

Generative AI and plagiarism

1. Introduction

Welcome to our online tutorial on generative AI and Plagiarism.

Plagiarism is defined as the act of using someone else's ideas or work without giving credit where it is due. So, avoiding plagiarism is really about academic honesty, about making sure that your audience knows what arose from your thoughts and ideas, and what has influenced your thinking.

Using this tutorial

Use the back and next buttons at the bottom right of the screen to navigate through the tutorial. Alternatively, use the contents button to jump to a specific page.

You will need to allow approximately 10 minutes to complete the tutorial.

Learning outcomes

This tutorial will look at:

- the relationship between plagiarism, academic honesty and using generative AI tools;
- why referencing is important and how to use it effectively to acknowledge use of AI tools.

2. Academic honesty and generative AI

Using generative AI technology to assist with your assignment may not seem like plagiarism because the answers come from a complex algorithm, not a single person's work. However, it's not that simple. Even though AI-generated answers don't violate someone's specific intellectual property, using them in your assignment without proper citation is still academically dishonest, especially if it's hard to tell these answers apart from your own words.

In academic settings, it's expected that students and researchers' credit anything they've used to develop their arguments, including content generated with AI tools. Therefore, if you use generative AI in your assignment, be sure to reference and acknowledge it.

Ultimately, the ethical use of generative AI depends on where and how it's used, and the expectations of the people or organizations involved.

For more details on the Open University's requirements for declaring use of generative AI, refer to the [Generative AI for Students guidelines](#).

3. Referencing generative AI output

Referencing is an important academic skill and is part of the assessment criteria for any lengthy piece of writing, and is a way of acknowledging the sources you have used, or referred to, in your work by:

- providing information on other people's ideas, theories or works;
- paraphrasing these ideas – i.e., putting them into your words while giving credit;
- quoting their exact words directly.

Acknowledging your sources

By acknowledging your sources, you are providing clear information to allow your readers to trace your reading.

Referencing is like giving directions for your ideas. It helps people see where your thoughts came from and how you reached your conclusions. Just like GPS coordinates show a location, references show where your ideas came from.

If you use generative AI to generate ideas, it might give different results for the same question, but you can still be honest by giving enough info for others to follow your steps and find the same info you did. This way, you acknowledge where your ideas came from.

4. Referencing generative AI output examples

Follow these instructions to reference generative AI output.

Slide one looks at online material and slide two at personal communications.

Online AI material

If the generative AI material is available online you can cite it as an electronic version of a source. To do this you would need the following details: Citation order:

- Creator (name of AI)
- Year (in round brackets)
- Title of work (in italics)
- [Medium]
- Available at: DOI or URL (Accessed: date). [Source: CTR, <https://www-citethemrightonline-com.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/sourcetype?docid=b-9781350927964&tocid=b-9781350927964-217&st=AI>].

Example of use:

While there are many referencing formats, the examples here have been provided using Harvard Referencing, the most commonly used author-date style.

An AI-generated flower, for example would be cited in-text as follows:

AI-generated flower (Shutterstock AI, 2023) ...

In a reference list, it would then appear as follows:

Shutterstock AI (2023) *Photo of pond with lotus flower* [Digital art]. Available at: <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-generated/photo-pond-lotus-flower-2252080005> (Accessed: 31 March 2023).

Personal communications

If the generative AI's end product (for example use of ChatGPT in a conversation) is only available to you, cite this as a personal communication and include a description of the AI generated material in your in-text citation.

Citation order:

- Name of AI
- Year of communication (in round brackets)
- Medium of communication

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- Receiver of communication
- Day/month of communication. [Source: CTR, <https://www-citethemrightonline-com.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/sourcetype?docid=b-9781350927964&tocid=b-9781350927964-217&st=AI>].
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Example of use:

A chat with ChatGPT would be cited in-text as follows:

When prompted by the author, ChatGPT responded with a 'definition of academic integrity' (OpenAI ChatGPT, 2023). A copy of this response is in Appendix 1.

It would appear in the reference list thus:

OpenAI ChatGP (2023) ChatGPT response to John Stephens, 2 April.

