**Plagiarism**

In Academic Writing, plagiarism is the uncredited use, intentional or unintentional, of another’s words or ideas. When you reference another’s words or ideas, you must always use an in-text citation! Plagiarism is:

- If you use another’s words as your own.
- If you pass off an original idea as your own.
  - Example: “I invented the internet.” (And you didn’t.)

**What are some often missed citations?**

- Online discussion boards, class discussion, interviews, or conversation with an expert in the field.
- Song lyrics, magazines and newspaper articles, quotes from a TV program.
- When you are defining a word or technical term, especially if you are using someone else’s language.

**What does not need citation?**

- Your own observations, experiences, or attitudes.
- Your own results from a lab or experiment.
- Common knowledge (folklore, urban legends, common sense observations, or general knowledge).

**What is common knowledge?**

- A source is probably common knowledge if you can find it undocumented in 3 or more credible sources. Some examples of common knowledge are:
  - Virginia is in the United States.
  - Dogs are mammals.

**When in doubt, it is usually better to cite than not!**