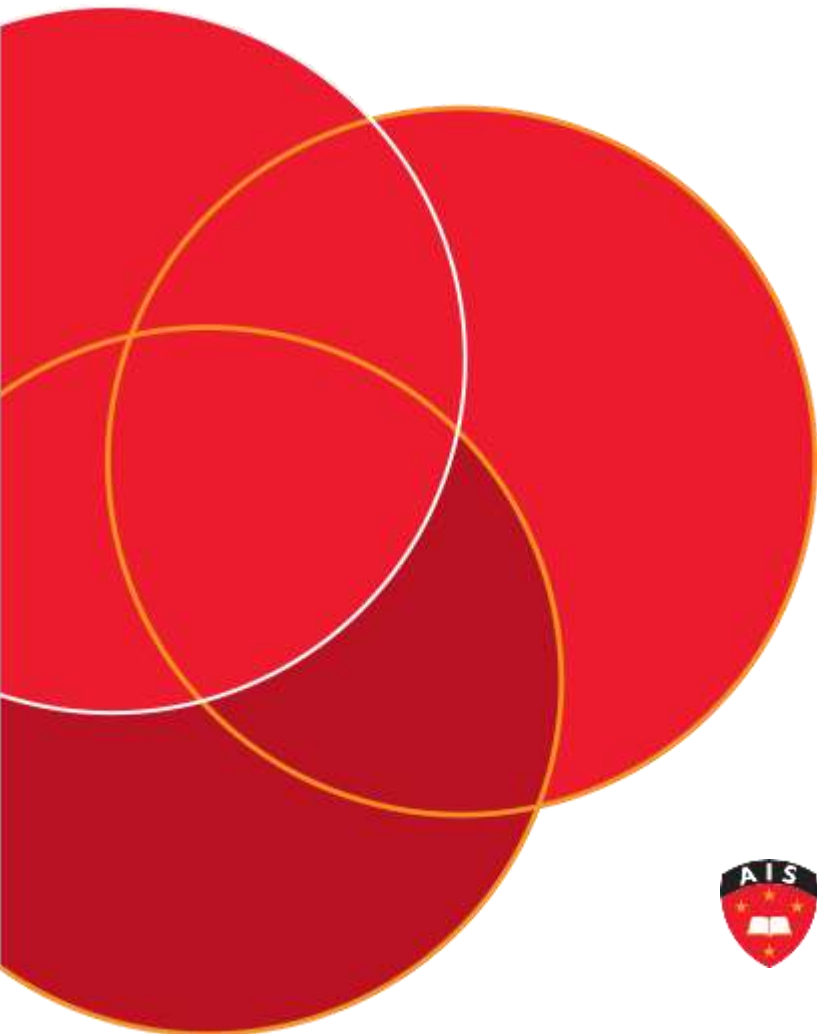


# PLAGIARISM

What it is, and how to avoid it



**AUCKLAND  
INSTITUTE  
OF STUDIES**  
NEW ZEALAND

## What is plagiarism?

In a sentence, plagiarism is the use of another author's original words or ideas, without stating where the words or ideas came from. In this way, you make the words or ideas look like they are your original words or ideas — but they are not. **Plagiarism** is thus a form of academic dishonesty, as it is tantamount to stealing someone else's words or ideas and lying about it. Stating that material has been taken from elsewhere, and giving your readers the bibliographical information to find the source, is usually enough to avoid the accusation of plagiarism. The mark you receive for an assignment relates to your original contribution, not to your ability to copy and paste, or quote other people.

## Reasons for citations

In academic writing, it is normal to refer to other people's ideas and words, because:

- it shows the reader that you have researched the topic
- it makes your work stronger by adding outside support to your ideas
- the people you quote may be considered experts (and you are probably not an expert)
- you can quote other people's ideas without necessarily saying that you agree with them
- it allows the reader to consult the original source, to read more

## The internet

Plagiarism has never been easier. The internet has made it easy to find, copy and paste material on a huge range of topics. However, electronic sources constitute other people's intellectual property (words and ideas), even if it is available online. When used, it must therefore also be referenced. Plagiarism is similar to illegally downloading films or music.

