

**AVOIDING PLAGIARISM BY CAREFUL NOTE-TAKING** In doing research, whether conducting an interview, listening to a lecture, reading an article in a library periodical, or searching on the Internet, a student needs to be good at taking notes. Taking notes is not always a simple task because it involves making a judgment about what will be needed later on (for a research paper or for a test). Some people try to write down everything; others do not write down enough. Still others have trouble distinguishing between major points and minor details. Learning to take good notes is one of the most important skills a college student can master. Depending on how the information is going to be used, notetaking can be done by quoting (directly or indirectly), summarizing, paraphrasing, or

#### CHAPTER 33 OTHER COLLEGE WRITING: THE RESEARCH PAPER AND THE ESSAY EXAM 595

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any combination of these. Paying careful attention when note-taking will avoid the problem of unintentional plagiarism. Whenever exact words, ideas, facts, or opinions from the works of other writers are used in a research paper and the sources are not specifically identified, the writer of the research paper is guilty of inappropriate use, known as plagiarism. When you are researching and writing reports and term papers, you must be constantly aware of the dangers of plagiarism. As long as you quote sources correctly and cite your sources properly, the integrity of your own work will be assured.

Plagiarism is the use of another person's work without acknowledging the source.

Some plagiarism is deliberate. This happens when a writer copies another person's work and presents it as his or her own with no intention of acknowledging the real source. The public is rightly shocked when such dishonesty is exposed. Over the years, a number of news reports have revealed people in important positions who have plagiarized. At the university, plagiarism is considered a very serious academic offense, one that often results in receiving a failing grade for a course and, in some cases, results in expulsion from a school. For those students who are tempted to deliberately plagiarize an assignment, not because they are lazy or unwilling to do the work, but because they feel inadequate to the task, we would encourage them to go to their instructors right from the start and ask for special help. Most colleges have writing labs that can lead students through the process of writing research papers. Most plagiarism is unintentional. Unintentional plagiarism is most often the result of carelessness during the research stage. The student's notes fail to report the exact source of the information used, or those notes do not indicate whether the words or sentences have been copied word for word, are paraphrased, or are summarized. Not keeping accurate notes at the research stage can lead to serious (and avoidable) problems at the writing stage. Careful note-taking is one of the keys to conducting a successful piece of research.