



THE QUEEN'S COMMONWEALTH ESSAY COMPETITION 2017

Plagiarism: what is it and how can it be avoided?

The judges of The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition take plagiarism very seriously. To prevent any accidental or deliberate plagiarism, we have created this explainer to clarify what plagiarism is, why it matters and how you can avoid it.

What is plagiarism?

At the most basic level, plagiarism is taking someone else's work and calling it your own without giving the original author the credit they deserve.

What are some examples of plagiarism?

Many young writers think plagiarism is just copying someone else's work. However, plagiarism comes in many forms, including:

- Working with someone else without acknowledging their contribution,
- Copying from another source (including a website) without properly referencing,
- Taking words or ideas from someone, whether you know them or not, and passing them as your own, including by summarising, and
- Using famous quotes without proper referencing.

Why shouldn't I plagiarise?

Plagiarism isn't fair. Taking someone else's work and calling it your own is a type of theft and doesn't give credit to those who truly deserve it. It's also unprofessional, unacademic, and is grounds for dismissal from most jobs, schools and universities. If you are caught plagiarising you **will be automatically disqualified from the competition**.

Finally, plagiarism doesn't allow your ideas and words to shine through. Trust that you are a strong enough writer and thinker not to need to take someone else's work. We know you are!

How do I avoid plagiarism?

Avoiding plagiarism doesn't mean avoiding research – it just means referencing properly. There are lots of guides online that can help you with referencing, such as [Imperial College London's guide to Harvard style references](#), [the MLA style guide](#), and the [University of Western Australia's Oxford referencing examples](#). Some of these use footnotes and some use in-text citations. We've included some examples on the back of this sheet to get you started. You can use any style of reference for the competition and your Works Cited or Bibliography and referencing footnotes or endnotes do not count towards the word count.

If you are doing a piece of creative writing and haven't looked in any books, on any websites, or taken ideas from anyone you know, the chances are you won't need to reference at all.

Need help?

We encourage you to ask your teacher or parent for help if you need it. We are also always at competitions@thercs.org to lend a hand.

Examples of referencing

Please note that these are just a few examples of how to reference. There are many styles to choose from and we encourage you to research how to reference to be sure you get it right.

All items listed in **red** should be included in your reference. All items listed in **blue** should be adapted to your source. All *italics*, "quotation marks", and punctuation must be applied and included when you reference.

Examples have been given in black.

Original Source: Website

MLA Referencing

Author Surname, Author First Name. "Individual page name." Date published, website URL. Accessed [date accessed].

Johnson, Betty-Sue. "Commonwealth Essay Competition." 02 Nov. 2011, www.commonwealthessaycompetition.co.uk. Accessed [22 Feb. 2017].

Harvard Referencing

Author Surname, Author First Initial. (Year Published). *Individual page name*. [online] Available at: website URL [Accessed Date Accessed].

Johnson, B. (2011). *Commonwealth Essay Competition*. [online] Available at: www.commonwealthessaycompetition.co.uk [Accessed 22 Feb. 2017].

Oxford Referencing

Author Surname, Author First Initial., 'Individual page name', website URL, date published, (accessed [date accessed]).

Johnson, B., 'Commonwealth Essay Competition', www.commonwealthessaycompetition.co.uk, 02 Nov. 2011, (accessed [22 Feb. 2017]).

Original Source: Book

MLA Referencing

Author Surname, Author First Name. *Title of Book*. City: Publisher, Year Published. Print.

Meyer, Stephenie. *Twilight*. New York: Little, Brown & Company, 2004. Print.

Harvard Referencing

Author Surname, Author First Initial. (Year Published). *Title of Book*, Publishing city: Publisher.

Meyer, S. (2004). *Twilight*. New York: Little, Brown & Company.

Oxford Referencing

Author First Initial. Author Surname, *Title of Book*, Publishing City, Publisher, Publishing year.

S. Meyer, *Twilight*, New York, Little, Brown & Company, 2004.