

The following guidelines are taken from the *Central Bucks School District Graduation Project Student Manual*, page 10.

Plagiarism Guidelines

If you borrow someone else's ideas or words and pretend they are your own, you are plagiarizing. **When you plagiarize, you are using someone else's *opinions, ideas or language* without giving him/her credit.** You are being dishonest when you plagiarize. It is a form of cheating, whether it is intentional or not. You will avoid plagiarism if you acknowledge that the borrowed ideas and/or words are not your own.

Below is an example of plagiarism taken from the fourth edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, section 1.7, pages 26 and 29.

Suppose, for example, you want to use the material in the following passage, which appears on page 624 of an essay by Wendy Martin in the book *Columbia Literary History of the United States*. Here are the words exactly as they appear in the book:

Some of Dickinson's most powerful poems express her firmly held conviction that life cannot be fully comprehended without an understanding of death.

If you write the following sentence based on Martin's statement without any documentation, you will commit plagiarism:

Emily Dickinson strongly believed that we couldn't understand life fully unless we also comprehend death.

However, you may present the material if you cite your source, as seen below:

As Wendy Martin has suggested, Emily Dickinson strongly believed that we couldn't understand life fully unless we also comprehend death (624).

The source is indicated, in accordance with MLA style, by the name of the author and by the page reference in parentheses. The name refers the reader to the corresponding entry in the works cited list, which appears at the end of the paper.

If you have any doubts about whether or not you are committing plagiarism, cite your source or sources. Giving credit is known as **citation**. The first type of citation is used for a *direct quote*: you must give credit if you quote directly from a book. The second type of citation is used for a *paraphrase*: you must also credit any indirect reference where you restate the other person's ideas in your own words.

Because you do not want to plagiarize, you must take care to start the research process by keeping careful track of sources and direct quotations as you take notes.