

PLAGIARISM

I don't know why students plagiarize: it's so easy to catch and I have no sympathy for cheaters of any sort. But every semester some yoyo submits copied text. Some fail the course and a few are not allowed to graduate. Some have been assigned hours of community service. Few who plagiarize get into med school, vet school, or grad school.

Mosaic Plagiarism

Many students copy a passage from the Internet and then change a few words. NOT OK. This lazy, sloppy, and intellectually immoral practice is so common it even has its own name: "Mosaic Plagiarism." **If you engage in mosaic plagiarism, Turnitin will catch it, and I will bust you for plagiarism.**

Turnitin uses sophisticated pattern-matching algorithms. If you copy anything, even from another student, Turnitin will detect it. Students have copied from online sources such as Wikipedia: super easy to detect. It's easy to tune the algorithms to catch mosaic plagiarism.

Some students cheat intentionally, but plagiarism can also happen unintentionally. *"UNINTENTIONALLY???* You mean I can get in trouble for something unintentional?" Indeed you can. If you pass off as your own creation the words or ideas of someone else, you are considered dishonest, whether you did so intentionally or not. While taking notes from a published paper, students have transcribed the words of that paper's author, then eventually forgotten that those words were not their own and incorporated them directly into a manuscript. That will be flagged as plagiarism and I will bust you for doing this too.

Of course every word you write has been used before, but Professor Lou Bloomfield at the University of Virginia has discovered that the likelihood of two writers using **six consecutive identical words of English** is infinitesimally small unless one writer has copied from the other.

How can you avoid this terrifying pitfall? Jan Pechenik's book *"A Short Guide to Writing About Biology"* has a helpful section on how to take notes in a way that will avoid plagiarism. **HIGLY RECOMMENDED READING.**

If I detect plagiarism, I retain the option to report it to the university's office of Student Affairs.

SIGN BELOW:

I agree to the following statements and conditions:

1. I have read the previous page describing plagiarism.
2. I understand what plagiarism is, and I have had any uncertainty resolved by the instructors of this course.
3. I understand how to avoid plagiarizing published works and the works of others.
4. I promise that I will not submit any work in this class or any other at FIU that contains any plagiarized passages.

Printed Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____