

## The definition of plagiarism and the potential ways to avoid it

from the student's aspect

### PLAGIARISM

"NOUN (Literary, Literary Critical and Journalistic Terms)

1. <Since the establishment of copyrights> misappropriation of other people's intellectual property, usage of their intellectual work or parts thereof without reference to the original or the author, intellectual larceny, theft. Literary, scientific, musical plagiarism; they were sued for or on account of plagiarism; they committed plagiarism; they were accused of plagiarism. This is sheer plagiarism. The adoption of these details exhausts the definition of plagiarism. || a. (rare) A body of work created this way. The whole thesis is plagiarism. While the original versions of the great Lope's works were forgotten even by philology, plagiarisms, through a bunch of translations, were present on all theatre stages of our era. (Zoltán Ambrus) [...]

Compound expression(s): plagiarism lawsuit; plagiarism charges."

Source: The Defining Dictionary of the Hungarian Language <https://www.arcanum.com/hu/online-kiadvanyok/lexikonok-a-magyar-nyelv-ertelmezo-szotara-18E8B/p-44572/plagium-45DB1/>

In short, **plagiarism means the adoption of other authors' ideas without indicating the source.** When it comes to conceptualizing the notion of plagiarism, we need to understand what other people's idea means in this context, how we can access it and what we mean by indicating/referencing sources.

In this case, the term "idea" covers a wide spectrum of content, including:

- idea, thought;
- statement, conclusion;
- image, photo, drawing;
- figure, table, note;
- formula, deduction;
- video or audio material;
- etc.

The list is not complete, but it clearly demonstrates how widely the definition of *idea* is interpreted in the context of plagiarism.

In general, the next important question is how we get access to this information, but when it comes to plagiarism, it does not really matter. We can certainly adopt/use information received from written/printed text or seen/heard in exhibitions, lectures, video, podcast, personal discussions, etc., but we must refer to the source in order to avoid plagiarism.

To a certain extent, the usage of other people's ideas forms a required element of all scientific work (e.g.: Student Research Society), including thesis papers. Adequately referenced literature is instrumental in laying the professional grounds for our own work and, in certain cases when we receive divergent results, it can determine our points of reference. Consequently, no thesis or student research paper can be prepared without researching, reading and properly referencing the relevant literature within our own paper. The references or bibliography section at the end of the paper will show the supervisor or other readers how thoroughly we looked into the given topic. Reading the list of references, experts can immediately see whether we have read the necessary literature.

The usage of ideas means that other people's "thoughts" are quoted verbatim or paraphrased in our paper. Usage in itself does not mean plagiarism, unless we fail to indicate where we read or heard the idea, i.e., where we got it from. Consequently, the most important task is to reference every piece of text we use. Proper referencing in a thesis paper, for example, has its pre-defined rules which are available on the library's website.

If we quote something verbatim, we must always put the text between quotation marks and reference it, but if we translate something from English, for example, or paraphrase the sentence(s), quotation marks are not required, but we still must indicate the source at the end of the sentence or paragraph.

Two examples:

"The largest variance in the opinions of pesticide users (57.3%) and non-users (42.7%) was registered regarding the importance of efficacy." [1] Although not closely related, another important finding in Morzillo and Mertig's study was that cca. 9% of the respondents used anti-coagulants.[2]

#### References

1. Tóth Sz, Vetter Sz, Ózsvári L, Markovits Zs (2023) A rágcsálóirtás állatvédelmi szempontú megítélése a magyar lakosság körében ("The Hungarian Public's Opinion of Pest Control from the Aspect of Animal Protection"). *Magyar Állatorvosok Lapja ("Magazine of Hungarian Veterinarians")* 145: 407–418 <https://doi.org/10.56385/magyallorv.2023.07.407-418>

2. Morzillo AT, Mertig AG (2011) Urban resident attitudes toward rodents, rodent control products, and environmental effects. *Urban Ecosyst* 14: 243–260 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11252-010-0152-5>

#### Why is it so important to avoid plagiarism?

Beside complying with the generally accepted ethical norms, it is also to be avoided because plagiarism entails a violation of the University's written ethical norms, which results in an ethics procedure. The relevant code is available [on the University's website](#):

(5) Students shall only submit their own research findings as the result of their work, they shall indicate external sources in the expected form and according to the relevant rules and cite references and sources accurately. Shall reference as sources consulted if they used any other person's a) written or oral communication or parts thereof, quoted verbatim or in summarized form;

b) concepts, opinions, hypotheses or model;

c) established facts, data or illustration for their work.

Failure to provide proper references constitutes plagiarism, which is a violation of the norms related to honest and fair professional activities.

(6) Students who are aware of plagiarism shall file for ethical proceedings.

#### What can help us to avoid plagiarism?

- When reading the literature, you may want to use, copy or highlight the important parts with an indication of the source as well.
- If you listen to an interesting lecture or participate in a discussion, you may want to immediately note by whom, where and when the idea was conveyed.

- When it comes to literature you select for potential use, you may consider collecting it in a systematic way, e.g., in [Zotero](#), which helps you to easily prepare the list of references and bibliography later in Word, for example, but it allows you to store full texts as well. You can find links and a short video about Zotero on the library's [Research assistance](#) page.

### **What is plagiarism scanning - similarity checking?**

Before the final submission of thesis papers but after the deadline for uploading into the NEPTUN system, the University uploads all papers from NEPTUN to the Turnitin Similarity application.

Turnitin Similarity compares the submitted paper's text to the millions of articles, books and other accessible online resources, including thesis papers written at UVMB or other universities, etc., and marks the existing similarities. After this software-based check, the thesis supervisor reviews the results and decides whether the paper contains quotations with proper source referencing (in the adequate percentage) or whether it (also) contains unreferenced use of other people's ideas.

Depending on the results of this review, the thesis supervisor may require the student to rework certain parts of the paper. If the student fails to comply by the relevant deadline, the paper will be rejected, and if the paper is submitted in its plagiaristic form, it may entail an ethics procedure.

**If you have further questions**, please consult the [FAQ section on the Library's "Thesis Assistance" page](#) to see if your question has already been answered there, or send a mail to [library@univet.hu](mailto:library@univet.hu).