

In any class at Stetson, students will encounter the question of what constitutes plagiarism. This page offers some discussion questions, with which students and instructors can talk about the often hidden assumptions about ownership of ideas and where that very fine line is.

*In small groups discuss the following cases of plagiarism. Then rate each case on a scale of one to five, with one standing for “no plagiarism” and five standing for “deliberate plagiarism.” Take the time to discuss your reasons before you present your ratings to the class.*

1. You must write a movie review. You’ve never done this before so you search the web for examples. After reading a number of reviews, you feel that you have a good idea of what kinds of things should be included. You write the review, but you accidentally/unconsciously include phrases from the reviews that you read.
2. You must write a movie review. Time and money are short, so you and a fellow student decide to pool your resources, rent, and review the same movie.
3. You must write an essay for your Psychology course. Unfortunately, writing essays is very difficult for you. You go to the writing center, and they make some suggestions to help you get started.
4. You can’t think of anything to write about. You are terribly frustrated and tell your roommate that you have writer’s block. Your roommate, who has already completed ENGL 101 at Stetson, suggests that you write about universal health care. She tells you that she wrote a paper on this topic for a course and received an A. Your roommate is kind enough to lend you the research materials that she used in writing her essay. She no longer has the paper, but she tells you its main points. You use those points to shape your essay.
5. You must write an essay. Unfortunately, you don’t come up with a topic until the last minute. By the time you finish your draft, you are exhausted and can hardly think straight. Your roommate wrote a similar paper last semester and makes several suggestions that revamp your entire essay. You follow her advice.
6. You can’t think of anything to write about. You are terribly frustrated and tell your roommate that you have writer’s block. Your roommate, who has already completed the ENGL 101 course, suggests that you write about global warming. He tells you that he wrote a paper on this topic and received an A. Your roommate is kind enough to lend you the research materials that he used in writing his essay.
7. You write a paper about global warming but find that you have misplaced the bibliographic information for one of your sources. You are short of time, so you make up the information necessary for your works cited and parenthetical references.

8. You have to write a paper, but because of commitments to your family, you don't have the time to do the research and writing. You wrote a paper about the PATRIOT Act in high school. You find a copy of it, put the teacher's name and class information on a cover sheet, and turn it in.

9. You write a paper about universal health care but can't find a source to support one of your points. Your roommate, who has already completed the composition course, tells you she wrote a paper about the same topic. She lends it to you and you quote her, being sure to properly document every word and idea.