

Exercise 4: Discussion Questions

Instructors should discuss the fundamentals of plagiarism with students **before** asking them for reactions to the scenarios that follow. Students must understand the proper use of paraphrase, summary, quotation, and citation, and the reasons that plagiarism is wrong, before they venture into grayer areas of ethical behavior.

1. The night before the paper was due in Morgan's course on World War II, a classmate approached her to proofread his final draft. As she read Ben's paper, Morgan realized that he had copied several paragraphs directly from a source that she also had consulted. Morgan advised Ben to rework the paragraphs or, at the very least, to set them in quotation marks and cite the source. After handing in their papers the next day, Morgan asked Ben if he was satisfied with his final revisions. She was startled when Ben confessed that he had passed in his paper without making the changes she had suggested. What should Morgan do?
2. Ted worked hard on the final paper for his class in Southeast Asian history and was pleased with the result. When the professor handed back his paper, however, she pulled Ted aside and showed him several passages that he had taken verbatim from well-known books on similar topics. During the conversation, Ted realized that sloppy note taking had led to the similarities. He produced the notebook in which he copied the passages and showed the professor where he neglected to write down the sources. Ted claimed that he had mistaken the passages for his own words when consulting the notebook to write his paper. The professor agreed that the copying was unintentional. Was Ted still guilty of plagiarism?