



Connect with Kids

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For the Classroom Plagiarism

Video Overview

While most high school students know that plagiarism is a form of cheating, many are unsure of what actually constitutes plagiarism.

"I thought before that it was just copying verbatim somebody else's work," 18-year-old Jessica Slaton says.

"A student might say, 'Well, maybe if I change the words, it's not plagiarism,'" explains April Williams, 16.

But by definition, plagiarism applies to more than just words.

"Plagiarism is taking someone else's works, ideas and anything else that's abstract [without giving credit]," 16-year-old Anthony Macaranas says.

Sometimes this cheating is intentional, but sometimes kids just don't know.

"A lot of people don't know. I know I didn't know four months ago if you took someone's idea, then that would be counted as plagiarism. I didn't know that," says 17-year-old Mario Feliz. "I'm part of the 97%. I'm not gonna lie. I have unwittingly plagiarized."

Experts say parents should ensure that their children really understand the meaning of plagiarism and then help them avoid it by asking specific questions about their schoolwork and the papers they're writing.

"Have the student, their son or daughter, talk about it," AP English teacher Christine Masdon says. "[Ask them] what are you doing this for, what are you learning in there and where did you find this?"

Masdon says that children need to know that in many high schools, plagiarism equals an instant "F" and in college, it can mean expulsion. They need to understand that when a student steals someone else's work, that student never learns how to research or write a paper and misses out on that feeling of pride for succeeding on one's own.

"It's gonna catch up with you later in life," April says.

Discussion and Self-Reflection Questions

- Did you learn something new about plagiarism in the video? How would you define it?
- How has technology and online research made plagiarism more of an issue?
- What are the rules about plagiarism at your school? How are they communicated? How are they enforced?
- How would you feel if someone plagiarized your work?