

A Guide To Academic Integrity
Romance Languages
University of Pennsylvania

The Department of Romance Languages fully supports and adheres to all University policies and procedures regarding academic integrity (cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, etc). *The work you submit for grades in your language class must be your own.*

Language instructors, as proficient users of the language, are quick to detect any work that is not the student's own creation; it is not like producing work in your native language where you have total command of the linguistic code. Certain idiomatic expressions, lower frequency vocabulary items, complex syntactic constructions not yet seen in the curriculum, etc, all stick out like red flags to alert the instructor that the student has appropriated language from another source. Any experienced language instructor can tell when a composition could not possibly be the result of hours and hours of dictionary or grammar book consultation.

If you submit work that has been copied without attribution from some published or unpublished source, (including the Internet), or that has been prepared by someone other than you (e.g. a friend or a tutor) , or that in any way misrepresents somebody else's work as your own, you will face severe discipline by the University.

Your instructor will go over the contents of this document in class to make sure you understand the department's expectations with regard to your work.

The first page summarizes our policy on getting outside help for your homework, whether it be from a tutor or a friend. The second page reviews the issue of plagiarism and outlines proper ways of crediting your sources. It is particularly important to note that material you find on the Internet must always be cited; simply because it appears on the Web does not mean that it is in the public domain. The third page addresses appropriate ways of using the Internet in more detail.

The guiding rule in all your work is that you must identify anything that is not your own, and acknowledge the source whether it be a from a tutor, a book, an online site, etc.

In the appendices you will find specific examples of plagiarism, as well as concrete examples of appropriate and inappropriate help from others,. We have also appended the composition correction codes used by many instructors, and suggest you share it with your tutor as an example of the kind of feedback he/she can be giving you.

If you have any questions concerning these issues, please raise them with your instructor. Feel free to bring any concerns to the attention of the Course Coordinator, or the Language Program Director.

The Department of Romance Languages does not accept as an excuse that you are not aware of what constitutes plagiarism, or what constitutes inappropriate help from others.

For more information on the University policy consult:

<http://www.upenn.edu/osl/acadint.html> (Code of Academic Integrity)

<http://www.upenn.edu/osc> (The Office of Student Conduct)

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Getting Outside Help for Your Language Class

In learning a foreign language, a very useful strategy is to seek help and input from more proficient learners or from native speakers of the language, and you are encouraged to do so to enhance your language learning process. Do seek out opportunities to interact orally outside with others who speak the language, to ask for explanations of rules, vocabulary, readings that may not be clear, or to get help on any kind of preparation for class work that is not graded.

However, for any work that will be graded you must make certain that the work remains your own, and that you are not submitting work that has been prepared by someone else; getting someone else to do the work for you constitutes an infringement of the University of Pennsylvania Code of Academic Integrity and is subject to disciplinary action. Please read the following guidelines carefully and consult your instructor if you have any questions.

Working with a tutor:

We encourage you to work with a tutor. However, you need to make sure that the tutor is just *helping* you, not doing the work for you. View and use your tutor as you would your instructor.

When you are requesting help for a written assignment,

- You need to have done your work prior to meeting with your tutor. Bring your work and have your tutor review it with you
- Your tutor should point out the problem areas, but not correct them. Your tutor may indicate what kind of error you have made (gender, agreement, tense, spelling, etc...) but he/she should not provide you with the correction.
- At the elementary level, students often lack grammar and vocabulary to express complex ideas. The tutor should help you figure out an easy way to phrase your thoughts. In other words, they should not suggest sentences or expressions that are above your level, but they should help you phrase things in a more simple manner.

NB: When you work with a tutor on a written assignment, you are required to submit to your instructor both your first draft (with the tutor's comments: that would be the underlined problem areas) **AND** your final version, with the improvements/corrections you have made.

