

Cheating vs. Plagiarizing

Is there a difference between cheating and plagiarizing?

It seems like there is a clear difference between cheating and plagiarizing. Students cheat on an exam, but plagiarize papers. The dictionary defines the words with slight differences, but there is one key element between them: **dishonesty**.

When a student takes someone else's answers and takes credit for having done the work.

Cheating

Plagiarism

Taking someone else's writing and saying that it is your own original idea. Sometimes this is intentional, but it can also happen by accident.

What about when I plagiarize accidentally?

Plagiarism can happen accidentally when students aren't sure how to correctly credit information. This is why you should take the time to use tools to protect yourself against accidentally violating your school's academic integrity policy.

Here are steps you can take:

- **Ask yourself where you got the idea:**
Did the idea come from your mind, or is it something commonly known? Then you don't need to cite it. Did the idea come from something you read in class or saw on the internet or in a book? You should track that source down and create a citation.
- **Be careful:** Not sure if you should cite something? It's better to be careful and cite more than you need to than to miss citing correctly.
- **Check your work:** Take your paper to a writing center or submit it to Tutor.com. Writing tutors are experts at making sure citations are correct! You can also check your work by looking through citation resources like the ones in the Tutor.com Writing Center.