Avoiding Plagiarism

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is the act of *taking another person's writing or ideas and passing it off as your own*. This includes information from web pages, books, songs, television shows, email messages, interviews, journal articles, artworks, images, online talks or any other medium.

Checklist to avoid plagiarism:

Before you submit your work, make sure you have:

- ☐ Paraphrased correctly and included a reference to clearly indicate the parts of your work that are drawn from another person's work.
  Paraphrasing is when you use what someone else has said or written, but you write it in your own words. If you paraphrase you must include an in-text citation add the source to your reference list.

- ☐ Used direct quotations sparingly.
  It is fine to occasionally quote other people, and it is expected that you do – but ensure you provide your own contribution or viewpoint. It is your work that earns you marks. As a guide, 10-15% quotes in a paper is usually acceptable.

- ☐ Provided a reference for every image, diagram or figure (unless you created it).
  Creation is when you produce something new. If you edit an existing item – reference it.

- ☐ Included a reference list of all work cited.
  Understand what type of referencing protocol you are required to follow for your unit. This information is found in unit and assessment outlines.

- ☐ Kept a copy of the original sources that you have referenced.
  Keep your work and the original reference together. You may be required to produce the original source for comparison.

- ☐ Avoided using copy and paste to take text from another source (unless it is a direct quote and you reference it).
  If you copy and paste from a source and fail to reference it properly, then you have plagiarised whether you did this intentionally or not.

- ☐ Avoided using another student's work, or submitting someone's work as your own.
  Often students are encouraged to work together, to cooperate by sharing ideas and understandings. However, individual assessments (where your name is the only name on the cover sheet) must be your own work. Copying from someone else's work is considered plagiarism and penalties can apply. Do not allow anyone else to submit your work.

- ☐ Avoided copying from a previous assignment submitted to this or any other unit.
  This is known as self-plagiarism.

Steps to follow when note-taking:

1. Read the section of text from the chosen source carefully to ensure that you have thoroughly understood the meaning of it.

2. Identify the main ideas and key words. Note, key words are specialised vocabulary and they do not need to be changed.

3. Underline words that can be substituted with synonyms and use the most suitable alternatives where appropriate.

4. In your own words, rewrite the section of text and make sure that you have included all the main ideas. Many students cover the text at this point to avoid direct copying.

5. When you have finished, review and compare your paraphrase to the original text to see if you have retained the meaning and tone from the original.

6. Record the reference details of the original source (including the page number) ready to include in your assignment.

Final points to remember:

✓ Familiarise yourself with the UC Academic Integrity policy.

✓ There are many different referencing systems available (APA, Harvard, Chicago etc) so it is important you check your unit outline for the correct one to use.

✓ Refworks and EndNote are good referencing tools; see introductory resources about these on the Study Help Moodle page.

✓ Use your course syllabus. Many lecturers provide guidelines regarding the use of other sources. Sometimes, a very specific format is required, and each discipline may be different.

✓ Incorporate sources into your work. You should be trying to summarise and paraphrase rather than directly quote.

✓ Most importantly, when in doubt, ask. Lecturers and tutors are there to help. There are also lots of online resources available (see below) and Study Skills handouts titled:
   o Summarising and Paraphrasing
   o Referencing Effectively

Handy links:

UC Academic Integrity Module:
http://learnonline.canberra.edu.au/course/view.php?id=3391

UC Study Help Moodle
http://canberra.edu.au/studyhelp

UC Library Referencing Guides:
http://canberra.libguides.com/referencing