Plagiarism

What It Is, What Are The Consequences, And How To Avoid It
Definition of Plagiarism

• From Dictionary.com:
  
  http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/plagiarism

  “an act or instance of using or closely imitating the language and thoughts of another author without authorization and the representation of that author’s work as one’s own, as by not crediting the original author.”
Examples of Plagiarism

• A student copies the work of another student without attribution or permission and presents it as his/her own

• A student turns in homework that is partly copied from a source that was found on the internet (Wikipedia, for example) without attribution
Another Example of Plagiarism

• **Edward Wegman**, a prominent statistician at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, wrote (with student **Jasmin Said**) a Congressional report in 2006 that was later published in *Computational Statistics and Data Analysis*. The report was reviewed by 3 plagiarism experts who concluded that parts of it were copied from Wikipedia and textbooks.

• The report was retracted by Stanley Azen, the CSDA journal editor

• Dr. Wegman said the student was responsible.

Another Example, Contin.

• Two other instances of plagiarism by Dr. Wegman have been alleged:

  - a paper on social networks, copying research by a climate scientist with whom Dr. Wegman disagreed

  - a paper on color graphics entitled ‘Statistical Data Mining’ which allegedly used various sources without attribution

See: http://andrewgelman.com/2011/06/further_wegman
Wegman: Consequences

- Two faculty committees at GMU carried out investigations. One unanimously concluded that “no misconduct was involved” in the 2006 Congressional Report. The other unanimously found that “plagiarism occurred in contextual sections of the (CSDA) article …” The GMU Provost said Wegman would receive an “official letter of reprimand.” The investigations took 2 years. The decision was made to not publicize the findings of the investigations.

Wegman Incident: Background

• The Congressional report was at the request of congressman Joe Barton (R-Texas), an opponent of climate change science

• The report had high visibility because of the topic and the fact that Wegman was known as a ‘climate change denier’, and may have received more scrutiny for this reason
Edward Wegman

Congressman Joe Barton, R-Texas

"I'm sorry I couldn't get you off the hook for the oil spill cleanup. I'm just one man! Forgive me?"


http://cds.gmu.edu/node/40
Plagiarism: Advice

• Don’t plagiarize as a student. It is unethical and you may get caught. Consequences could include grade reductions, failing a course, even expulsion from the program.

• Don’t plagiarize as a professional. It’s unethical and again you may get caught. Consequences are embarrassment, disgrace to your reputation; possibly lawsuits and criminal prosecution.
Referencing Sources

• To reference a book: include authors, year of publication, title, edition, publisher; e.g.

• To reference a paper: include authors, year of publication, title, journal, volume, page numbers:

• To reference a website: include the url:
  http://www.biostat.umn.edu/~brad/ph8400.html

• Denote direct quotations clearly with quotation marks: e.g.,
  Charles Dickens\textsuperscript{12} once wrote, “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times …”