

TASK 1: Identifying and understanding plagiarism

a) Look at the example of an original passage and three degrees of plagiarism based on it (from <http://www.princeton.edu/pr/pub/integrity/pages/plagiarism.html>). Try to decide what aspects of the paraphrases make them examples of plagiarism (or not).

Original text

From time to time this submerged or latent theater in Hamlet becomes almost overt. It is close to the surface in Hamlet's pretense of madness, the "antic disposition" he puts on to protect himself and prevent his antagonists from plucking out the heart of his mystery. It is even closer to the surface when Hamlet enters his mother's room and holds up, side by side, the pictures of the two kings, Old Hamlet and Claudius, and proceeds to describe for her the true nature of the choice she has made, presenting truth by means of a show. Similarly, when he leaps into the open grave at Ophelia's funeral, ranting in high heroic terms, he is acting out for Laertes, and perhaps for himself as well, the folly of excessive, melodramatic expressions of grief.

Alvin Kernan (1979) *The Playwright as Magician*. New Haven: Yale University Press. pp.102-103.

Text example 1

verbatim plagiarism, or unacknowledged direct quotation (lifted passages are in bold):

Almost all of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* can be understood as a play about acting and the theater. For example, there is **Hamlet's pretense of madness, the "antic disposition" that he puts on to protect himself and prevent his antagonists from plucking out the heart of his mystery. When Hamlet enters his mother's room, he holds up, side by side, the pictures of the two kings, Old Hamlet and Claudius, and proceeds to describe for her the true nature of the choice she has made, presenting truth by means of a show. Similarly, when he leaps into the open grave at Ophelia's funeral, ranting in high heroic terms, he is acting out for Laertes, and perhaps for himself as well, the folly of excessive, melodramatic expressions of grief.**

Text example 2

lifting selected passages and phrases without proper acknowledgment (lifted passages are in bold):

Almost all of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* can be understood as a play about acting and the theater. For example, in Act 1, Hamlet adopts a **pretense of madness** that he uses **to protect himself and prevent his antagonists from** discovering his mission to revenge his father's murder. He also presents **truth by means of a show** when he compares the portraits of Gertrude's two husbands in order **to describe for her the true nature of the choice she has made**. And when he leaps in Ophelia's open grave **ranting in high heroic terms**, Hamlet is **acting out the folly of excessive, melodramatic expressions of grief**.

Text example 3

paraphrasing the text while maintaining the basic paragraph and sentence structure:

Almost all of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* can be understood as a play about acting and the theater. For example, in Act 1, Hamlet pretends to be insane in order to make sure his enemies do not discover his mission to revenge his father's murder. The theme is even more obvious when Hamlet compares the pictures of his mother's two husbands to show her what a bad choice she has made, using their images to reveal the truth. Also, when he jumps into Ophelia's grave, hurling his challenge to Laertes, Hamlet demonstrates the foolishness of exaggerated expressions of emotion.

How to avoid plagiarism

It can be difficult to re-write somebody else's words without repeating their vocabulary and syntax (though it can be easier for a foreigner – one of the few instances when being a non-native is an advantage!). In order to paraphrase, you have to break down the original into its core ideas, and re-present them, not necessarily in the same order as they formerly appeared.

- i) Take notes
- ii) Find synonyms for the key terms
- iii) Think of alternative ways of presenting the information; consider using noun forms of verbs, adding adjectives and adverbs, etc.
- iv) Write your paraphrase from your notes and synonyms; **do not** refer back to the original.
- v) Check your paraphrase against the original to ensure that you have not inadvertently repeated parts of it verbatim.
- vi) Complete your paraphrase with a reference to the original (see Referencing).

TASK 2: Paraphrasing

Follow the steps listed above to prepare a paraphrase of the passage "Defining Plagiarism"

Defining Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a form of cheating and is a serious academic offence. It arises where work submitted by a student is not their own and has been taken from another source. The original material is then hidden from the marker, either by not referencing it properly, by paraphrasing it or by not mentioning it at all. (...)

It is important to realise that plagiarism may occur in a number of forms, not just in conventional written work. Another student may be involved, or the plagiarism may arise from the misuse of sources outside the University.

The key is proper attribution of source material. None of the activities listed above is, of itself, necessarily wrong.

(adapted from *Guidance for Students on Plagiarism* (no date) Academic Services,
The University of Birmingham <http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/study/support/sca/plagguide.shtml>)

Notes:

Paraphrase

TASK 3: Summarising

Read the following extract. What is the main point expressed here? Summarise the paragraph in **50 words or less**.

With clockwork regularity literary anthologies and course textbooks imply, suggest, or assert that eighteenth-century English children's literature was rooted in fairy tales, specifically those of Charles Perrault. Harvey Darton, whose richly documented history of English children's literature has provided the guiding direction for countless other accounts, wrote that Perrault's tales "have been naturalized citizens of the British nursery" since they were translated by Robert Samber in 1729. In *Classics of Children's Literature*, John Griffith and Charles Frey put five of Perrault's tales - "Sleeping Beauty," "Little Red Ridinghood," "Blue Beard," "Puss in Boots," and "Cinderella" - front and center and claim that they "grew steadily in popularity" once they were translated into English. Little wonder that Geoffrey Summerfield could comfortably state without further proof or elaboration that "these tales of Perrault soon passed into England, and in Robert Samber's translation were frequently reprinted throughout the eighteenth century". Summerfield's easy acceptance of the Perrault paradigm characterizes both lay and scholarly perceptions. (163 words)

Ruth B. Bottigheimer (2002) *Misperceived Perceptions: Perrault's Fairy Tales and English Children's Literature*. *Children's Literature* 30, 1-18.

Summary
