**RCHS Plagiarism Policy**

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, plagiarism is “The practice of taking someone else’s work or ideas and [passing](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/pass#pass__87) them [off as](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/pass#pass__87) one’s own.” In academic writing, plagiarism can occur when information is taken from a variety of sources including published authors, other students, the internet, and websites that sell academic papers, to name a few. We adhere to the RCHS policy that, “students are held accountable for violations of academic integrity. Violations may result in lack of credit, and will receive a disciplinary referral to the appropriate administrator.

As a rule, any information taken from a source must be paraphrased with proper documentation, using MLA Style. **Changing a few words from the source does not qualify as paraphrasing.** According to the website *Plagiarism.org*, “A paraphrase must make significant changes in the style and voice of the original while retaining the essential ideas.”

**Plagiarism includes the following:**

* **Verbatim plagiarism** 
  + This occurs when you copy information word for word. (Even if you place the information in quotes and document the source, this may be considered plagiarism. Quotes should be used sparingly, and you should be incorporating information into your writing for support of your own argument/ideas.)
* **Mosaic plagiarism**
  + This occurs when you copy parts of the source, a word or phrase here and there.
* **Inadequate paraphrase**
  + As stated above, it is not enough to change a few words here and there or change around the order of the sentence or sentences. According to Harvard College’s Writing Program website, “If your own language is too close to the original, then you are plagiarizing, **even if you do provide a citation**” (“What Constitutes Plagiarism?”).
* **Paraphrase that is not cited**
  + Even if you paraphrase the source’s ideas, the ideas still belong to the author. You must cite the source.
* **Quotation that is not cited**
  + Quotation marks signal that you are directly quoting the source. Again, you must still give credit to the author of the material.
* **Using material from another student's work**
  + Remember, the writing you submit must be your own. If your material is gathered from a class discussion or peer review, you still must cite the **original** source. If it is clear that an idea comes from one particular student, you should cite that student.
* **Turning in the same paper for more than one class**
  + You must produce new work for each course/assignment so that you can incorporate what you have learned in that course/assignment.

# The Exception to Citing Sources: Common Knowledge

* According to Harvard College’s Writing Program website, “Common knowledge is **information generally known to an educated reader**, such as widely known facts and dates, and, more rarely, ideas or language. Facts, ideas, and language that are distinct and unique products of a particular individual's work do not count as common knowledge and must always be cited.” If information is considered common knowledge, it will not be attributed to one source, therefore, no citation is needed. When in doubt about whether or not something is common knowledge, it is better to cite the most reliable source (“What Constitutes Plagiarism?”).
* **Widely known facts**
  + Some scientific and historical facts are considered common knowledge if they are widely known by everyone or almost everyone.
    - Ideas or interpretations **are not** considered common knowledge unless they are widely held.
    - As previously noted, **quotes require documentation**. The only exception would occur if the quote has become common knowledge.

“What Constitutes Plagiarism?” *Harvard.edu*. President and Fellowship of Harvard College, 2015. Web. 5 Aug. 2015.

“What is Plagiarism?” *Plagiarism.org*. iParadigms, LLC, 2014. Web. 5 Aug. 2015.

**Rock Canyon High School**

**Plagiarism Contract Agreement**

By signing this contract, the student agrees that he/she has read this plagiarism policy and will adhere to the expectation of academic honesty in each assignment that he/she submits.

He/she understand that plagiarism, whether accidental or intentional, may result no credit on the assignment and a disciplinary referral as administrative notification. There may be other consequences, such as release/exclusion from honor societies and other organizations.

Student’s Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student’s Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent’s Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent’s Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_