Other kinds of help:

For feedback on your written work, be careful when

- working with a fellow student who is just a couple of levels above you. Your friend may not always be able to give you appropriate feedback, or, worse, he/she may give you incorrect feedback.
- working with a native speaker who is not a language instructor. Non-teaching speakers can identify when something is wrong but cannot always explain *why* it is wrong. Also, they may not be able to help you at your level by suggesting simpler phrasing within your grammatical range. If you work with a native speaker, make sure you let them know what you have learned and what you have not learned. For example, they should not be suggesting sentences containing the subjunctive tense if you have only learned the present indicative and the past tense.
- working with spell checkers and grammar checkers. They occasionally make incorrect assumptions and provide you with inaccurate alternatives. Additionally grammar checkers do not give you the opportunity to think through your errors and figure out on your own what you need to change. While we do not prohibit the use of these tools, you should be aware of their limitations.
- working with online translation tools. They are notorious for producing strange and sometimes hilarious results that are immediately detectable by an expert user of the language.

-Dr. Christine Moisset

Guidelines for Citing Sources in Foreign Language Assignments

What is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is defined as using another person's words and/or ideas without giving that person credit. To give proper credit to any sources that you have used in a written or oral assignment, you must provide information concerning the source in such a way that readers/ listeners can find the words or passages that you have used.

General Written and Oral Presentation Assignments

Many of the assignments in your foreign language class require you to write and / or present your own ideas in your own words. Therefore, the only materials aside from your own mind that you need are your textbooks (for vocabulary and structures) and a good dictionary. A dictionary is essential for finding the best words to express your ideas, but you should not look to it or any other source (e.g., the textbook, the Internet, etc.) to find entire sentences or paragraphs to copy into your assignment. These sentences are someone else's words and if they are not credited as such, you are committing plagiarism.

As a foreign language student, your challenge lies in expressing ideas in your own words when you are not communicating in your native language. The best way to do this is to use the vocabulary and structures that you already know and to expand on them with the dictionary so that you can express yourself as best as you can given your level.

Written and Oral Research Assignments

Some of your assignments will require research as well. To avoid plagiarism when doing research, you must cite your sources either by:

- Quoting directly from your source and using footnotes or in-text citations to give your reader the bibliographic information necessary to find your source.
- Paraphrasing the words and ideas from your source and using footnotes to give your reader the bibliographic information necessary to find your source. Notes that in this last instance, it is often helpful to mention the source within your document.

NB: You must also provide a list of "Works Consulted" at the end of your document or to accompany your oral presentation. Works consulted include works from which you have quoted directly and works that you have simply read or used in gathering information.

How To Cite Your Sources

To cite sources appropriately, you can use a format with which you are already familiar from your other work at Penn or use the Modern Language Association (MLA) format. Examples of the MLA style appear in the appendices. The essential information that you must include whatever style you choose to follow is:

- *For books or magazine or newspaper articles in print:* Author, title (and publisher for a book), date of publication, and page number.
- *For Web sites:* the URL (web address). (See further details on the use of the Internet below).

Using the Internet in your Foreign Language Class Assignments

In many classes you will regularly be asked to consult the Internet in completing homework assignments, writing compositions, preparing oral presentations, or working on group research projects. Indeed, the Internet is an invaluable source of information about the target culture(s) of the language you are studying, and it affords you access to up-to-date information on what is currently happening abroad through online newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations. One of the many goals of foreign language study is to familiarize you with some of the resources available through the Internet that will enable you to maintain this global connection to other countries once you finished your language studies.

When consulting the Internet for your foreign language exploration, you must have the same concerns as in your native language. How reliable and reputable are the sites you find through your searches? This may be difficult in a language in which you are not proficient, and you should rely on your instructor to help you. As a rule of thumb, it is best to work with sites that are well-established (products of recognized publications, institutions, organizations, rather than of individual authors).

The immediate accessibility of Internet sources combined with the easy option of copying and pasting sentences, paragraphs and entire passages, has unfortunately resulted in an increase in the number of students committing plagiarism.

It is essential when you are using sources from the Internet that you acknowledge them. The same principles characterizing plagiarism from books, journals, newspapers, etc., apply to Internet documents. We might add that it is very easy for an instructor to identify instances of plagiarism from the Internet through various search engines and special software.

When you are citing an Internet source you should include the following information: Author (if given), title of the page or section, name of the site, the date you accessed the site, and the URL. For further details and examples of how to cite electronic resources using the MLA format consult the following Van Pelt Library site:

http://gethelp.library.upenn.edu/PORT/documentation/bibliography_MLA.html