

Proposal: The Academic Senate reaffirms support for A STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM, and directs the Senate Executive Committee to disseminate this document to the MJC faculty.

A STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is misrepresenting someone else's words or ideas as your own. The wording or ideas of others, when used in a written composition, oral presentation, or other assignments, must be properly attributed. This means using proper citation style to give credit to the source in a paper, or verbally acknowledging the source in a speech. Borrowed ideas may include facts, opinions, statistics, graphs, drawings, and physical models.

Use of another person's wording requires quotation marks and a proper citation in a written presentation, or clear spoken attribution of the quotation in an oral presentation. Paraphrasing or summarizing -- any form of restating the ideas of others in your own words -- also requires attribution. When you paraphrase, you must use your own words and sentence structure; changing or rearranging a few words is not sufficient and is considered plagiarism.

Attribution is not required for common knowledge or your own ideas, such as facts you witnessed, your interpretation, or your opinions. "Common knowledge" is information widely known by a reasonably well-informed public. If you do not remember the source of some knowledge or have all the details about the source for proper citation, you must research further to get the required information before using that source.

Other forms of plagiarism include distorting a source's words or ideas and misrepresenting the source by faking a citation. Also, an essay, speech, or other work produced by you in the past, but re-used for a current assignment without clear indication of its prior use, may be considered "self-plagiarism."

Ignorance is not an excuse. Students are expected to understand what plagiarism is and that it is unacceptable. Whenever in doubt, students should ask their instructor.

(Modesto Jr. College Academic Senate Academic Standards Committee, November 17, 2004)