

Plagiarism Tip Sheet

What is Plagiarism?

- Using someone else's writing without noting the source
- Using someone else's original research and passing it off as your work
- Quoting without quotation marks
- Failing to reference sources
- Copying text word-for-word
- Cutting and pasting or "borrowing" parts of essays from the Internet

The Rule of Three

Once you know what plagiarism is, it's easy to avoid doing it. Remember these three important rules.

❶ Basic facts are safe to use.

If something appears in many sources, using it is usually not plagiarism. For example, a person writing about the solar system doesn't need to worry about saying there are nine planets that move around Earth in elliptical orbits. Everybody knows (or should know!) that.

❷ **Paraphrase.** Rewrite in your own words wherever possible; don't just cut and paste paragraphs from books, articles, and the Internet into your paper. Use synonyms to replace words and give authors credit for their ideas.

Example:

"I find the gift of language to be one of the greatest things we as a *human race* possess."
Source: "Writing the Thing" by Karyuu at teenwriting.about.com

To avoid plagiarism, paraphrase the paragraph; don't just cut and paste it into your paper:

In her essay "Writing the Thing," teen writer Karyuu says that that language is one of the greatest gifts the *human species* possesses.

Notice how the synonyms replace the italicized words, and Karyuu receives credit for her ideas.

❸ **Always acknowledge sources.** Whether using well-known facts, opinions or new research, always include a bibliography or list of sources in your work. That shows that you didn't make anything up and lets readers find out more if they want to. And, enclose borrowed phrases in quotation marks:

"I find the gift of language to be one of the greatest things we as a human race possess," says writer Karyuu, in her essay "Writing the Thing," originally published on **About.com's** Teen Writing site.