

Intellectual Property Issues

What is Intellectual Property?

Intellectual property refers to tangible products of the human mind and intelligence which have the legal status of personal property, especially works protected by copyright and inventions protected by patent (including trade marks). Ideas are not considered the intellectual property of their creator until they are recorded or made manifest in some form.

What is Copyright?

Copyright is the legal right to authors to protect their creation against copying. It includes dramatic, musical and artistic works. Copyright provides the owner with the exclusive right to reproduce, distribute, perform, display, or license his/her work. To be covered by copyright a work must be original and in concrete "medium of expression". Under current law, works are covered whether or not the work is registered.

Copyright laws are introduced because it is believed that's those who create an original expression in any medium need protection for their work so they can receive appropriate compensation for their intellectual efforts. Another reason is so that it can stimulate the creation of and the public's knowledge or works. Although Internet documents are easily obtained, downloaded and printed, the copyright law also protects them. Special instructions or restrictions stated within the documents or at the site must be read carefully and followed carefully.

Plagiarism

This refers to the use of another person's ideas or expressions in your writing without acknowledging the source. It is considered intellectual theft. All sources of information used must be cited, whether it is printed or online. Internet publications are protected by copyright laws, the same as with print publications. Plagiarism does not however include the adoption of general plots and character types from existing works. If however you have any doubts about whether or not you are committing plagiarism, cite your source or sources.

There are six different ways that a person can plagiarize and they are as follows:

- ❖ Using another author's words without proper citation – when using another author's words, you must place quotation marks around the word and include a footnote or other indication of the source of the quotation.
- ❖ Using another author's ideas without proper citation – when using another author's idea, you must indicate with footnotes or other means where this information can be found.
- ❖ Citing your sources but reproducing the exact words of a printed source without quotation marks – this makes it appear that you have paraphrased rather than borrowed the author's exact words.
- ❖ Borrowing the structure of another author's phrases or sentences without crediting the author from whom it came – it is usually easier to replicate another author's style than to think about what you have read and put it into your own words.

- ❖ Borrowing all or part of another student's paper or using someone else's outline to write your own paper.
- ❖ Using a paper writing service or having a friend write the paper for you – regardless to who writes a paper for you it is a breach of academic honesty to hand in work that is not your own.

Five Tips for Avoiding Plagiarism

1. First, use your own ideas. It should be your paper and your ideas that should be the focus.
2. Use the ideas of others sparingly--only to support or reinforce your own argument.
3. When taking notes, include complete citation information for each item you use.
4. Use quotation marks when directly stating another person's words.
5. A good strategy is to take 30 minutes and write a short draft of your paper without using any notes. It will help you think through what you want to say and help prevent your being too dependent upon your sources.