Transitioning to College
Helping You Succeed

Activity #4: Detecting Plagiarism

Objective
Provided with original source material and citations, students will identify the quotes and paraphrases that are plagiarized.

Procedure
1. Print out a Plagiarism Activity Sheet for each student and one for the instructor.

2. Print out a Plagiarism Answer Sheet for the instructor and review the answers.

3. Teach a lesson on different forms of plagiarism. Refer to the Tips for College Research: Use Information Responsibly, Ethically, Legally section for links to plagiarism Web sites, tutorials, and online quizzes for students.

4. Either independently or with a partner, have students complete the Plagiarism Activity Sheet.

5. Discuss the answers with the whole class.

Note: If you have done an extensive study of plagiarism or your students already have a good understanding of the subject, you may want to focus on asking students to explain why the quotes or paraphrases are plagiarized.

Note: The Plagiarism Activity Sheet could be divided into two sections. The first section could be used as a pre-test before the lesson, and the second section could be used as a post-test.

Additional Activity
Have students practice paraphrasing using the two text passages on the Paraphrase Practice Worksheet. This activity provides them with an opportunity to apply what they have learned.

Plagiarism Activity

**Directions:** Below are two original sources followed by quotes and paraphrases of the original sources. On the line write **Plagiarized** by any quote or paraphrase that is an example of plagiarism. Write **Okay** on the line if the quote or paraphrase is correct.

**MLA Citation:**

**Original Source Material:**
“Soccer is quickly gaining popularity in America. More schools continue to add soccer to their list of competitive varsity sports. In fact, most high schools that offer varsity soccer have a feeder program in the elementary and intermediate grades so that players come to the sport with a good number of skills and knowledge of the rules of the game.”

1. Soccer is being offered as a varsity sport at an increasing number of American high schools. In order to have better-prepared varsity participants, these school districts offer soccer programs to teach the basics to their students in grades 1 through 8 (Krenkle 16).

2. Most high schools that offer varsity soccer have a feeder program in the elementary and intermediate grades so that players come to the sport with a good number of skills and knowledge of the rules of the game (Krenkle 16).

3. “Soccer is quickly gaining popularity in America. More schools continue to add soccer to their list of competitive varsity sports” (Krenkle).

4. In American schools today it is more common to see soccer offered as a high school varsity sport. To better prepare their students, these school districts frequently present their students in grades 1 through 8 with the opportunity to learn soccer basics.

5. Soccer has become a popular sport in America, with more schools adding soccer to their list of competitive varsity sports. The majority of high schools offering varsity soccer have feeder programs in the earlier grades to teach young players basic skills and the rules of the game (Krenkle 16).
MLA Citation:

Original Source Material:
"The entire state of Oklahoma has not seen a drop of rain in six weeks. Fields have deep chasms in their arid soil; the mouths of these chasms gape open, begging for a drink. Farmers have lost billions of dollars worth of crops, and the lack of feed for livestock is making many more farmers nervous about the winter months."

6. According to Helms, arid Oklahoma fields have deep chasms that beg for a drink of rain. Farmers are really worried about their livestock.

7. Oklahoma has not seen a drop of rain in six weeks. Farmers have lost billions of dollars worth of crops, and the lack of feed for livestock is making many more farmers nervous about the winter months.

8. In Oklahoma, “farmers have lost billions of dollars worth of crops, and the lack of feed for livestock is making many more farmers nervous about the winter months” (Helms A4).

9. Oklahoma farmers are worried that they will not be able to feed their animals during the winter because the absence of rain the past six weeks has caused billions of dollars in crop loss (Helms A4).

10. All of Oklahoma has not seen any rain in a month and a half. The dry earth has enormous crevices. Farmers have lost billions because of crop failure, and they are very concerned about whether they will be able to feed their herds during the winter months (Schmidt 18).

Answer Sheet for Detecting Plagiarism Activity

Directions: Below are two original sources followed by quotes and paraphrases of the original sources. On the line write Plagiarized by any quote or paraphrase that is an example of plagiarism. Write Okay on the line if the quote or paraphrase is correct.

MLA Citation:

Original Source Material:
“Soccer is quickly gaining popularity in America. More schools continue to add soccer to their list of competitive varsity sports. In fact, most high schools that offer varsity soccer have a feeder program in the elementary and intermediate grades so that players come to the sport with a good number of skills and knowledge of the rules of the game.”