## Direct and indirect quotation

Direct quotation means using the original author's words, word-for-word. In this case, you must put the words in quotations marks (" ") for any quote up to 40 words, and in a separate paragraph (block format) for longer quotes. Indirect quotation means that you are using the original author's ideas, but you are not quoting word-for-word. In short, you are paraphrasing or summarising. In all cases of direct or indirect quotation, you need to include a reference to the original work.

## Proper paraphrasing and summarising

In a proper paraphrase, you accurately convey the meaning of the original piece in your own words. A summary is also shorter than the original, usually by leaving out unnecessary details, examples, etc. To avoid word-for-word copying from the original, you should not look back at the original passage while writing a paraphrase or summary. It is not acceptable to take word-for-word sentences or other chunks from the original, put them together, perhaps change a word or two, and claim that the result is a summary.

## Proper referencing

When you refer to other people's ideas and words, you must do two things:

1. Make an in-text citation, that is, say, in the body of your writing, where the ideas and words came from, eg ..." (Smith, 2013, p.54); Jones (2012) analyses ... Include a page number with direct quotations.
2. Include a reference list at the end of your writing, giving in alphabetical order full bibliographical details of the works you have cited, so that readers can follow up the reference, if they want to, eg

Jones, P. (2012). *Tourism in New Zealand*. Capital Press.

Smith, W. (2013). The New Zealand economy 2000 – 2012. *Journal of Economics*, 24(2), 48-67.

Any source that has been cited in-text must appear in the reference list and, vice versa, any item in the reference list must have been cited in-text.

## APA format

AIS, like many tertiary institutions in New Zealand and the western academic world, uses APA (American Psychological Association) format for referencing. The three main sources that need to be quoted are:

### Books

<Family name>, <Initial>. (<date>). <Title>. <Publisher>.

eg Jones, P. (2012). *Tourism in New Zealand*. Capital Press.

### Journal articles

<Family name>, <Initial>. (<date>). <Article title>. <Journal Title>. <Volume #>(<Issue #>), <page #> - <page #>.

eg Smith, W. (2013). The New Zealand economy 2000 – 2012. *Journal of Economics*, 24(2), 48-67.

### Webpages

As for print article. <URL> or <DOI>.

eg Fielding, M. (2006). Population in Bangkok. *On-line Journal of Population*, 7(1), 23-31.

cup.co.uk/ojp/2006/fielding.

See the following websites for further details:

- <https://moodle.ais.ac.nz/course/view.php?id=4>
- [www.library.auckland.ac.nz/docs/helpsheets/APA.pdf](http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/docs/helpsheets/APA.pdf)
- [www.waikato.ac.nz/library/learning/g\\_apaguide.shtml](http://www.waikato.ac.nz/library/learning/g_apaguide.shtml)
- [libguides.library.curtin.edu.au/home](http://libguides.library.curtin.edu.au/home)

## What does not need referencing

You do not need to reference information that is not the result of original research or thought, but can be considered facts or common knowledge, such as:

- *In 2011 New Zealand hosted and won the seventh Rugby World Cup.*
- *Potatoes are a natural source of vitamin B.*
- *There are eight planets in the solar system.*

## Cultural differences

These guidelines for referencing are standard throughout the western academic world (New Zealand, Australia, Europe, the USA, Canada, etc). They may, however, differ from practices in your own country. While in some countries, using someone else's work is considered a sign of respect, that is not true in New Zealand and the western academic world. You will gain marks by showing that you have read and digested what others have written about the topic, you have thought about the topic and formed your own opinion about it.

## Academic dishonesty

Plagiarism is just one form of academic dishonesty, that is, the improper treatment of intellectual property. Academic dishonesty includes:

- copying words or ideas from elsewhere without referencing
- copying source material, but changing some words
- failing to put a word-for-word quotation in quotation marks
- misquoting a source
- giving wrong details about a source

(The above practices would be called plagiarism.)

- handing in someone else's work as your own
- paying someone else to write for you
- asking someone else to correct your writing (unless specifically allowed by the lecturer)
- working together with another person (unless specifically allowed by the lecturer)
- copying material from a previous student's work
- submitting the same piece of work more than once (sometimes called self-plagiarism)
- using an essay found on a "paper mill" or "cheat site" on the internet
- looking at another student's work during a test or exam
- allowing another student to look at your work during a test or exam
- taking unauthorised notes into a test or exam, whether on paper or on a cellphone

(The above practices would be called cheating but are still examples of academic dishonesty.)

