Study Skills 3: Referencing and Plagiarism

You may well have heard of **plagiarism** before, and to have heard that it is something that you need to avoid. **Plagiarism** is seeking to pass off the work of others as your own and is considered a form of cheating. Universities take a very strict line on **plagiarism** which can sometimes even result in being removed from a course.

How do you avoid **plagiarism**? There are two essential parts to this:

1. Understanding what needs to be referenced
2. Referencing your sources clearly and correctly

What is a reference?

A reference is just a note in your assignment which says if you have referred to or been influenced by another source such as book, website or article.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Needs to be referenced | Does not need to be referenced |
| * Direct quotationse.g. ‘A diet low in fruit and vegetables is ‘among the top mortality risk factors all over the world’
* Paraphrased material e.g. For both men and women, adopting a vegetarian diet can significantly reduce the risk of premature death.
* Facts, figures or statistics e.g. Healthy diet, exercise and being a non-smoker can increase life expectancy by 9 – 15 years.
 | * Facts already common knowledge e.g. A vegetarian diet is one that excludes meat.
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**What would a good reference look like?**

Text: The proponents of vegetarian, vegan or largely plant-based diets argue that, coupled with regular exercise and being a non-smoker, these diets can increase life expectancy – some studies suggest by up to 15 years [1].

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Endnote: [1] Salonen, Arto O. & Helne, Tuula, T., ‘Vegetarian Diets: A Way towards a Sustainable Society’, *Journal of Sustainable Development* 5:6 (2012), pp. 10-24, (p. 11).

There are a number of different ways of referencing, and these often vary depending on what subject you are studying. The most important to thing is to be consistent. This means that you need to stick to the same system throughout your whole assignment.

The example here shows how we would recommend you reference in your Final Assignment.

If you’re not sure if something you have used in your essay needs to be referenced, **send your tutor a message on the VLE** and they can help you decide if it needs citation and write a reference. But as a general rule, **if in doubt, reference.**