[Source: CTR, <https://www-citethemrightonline-com.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/sourcetype?docid=b-9781350927964&tocid=b-9781350927964-217&st=AI>].

5. Quiz Time!

Question 1 of 4

What is plagiarism primarily about?

1. Using AI tools to enhance academic work.
2. Providing clear directions for your ideas.
3. Using someone else's ideas or work without proper credit.
4. Using generative AI to produce complex algorithms.

Question 1 Feedback for Option 1

False. While AI tools can be used in academic work, plagiarism is not primarily about using these tools.

Question 1 Feedback for Option 2

False. Providing clear directions for your ideas relates more to referencing and is not the primary definition of plagiarism.

Question 1 Feedback for Option 3

True. Plagiarism is defined as using someone else's ideas or work without giving credit. This is the primary focus when discussing academic honesty and plagiarism.

Question 1 Feedback for Option 4

False. Plagiarism is not related to using generative AI specifically to produce algorithms, but rather the act of not giving credit for others' work.

Question 2 of 4

Why is referencing important in academic writing?

1. To hide the sources of your ideas.
2. To acknowledge the use of other people's ideas and works.
3. To make your writing look longer.
4. To make your work harder to understand.

Question 2 Feedback for Option 1

False. Referencing is not meant to hide sources but rather to give credit where it is due.

Question 2 Feedback for Option 2

True. Referencing is important to acknowledge the sources of other people's ideas and works, ensuring academic honesty and integrity

Question 2 Feedback for Option 3

False. Referencing does not aim to make writing longer but to acknowledge and support ideas.

Question 2 Feedback for Option 4

False. Proper referencing actually helps readers understand and trace the sources of your ideas.

Question 3 of 4

What is the consequence of using AI-generated content in your assignment without proper citation?

1. It demonstrates creativity.
2. It is a violation of someone's intellectual property.
3. It makes assignments more complex.
4. It ensures academic honesty.

Question 4 Feedback for Option 1

False. Using AI-generated content without citation does not necessarily demonstrate creativity; it may lead to plagiarism.

Question 4 Feedback for Option 2

True. Using AI-generated content without proper citation can be considered a violation of intellectual property rights.

Question 4 Feedback for Option 3

False. Using AI-generated content without citation does not inherently make assignments more complex.

Question 4 Feedback for Option 4

False. Using AI-generated content without citation does not ensure academic honesty; proper citation is required for honesty.

Question 4 of 4

When citing an AI-generated response received in a personal communication, which information should be included in the citation?

1. Only the name of the AI and the receiver's name.
2. The name of the generative AI, year of communication, medium of communication, receiver of communication, and date of communication.
3. The title of the work and the year of communication.
4. It ensures academic honesty.

Question 5 Feedback for Option 1

False. This answer is incomplete and does not provide enough detail for proper citation.

Question 5 Feedback for Option 2

True. When citing AI-generated content received in personal communication, the citation should include the name of the AI, year of communication, medium of communication, receiver of communication, and date of communication.

Question 5 Feedback for Option 3

False. This answer does not include the necessary details for personal communication citations.

Question 5 Feedback for Option 4

False. Only the name of the generative AI and the year of communication.

6. Summary

While generative AI offers new and exciting ways of handling information and data, it is important to consider its effects on academic integrity and to ensure that any use of generative AI tools is acknowledged as fully as possible.

Here are some key takeaways:

- Conducting academic work requires that the work you turn in is your own. Any part of it that is written by AI is not considered your own original work.
- Remember to note details of your interactions with AI to be able to reference these properly.

It is also important to note that tools that simply check your writing are okay to use. Examples can include the autocorrect feature in word processors and the use of Grammarly. The key difference between these tools, which scan pieces of writing for errors and/or make suggestions for edits, and generative AI is that it is your own original writing that is being scanned for possible mistakes versus AI that does all the writing for you.

For further activities on referencing and plagiarism, you may find the following useful:

- [Being Digital](#) is an online collection of short easy-to-follow activities. The activities can help you to avoid plagiarism and will show you how to include in-text citations and reference lists within your written work.
- [Avoiding plagiarism pathway](#).
- [Referencing your sources pathway](#), which includes an activity on [Referencing websites](#).