- using quotations for more than 10% of your writing

## Why do students plagiarise?

There are many excuses that students give when they are caught plagiarising:

“I couldn’t keep up with the workload on my course.”

“I didn’t plan my time for working on various assignments.”

“I ran out of time on the assignment and got desperate at the last minute.”

“I can’t express my ideas as well as the original authors can.”

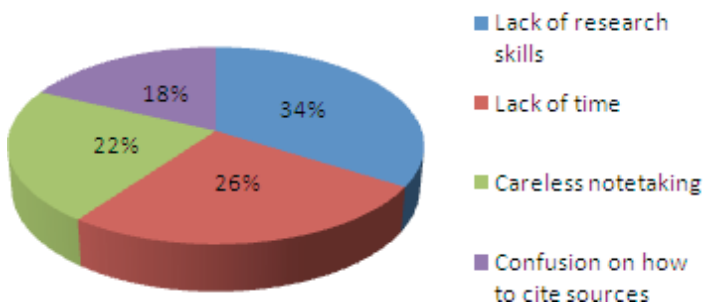
“My English is not so good, so I used the original author’s words, because he is a native speaker of English.”

“I forgot where I took the quotation from.”

“I didn’t know how to reference properly.”

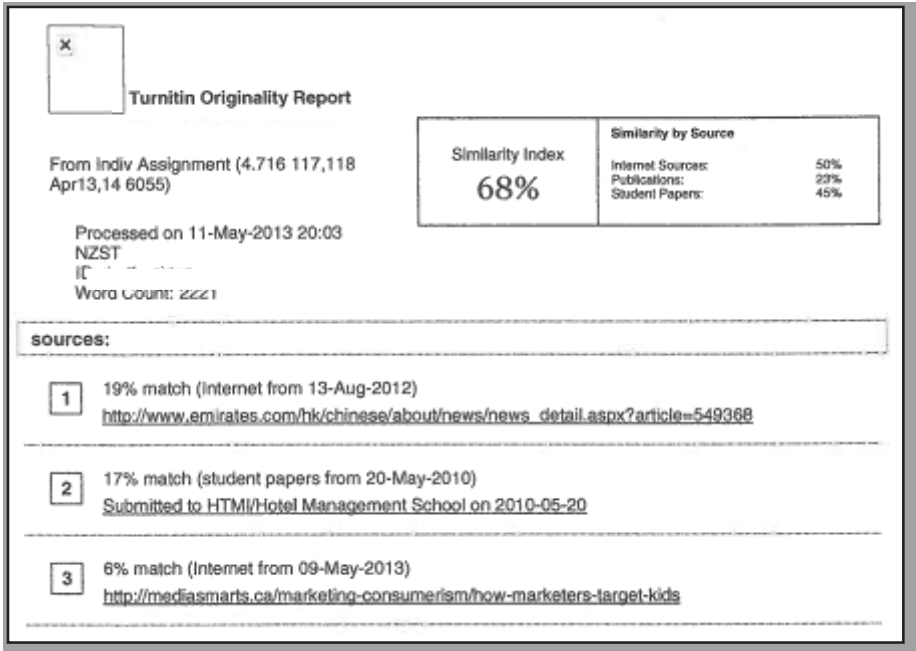
The diagram (from [blog.writingshield.com/index.php/2011/02/understanding-student-plagiarism/](http://blog.writingshield.com/index.php/2011/02/understanding-student-plagiarism/)) shows the results of a survey into the reasons. The AIS Study Skills Advisor runs regular free workshops on all the above problems.

## Why students plagiarize



## Turnitin

AIS, like many tertiary institutions around the world, uses Turnitin (turnitin.com) to check for plagiarism. Assignments and other pieces of writing are submitted to Turnitin, which compares them with a huge database composed of over 40 billion webpages, over 300 million student papers and over 130 million articles from over 110,000 journals. It generates a report like this one:



The screenshot shows a Turnitin Originality Report. At the top left, there is a small icon with an 'x' and the text 'Turnitin Originality Report'. Below this, it says 'From indiv Assignment (4.716 117,118 Apr13,14 6055)'. To the right, a box displays the 'Similarity Index' as '68%'. Further right, a table titled 'Similarity by Source' shows: Internet Sources: 50%, Publications: 23%, and Student Papers: 45%. Below the main report area, there is a section titled 'sources:' with three numbered items:

Similarity by Source	
Internet Sources:	50%
Publications:	23%
Student Papers:	45%

Processed on 11-May-2013 20:03  
NZST  
IT  
Word Count: 2221

**sources:**

- 1 19% match (Internet from 13-Aug-2012)  
[http://www.emirates.com/hk/chinese/about/news/news\\_detail.aspx?article=549368](http://www.emirates.com/hk/chinese/about/news/news_detail.aspx?article=549368)
- 2 17% match (student papers from 20-May-2010)  
Submitted to HTMI/Hotel Management School on 2010-05-20
- 3 6% match (Internet from 09-May-2013)  
<http://mediasmarts.ca/marketing-consumerism/how-marketers-target-kids>

This shows that 68% of the assignment that was submitted corresponds to what is in the database, either word-for-word or with minor changes. In other words, two-thirds of what this student submitted was not written by the student but copied from elsewhere. The largest component is 19% from one source. In short, one-fifth of this assignment was copied from one source.

## Consequences of plagiarism at AIS

AIS must maintain the quality of its courses, to the standards of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority. Severe penalties are therefore imposed on students found guilty of academic dishonesty. The usual outcome is an appearance before the Student Disciplinary Committee and, if found guilty, a mark of zero for the assignment and a major demerit point (three demerit points lead to expulsion). Other penalties may include:

- a reduction in the mark for the assessment
- your name on the AIS plagiarism list
- a fail grade for the course
- re-enrolment in the course and repayment of fees
- expulsion from AIS

## Consequences of plagiarism in life

While the above penalties apply at AIS, perhaps more serious penalties await those who are guilty of academic dishonesty in working life:

- **Forced resignation:** France's top rabbi, Gilles Bernheim, has resigned amid a scandal over plagiarism. Rabbi Bernheim had admitted to plagiarising several authors and lying about an academic status on his CV, reports said. He has resigned with immediate effect, the body governing France's Jewish congregations announced. (*France's top rabbi Gilles Bernheim quits in plagiarism row* (11 April 2013). [www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-22111313](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-22111313))
- **Being struck off a professional register:** A nurse with an "unimpeachable" track record has been struck off for falsifying signatures and plagiarism. The plagiarism offences happened in 2008 and 2009 while Emmanuel Ajala was studying for a nursing MSc at Essex University. (*Essex University plagiarism nurse struck off by NMC* (12 August 2013). [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-23666253](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-23666253))
- **Lost sales and income:** Publishers and magazines have been working to take down poems and suspend sales of collections by David R Morgan after the American poet Charles O Hartman realised Morgan's poem "Dead Wife Singing" was almost identical to his own, three-decades-old "A Little Song". (Flood, A. (22 May 2013). *Another plagiarism scandal hits poetry community*. [www.theguardian.com/books/2013/may/22/plagiarism-scandal-poetry](http://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/may/22/plagiarism-scandal-poetry))
- **Public shame:** Author Witi Ihimaera [...] the writer of *Whale Rider* was embarrassed by revelations that his latest novel, *The Trowenna Sea*, contains passages by other authors without attribution. He apologised for the oversight, [...] and promised any future editions of the book would include proper acknowledgments. (Koubaridis, A. (2009). *Ihimaera wins \$50,000 arts prize despite plagiarism row*. [www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=1&objectid=10609994](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10609994))

## Tips for avoiding plagiarism

1. When note-taking from readings, record the bibliographical information of source material immediately.
2. Evaluate websites critically; much of the internet is unreliable.
3. If you do not understand plagiarism, ask your lecturer or attend a workshop by the Learning Support Advisor.
4. Always include both (1) in-text citations and (2) a reference list. A reference list alone is not enough, as the reader does not know which parts in the body of your essay were taken from which sources.
5. Put in-text references immediately next to the part that they relate to. Do not put vague references at the ends of paragraphs.
6. Make APA format a habit.
7. For every line you quote, you should spend at least two lines analysing and commenting on it.
8. Do not use word-for-word quotations all the time; use paraphrase and summary as well.
9. Do not use quotations for more than 10% of your work.
10. Know how to paraphrase and summarise effectively.
11. If in doubt, include a reference.
12. Plan your study (reading, working on assignments, revision for exams, etc), so that you do not run out of time and are not tempted to plagiarise or cheat.