

# Plagiarism

## What is plagiarism?

- Plagiarism is using another person's idea, concept, theory, or words without giving credit by citing the source.
- Whenever an idea presented in a paper comes from another source, that person or group must be identified and cited correctly using a citation system such as the ones published by: the American Psychological Association (APA), the Modern Language Association (MLA), the Chicago Manual of Style (CMS), or another professional method of citing.
- Failure to identify specific sources is considered to be a theft of intellectual property and may result in a failing grade for the assignment, a failing grade for the course, or even expulsion from the college (see *NCC Student Handbook*).
- Citations are **not** needed, however, for ideas that are not exclusive to a particular scholar, unless that person's exact wording is used.
- Information that is common to a discipline or facts that are generally accepted as true by multiple sources need **not** be cited.

## How can I avoid plagiarism?

- Choose a topic about which you have some previous knowledge or interest.
- Write a draft of your paper using only what you know or what you would like to find out.
- Then research specific points to provide support for your ideas or to expand your knowledge .
- Take careful notes while doing research.
- Keep a record of the author, publication, date, and pages of information that may be useful for your paper.
- Indicate in your notes when you are using a source's exact words by putting quotation marks around the passage.
- Paraphrase and summarize in your own words when possible, but still keep a record of the source, since even paraphrases must be cited if the ideas are from another source.
- Lead into quotes or paraphrases with a tag phrase: According to..., As reported by..., President Smith maintains...
- **Always** attribute a quotation, paraphrase, or summary to its author and source. It gives the information credibility and indicates why it is included in the paper.
- Likewise, follow a quotation, paraphrase or summary with an explanation of its relevance to the points you are making.
- Be familiar with the citation format required for the assignment. Handouts and Manuals for MLA and APA are available in the NCC Library and Learning Center and on the websites for both services.
- When in doubt, cite it.

