

## Plagiarism - Information for senior pupils

In most subjects you are encouraged to research the topics you are studying, using a variety of sources to gain information and ideas. Such sources as the library and the internet are enormously helpful for this. However, they need to be used with care as it is all too easy to take other people's words and ideas and - without realising it - pass them off as your own. This is what is meant by plagiarism, and it is a form of cheating.

Plagiarism, like all cheating, is regarded as a serious offence by teachers and by the SQA. The SQA investigates many instances of suspected fraud every year. However, in addition to the dishonesty of plagiarism, it is also contrary to your long-term interests as a learner. If undetected, it may provide you with a short-cut to an undeserved high mark, but you will be achieving a level you cannot maintain. It is also a way of bypassing the process of learning through your own efforts, thus preventing you from making real improvement. To ensure you avoid the pitfall of plagiarism:

- DO NOT 'lift' ideas from someone else by copying directly from a book, from another pupil's work or by downloading from the internet, except when deliberately quoting (see below);
- DO NOT make a very close paraphrase of a source by simply altering a few words of the original; you should instead make your own notes from sources, restructuring the original and using your own expressions;
- DO NOT adopt the structure or form of another person's work. However, we all learn from other people and from exploring their ideas. There are, therefore, occasions when it is appropriate to adapt ideas from another source or include quotes or phrases from another writer. However, whenever this is done, the following procedures must be observed:
- YOU MUST openly acknowledge these ideas and where they originate, by introducing them appropriately (e.g. As so-and-so argued in her article for the 'Observer', long life can be a mixed blessing . . . );
- YOU MUST acknowledge quotations and phraseology by enclosing quoted words in quotation marks and showing how they illustrate the point you are making;
- YOU MUST provide a bibliography, or list of sources consulted, at the end of your essay/project (further details from your subject teacher).

Be responsible and enjoy your research!