1. Soccer is being offered as a varsity sport at an increasing number of American high schools. In order to have better-prepared varsity participants, these school districts offer soccer programs to teach the basics to their students in grades 1 through 8 (Krenkle 16).

Okay.

2. Most high schools that offer varsity soccer have a feeder program in the elementary and intermediate grades so that players come to the sport with a good number of skills and knowledge of the rules of the game (Krenkle 16).

Plagiarized. The text is the third sentence of the original (except for “In fact”) and should be placed inside quotation marks.

3. “Soccer is quickly gaining popularity in America. More schools continue to add soccer to their list of competitive varsity sports” (Krenkle).

Plagiarized. No page number is provided in the citation. Also, you could discuss whether this would be good information to submit as a quote in a research paper since it could easily be paraphrased and cited.

4. In American schools today it is more common to see soccer offered as a high school varsity sport. To better prepare their students, these school districts frequently present their students in grades 1 through 8 with the opportunity to learn soccer basics.

Plagiarized. No citation is provided.

5. Soccer has become a popular sport in America, with more schools adding soccer to their list of competitive varsity sports. The majority of high schools offering varsity soccer have feeder programs in the earlier grades to teach young players basic skills and the rules of the game (Krenkle 16). Plagiarized.

Only a few words have been changed with synonyms.
MLA Citation:

Original Source Material:
"The entire state of Oklahoma has not seen a drop of rain in six weeks. Fields have deep chasms in their arid soil; the mouths of these chasms gape open, begging for a drink. Farmers have lost billions of dollars worth of crops, and the lack of feed for livestock is making many more farmers nervous about the winter months."

6. According to Helms, arid Oklahoma fields have deep chasms that beg for a drink of rain. Farmers are really worried about their livestock.  
Plagiarized. No page number is provided in the citation. Phrases are the same as the original (see red text), and original words are borrowed but moved elsewhere.

7. Oklahoma has not seen a drop of rain in six weeks. Farmers have lost billions of dollars worth of crops, and the lack of feed for livestock is making many more farmers nervous about the winter months.  
Plagiarized. No citation (author and page number) is provided. Partial and entire sentences from the original quote have been copied and should be placed inside quotation marks.

8. In Oklahoma, “farmers have lost billions of dollars worth of crops, and the lack of feed for livestock is making many more farmers nervous about the winter months” (Helms A4).  
Okay. You could, however, discuss whether this would be good information to submit as a quote in a research paper since the information could be easily paraphrased and then cited.

9. Oklahoma farmers are worried that they will not be able to feed their animals during the winter because the absence of rain the past six weeks has caused billions of dollars in crop loss (Helms A4).  
Okay.

10. All of Oklahoma has not seen any rain in a month and a half. The dry earth has enormous crevices. Farmers have lost billions because of crop failure, and they are very concerned about whether they will be able to feed their herds during the winter months (Schmidt 18).  
Plagiarized. The citation is fabricated because the student did not remember the source (Helms). Also, the sentence and paragraph structure is too much like the original.

**Paraphrase Practice Worksheet**

**Directions:** Read the original text below. Without plagiarizing, write a paraphrase on the lines for each of the original text passages. Be sure to give proper credit to the sources.

**Citation:**

**Original Text:**
“Whether you have morning sickness, motion sickness, or nausea from chemotherapy or radiation therapy, help may be no farther than your refrigerator or kitchen pantry. There are several foods that can help the body mitigate mild to moderate nausea. Pectin is a dietary fiber that occurs naturally in plant cell walls. Fruits such as apples, peaches, plums, and currents are good sources of pectin, as are carrots and potatoes. Ginger, also known as ginger root, is another very powerful plant that works on the digestive tract. Ginger is found in ginger ale, gingersnaps, gingerbread, and certain Chinese dishes. So the next time your stomach is feeling queasy, try reaching for a can of ginger ale, or nibbling a gingersnap cookie, an apple, or a carrot.”

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Paraphrase Practice Worksheet

Citation:

Original Text:
“Who should teach children about personal finances? Ideally, it would be the child’s parent or guardian. However, many adults do not have the knowledge necessary to teach such concepts. This is evident by the staggering amount of credit card debt in the United States and the astounding number of adults who claim they cannot balance their own checkbook. Many argue that schools must step in and teach personal finance. Adding this requirement to the compulsory curriculum would require that more teachers be hired, which many school districts cannot afford, and would increase the credit requirement for graduation.”