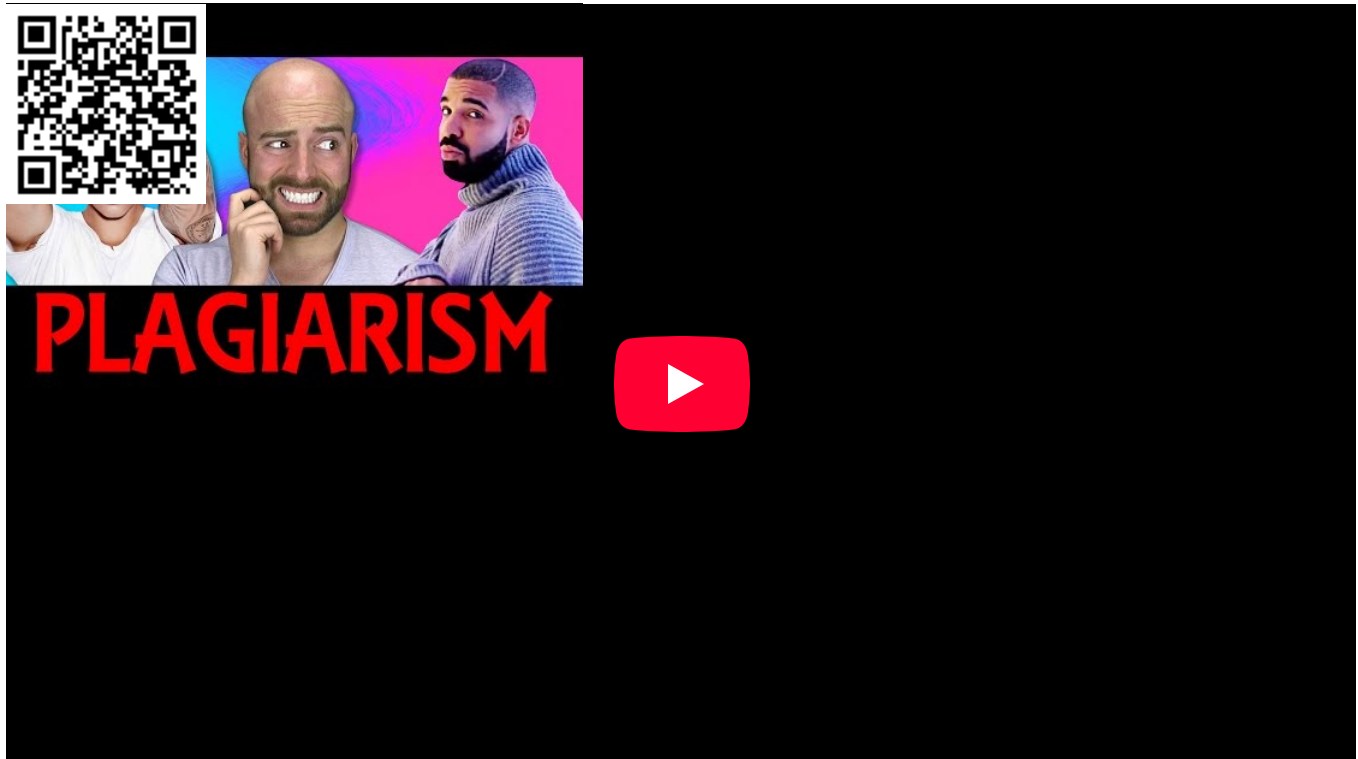


## 4.6.14: Avoiding Plagiarism

### Learning Objectives

Identify instances of plagiarism, both intentional and unintentional

As discussed in the previous page, incidents of plagiarism and related ethical violations are unfortunately common features of contemporary life, both in and out of our work environments. The video below from 2016 describes 10 famous cases:



Both intentional and unintentional plagiarism are problems, and you should do everything you can to keep them from happening. It is obvious that intentional plagiarism would be a gross violation; however, unintentional plagiarism is a bit more difficult to nail down.

As the UNSW Sydney's page for their current students describes, "most incidents of plagiarism are the product not of deliberate cheating, but of underdeveloped academic skills."<sup>[1]</sup> Often the problem isn't with the ethical standing of the author but with something else, such as lack of time, lack of clear notes, and lack of understanding of proper referencing. Thus, the basic rule of thumb for avoiding plagiarism is three-fold:

- If you even suspect the idea is someone else's, take the time to go back through notes, Google, or other reputable sources, and search for the author.
- Allow enough time to build your reports.
- If you are not sure of authorship, consider using other evidence or sources to articulate your idea.

There are, however, a very few things that don't require attributions: scientific or mathematical equations and "common knowledge." You don't have to provide a citation if you include the equation  $E = mc^2$ , but you do need to attribute a quote that explains the history of the equation's discovery. You don't have to provide a citation if you include the fact that gravity exists, but you do need to provide a citation for a study that discusses how gravity impacts astronauts on the ISS.

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1. UNSW Sydney. "[How Does Plagiarism Happen?](#)" Web. 18 June 2018.

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