

How to discourage plagiarism

1. Give Specific Assignments

If assignments are embedded in the course curriculum and are limited to a few specific topics, then finding an exact match for the assignment requirements will be that much more difficult.

2. Require Specific Components

Prescribing certain features, like a compare and contrast or a personal observation component, would necessitate too much reworking of an *acquired* paper in order to tailor it to suit the assignment requirements.

3. Give Related Assignments

Integrate the writing assignments with other related projects. Ask students to keep a journal of the writing process where they discuss their research, explore the topic and thesis, and even discuss their personal struggles with the assignment. Or have the students present the substance of their paper to the class in the form of an oral report. To this point, the class could organize a "Conference Day" with organized panels.

4. Ask Students to Submit Sections in Stages

Set a schedule whereby students submit perhaps an outline, introduction, body portions, research summaries, a conclusion, etc. by a set date. Students could work on these sections in peer review groups.

5. Have Students Establish a Research Trail

For example, students could prepare a list of resources along with a brief summary and an indication of where the resource was acquired (call numbers, for ex.)

6. Make Student Work Public

Have students share their writing in groups, do peer review, submit writing to discussion forums, or even publish writing on the web. Broadening the readership of student writing heightens the risk of discovery of lifted material.

7. Require Revisions

No (student) paper is perfect. Make editing a compulsory part of the writing process.

8. Get Students to Discuss and Explain Their Projects

Student conferences and round table class discussions provide opportunities for students to showcase the knowledge they've acquired through the research and writing process.

9. Don't Accept Papers that Attempt to Circumvent Requirements

Instead of awarding a single grade for the final product, have the grade reflect the writing process. If, for example, students are submitting pieces of the paper in stages, they could receive a grade for each submission as well as the final product so that the total would equal 100%.

10. Let Students Know that You're in the Know

Before students begin writing projects, discuss plagiarism and in the process let students know that YOU are aware of online plagiarism sites and that you actively use anti-plagiarism software. You might even demonstrate your ability to detect a lifted passage by submitting it to one of the comprehensive search engines.

11. Ask Students to Sign an Integrity Certificate

Prepare an integrity certificate that defines plagiarism, discusses the seriousness of the crime, and explains the penalties that you and/or the College will impose. The certificate ends with a statement like "I understand the information contained in this document including the consequences of plagiarism." Have students sign and return the document to you the first week of class.