DEFINITION:
Although you have probably heard the term “plagiarism” many times, you may not thoroughly understand what it is. According to The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, to plagiarize is: “1. To use and pass off (the ideas or writings of another) as one’s own. 2. To appropriate for use as one’s own passages or ideas from (another)… To put forth as original to oneself the ideas or words of another” (Pickett, 2000, p.1340). What does this mean? It means that anytime you use words or ideas from another source, you need to cite where that information came from. If you do not cite your sources, you are stealing.

These are all examples of plagiarism:
- Turning in someone else’s work as your own
- Copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- Copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not (Research, 2003)

PREVENTION:
It takes time, effort, and practice to become comfortable with the paper writing process and to become adept at integrating sources into your papers by using proper citation methods. Here are a few tips that may make this process easier:
- Use your resources here at Rasmussen when you have questions. The Resources tab in all online course contains the APA Citation online guide. Your instructor, the librarians, and the learning center coordinators are all there to help you when you have questions about paper writing.
- The Resources tab and online library webpage via the Student Portal also has an example of a sample paper written in APA style, sample citations, formatting guides, and links to NoodleBib citation generator all of which can be useful for students in creating their research papers.
- Go to the Online Tutoring Service to speak with a librarian or English tutor about the correct way to paraphrase and quote when writing a paper. Librarians are also great resources for information on the proper way to use parenthetical citation and format the References page using APA style
- Learn how to paraphrase properly. Paraphrasing is when you borrow someone else’s idea, but restate it in your own words and sentence structure.
- Practice using quotations correctly. Whenever you use exact words from another source you are quoting. Quoting should be used when you want to emphasize a point, or when you don’t believe you can make the same point as well as your source did.

IN-TEXT CITATION:
By using parenthetical in-text citation you alert a reader that you have borrowed information from another source. Your citation should give the reader the information he or she would need to find that source. If you borrow ideas or words from another source without citing, you are plagiarizing.

Here are a few other reasons to cite:
- Citations are extremely helpful to anyone who wants to find out more about your ideas and where they came from.
- Citing sources shows the amount of research you’ve done.
- Citing sources strengthens your work by lending outside support to your ideas (“Research resources”, 2003).
- If you are unsure whether a statement or fact needs to cited, it is always better to cite than not to cite.

REFERENCES