Plagiarism—Graduate Level
Module 2: Avoiding Plagiarism

1. Plagiarism can take a variety of forms. These are the most common:
   a. Paraphrasing badly. That is, putting someone else’s idea into your own words with little modification and without giving them credit.
   b. Passing off someone else’s work as your own, whether it’s buying a paper off the Internet or using a paper your roommate wrote.
   c. Using any kind of multimedia—audio, video, charts or graphs—without citing its source.
   d. Cutting and pasting phrases from a website without attributing them to their author.

2. First, find a method of note taking that works for you and use it consistently. How you do it is up to you. You can use index cards, a notebook, RefWorks, your iPhone or a Word document.

3. Just be sure to include the following for every source you use:
   a. Author
   b. Title
   c. Date created
   d. Source (a journal name or URL)
   e. Page numbers, if it’s a print item

4. It’s important, too, to know the citation method you’re required to use. In graduate school, these include APA, Chicago, MLA and others.

5. Citing a source generally takes two forms: a direct quote or paraphrasing.

6. A direct quote means you use the writer’s words exactly as she wrote them. In a paper it would look like this:

   Giving students a writing sample provides them with a model of how to organize and format their papers correctly and, as Salend (2008) writes, “The value of the model can be increased by reviewing it with students and marking it with comments highlighting the qualities that help to make it an excellent product” (p. 436).

7. Notice that the phrase is enclosed in quotation marks and the author’s name, the publication date and the page number are included next to the quote.
8. You’ll list more complete information about the source of the quote in your References list at the end of your paper.

9. Paraphrasing information correctly is more complex than a directly quoting an author. And it involves more than simply rearranging the original words.

10. To paraphrase well is a process. You need to:
    a. Read the text
    b. Understand its meaning
    c. Combine the information with what else you know about the topic
    d. Express what you believe the author means in your own words

11. Direct quotations and paraphrasing both involve text. But remember that charts, statistics, graphs, photos, audio and film clips also need to be cited.

12. By properly citing your sources:
    a. You add credibility and evidence to your argument by using ideas from experts in the field
    b. You acknowledge and show respect to the original writer
    c. You connect your paper and ideas to a larger conversation in the field
    d. You allow readers to find your sources
    e. You gain educational skills in the areas of research, analysis, evaluation and writing

13. However, there is one source of information that doesn’t require a citation. This is called common knowledge.

14. Common knowledge includes facts that are known by a lot of people and can be found in many sources.

15. Some examples of common knowledge include:
    a. George Washington was the first president of the United States.
    b. Unethical business practices contributed to the Enron bankruptcy.
    c. The Library of Congress is located in Washington D.C.

16. Common knowledge doesn’t require a citation because it can be found in so many places and is known by so many people.
17. Not sure if the information you’re using is common knowledge? Then cite a source.

18. Does all of this sound like a lot of work? It is. But while ethical behavior in graduate school will protect your grade, ethical behavior in the work world can protect your job and your company.

19. Closely related to plagiarism is copyright infringement. Plagiarism is punished by loss of course credit, but copyright infringement is punished by fines and sometimes imprisonment.

20. To see how unethical behavior can play out in the workplace, go to Module 3: Copyright Infringement and Fair Use.