

Plagiarism and Referencing

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is simply theft! It is presenting (directly or indirectly) another person's thoughts or words as your own. This includes copying and pasting from the Internet or another student's document and changing a few words. Also, if you don't acknowledge a source when quoting a piece of information in a piece of coursework, then you are passing off someone else's original ideas as your own.

Exam boards take plagiarism very seriously. Each exam board requires every student to sign a piece of paper to prove that the coursework submitted is their own. If you 'lie' and are found to have used someone else's work in your coursework, you will not be entered for the exam and therefore will not gain a GCSE in that subject. It will also affect whether you will be allowed to be entered for other GCSEs that are marked by the same exam board.

If you regularly and consistently make the correct, appropriate references to other authors' work, then you'll avoid the risk of plagiarism. Even accidental plagiarism is still plagiarism - and can be avoided by good referencing.

Referencing

Referencing is essential to show that you have researched your material. It also helps to distinguish between the ideas presented in articles you have researched and your own opinions.

A reference is an exact note of the source of a piece of information. Typically, a reference has the following elements:

- author(s) name(s)
- title of the article
- book/newspaper or magazine title
- year when published (for newspapers, include the whole date)

When referencing the Internet, the important thing to include is the URL (the long website address at the top of the screen)! You must also include the date you accessed the website, as online information is updated regularly.

Here are some examples of references:

A book:

Burden, J., Fullick, A., Martin, J. & Hall, A. Core: Modules 1-3, Twenty First Century Science Pilot Resources, 2003.

A newspaper article

LOWTHER, W. (2002), "Inside the clone cult's laboratory", *Mail on Sunday*, 29th December 2002

A website:

Q&A: Stem cells [online], BBC News UK Edition. Accessed: Thursday, 19 May, 2005.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/4562235.stm>.