

WHAT IS ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND HOW CAN I AVOID IT?

In recent years, things in classrooms have changed. The Internet makes research and information- seeking so much easier and efficient, and communications are available at the touch of a button. Because of these great advances, though, some students find the lines between their own work and plagiarism a bit blurry. In many cases, students are unaware that some ways of working are actually cheating, so I wanted to clarify for you what is considered academic dishonesty so you do not unintentionally fall into that trap.

1. Internet research is great, but you MUST credit all sources. If, for example, you do a research paper on the dust bowl and you find a great site on the Internet, the procedure is that you take notes, read the material, digest it in your mind, and then write your paper in your own words. If something on the site is phrased just perfectly, you may use it. But, be sure to give credit to your source. *According to Dr. John Smith, an expert quoted on the Great History Website (www.greathistory.org), "The Dust Bowl swept through the Midwest like a plague of locusts, wiping out everything in its path." Smith estimates that over one million families were displaced and forced to move or starve to death.*

Using this information without giving credit to your source is like saying you are the expert on the Dust Bowl. That is probably not the case.

2. Working together on solitary assignments is something some students do frequently, and it can get you into trouble. Unless a project or report is a group project or report, do it yourself. Changing a few words here and there does not substantially change a paper if you and your friend have done it together.

3. Getting help on assignments from older brothers, sisters, or parents can be a blessing or a curse, depending on how you do it. Asking someone to read your essay and give you feedback is one thing, but asking them to rewrite your commentary, find good quotes for you, or juice up the vocabulary with words you do not know is not what feedback is all about. The essay is a reflection of what YOU know, not what your parents or siblings or best friends know.

4. Copying the work someone else has done is also academic dishonesty, even if you do not think it is a big deal.

CONSEQUENCES:

- 1st offense = zero on the assignment and an academic dishonesty referral
- 2nd offense = removal from the class with an F

I hope this clears up some of the confusion about academic dishonesty. If you have further questions, or you are unclear what constitutes academic dishonesty, please ask.