

Title: What is Plagiarism?

Grade Ranges:

 K-4
 X 5-8
 9-12

Subject Tag:

Writing Guides: Composition Writing
Writing Guides: Research Papers
Journalism

Synopsis:

Students will create definitions, rules, and consequences related to plagiarism. School districts, schools, and classes may have definitions of plagiarism that can be incorporated into this lesson plan. In conclusion, students will present their ideas to their classmates as if they were making a presentation to the school board. Plus, with the widespread use of the Internet in education today, it is important that students understand plagiarism, and this lesson can also be an introduction to a lesson on using the Internet as a resource.

Keywords:

plagiarism, research, writing, using the Internet in schools, cybercheating, documentation, MLA, citing, citations, sources, quotations

Body:

1. Facilitate a discussion on what, specifically, plagiarism is (not correctly documenting information from resources, whether done intentionally or accidentally). Through the discussion, create a definition of plagiarism the entire class agrees upon.
 - Discuss: citing work in quotations, using quotations for identical language, and most importantly, citing summaries of other people's ideas.
 - Ask students why it is important to credit people for their ideas. Why is it wrong to not give credit for ideas? Students will likely mention stealing and cheating, and these words will likely end up in your class definition.
2. Have students review the district, school, or class rules and definitions of plagiarism. They may do this early on in the discussion, or you may wait to look at this "official" definition until after they have created their own. How are the two definitions similar and different?
3. Divide students into cooperative groups and have them evaluate the various rules on plagiarism discussed in Step 2. Each group should come up with a rule to apply to every class in the school or district. Students must improve upon existing rules or create a completely new one if none exist.
4. After groups come up with their rules, each should come up with a set of consequences for those who violate the rules. They should consider whether the circumstances should influence the consequences. Will they treat first-time offenses or a repeat offenses differently or the same? What if the violation is

- intentional or accidental? (You may want to take a moment to talk about the challenge or proving intent.)
5. Have groups present their rules and consequences to the rest of the class as if making a presentation to the school board.
 6. (Optional) Apply what students have learned about plagiarism so far to a lesson on using the Internet in completing assignments. School districts, schools, or individual classes may set limits on the use of the Internet. If no official policy exists, as a class, create Internet guidelines for completion of all class assignments. Take this opportunity to demonstrate that the Internet can often be unreliable and inaccurate; anyone can set up a Web page and say anything. Allow students to search for examples of unreliable or incorrect information to highlight the dangers of plagiarizing from the Internet.

Related Links:

1. Plagiarism.org.
<http://www.plagiarism.org>
This site contains information for educators concerned about plagiarism. It is associated with turnitin.org, a site where educators go to help fight plagiarism.
2. “Avoiding Plagiarism”
<http://www.hamilton.edu/academics/resource/wc/avoidingplagiarism.html>
This site features an essay on how to avoid plagiarism from the writing center at Hamilton College (NY).
3. Cybercheating
<http://www.teachers-connect.net/cc/98-99/cybercheat.htm>
This site consists of an informational article for teachers that contains descriptions and links to plagiarism-related sites, from those that sell papers and encourage students to cheat to those that help fight plagiarism.

Features:

- ___ Contains special education tips
- ___ Quick Activity (less than 30 minutes; story starter)
- ___ Requires Internet access for students to complete

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to recognize examples of plagiarism.
2. Students will be able to compare and contrast correct uses of research tools.
3. Students will be able to organize, as a class, a working definition of plagiarism.

Standards:

- NY: 1** – Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.
4 – Students will read, write, listen and speak for social interaction.

NYC: E2a – The student produces a report that creates an organizing structure

appropriate to purpose, audience and context.

CT: 2 – Students will produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences. **3** – Students will apply the conventions of Standard English in oral and written communication.

NJ: 3.3 – All students will write in clear, concise, organized language that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes.

Time Required:

30 - 90 minutes

Technology and Materials Needed:

1. Existing district, school, or class guidelines on plagiarism
2. Use of the Internet (optional)

Assessment Criteria:

1. Students can be assessed on their class participation.
2. Students can be graded on the review exercise.

Recommended Lesson Plan Review Date:

Review Comments:

Check resource links.