.
x This is not to say that Johnson did not play, a large part
in his own political advancement, but that he did so by
sp sp using connections, an uncanny ability to mess with people and better word?
sp a very questionable election, to rise to the peak of poli-
tical success in America.

dangling
modifier.
Rephrase?

Note that you have two consistent problems:

- 1) spelling of words with double letters (or doubling single letters), and
- 2) insertion of unnecessary commas between the verb and its object (see Guth, p. 108).

I have read and understood all portions of The Freshman English
Statement on Scholastic Dishonesty.

Signature _____

Name Printed _____

Date _____

Course & Unique Number _____

Instructor _____