Hi, I’m Christine Jewell, liaison librarian at the University of Waterloo. This video describes plagiarism and how to avoid it.
The Oxford English Dictionary defines plagiarism as “The action or practice of taking someone else’s work, idea, etc., and passing it off as one’s own; literary theft.”

Whenever you use someone else’s work or idea, acknowledge that use. Give credit to your source by providing a citation, a reference to your source.
What sorts of things should you credit?

Credit quotations. If you use someone else’s exact words, place these words in quotation marks.

Credit a paraphrase. A paraphrase is a restatement of someone else’s words. It contains the same level of detail as the original. It must be in your own words, so take care that you do not repeat distinctive words, phrases, or even the sentence structure of the original.

Credit summaries. A summary is a broad outline of someone else’s work. Be sure to credit all aspects of your summary. Your reader needs to know when you are summarizing someone else’s work, and when you are presenting information that is original with you.

Credit ideas and reasoning. In the course of your research, if you come across an interesting analysis, conclusion, or theory, you can use it in your work. But make sure that your readers know that it isn’t original with you. Tell them where you found the idea.

Credit the products of someone else’s work. The products of someone else’s work include things like images, charts & graphs, data sets and computer code. Anything that you use that someone else has produced should include a reference to the creator.
Credit your source, regardless of the medium in which you found it.

Print sources must be cited.

Electronic sources must also be cited. Cite a source that you discovered on the Internet. Credit a webpage if you have used it, even if it is freely available.

Information discovered in a TV or radio broadcast must be cited.

If an idea was received through a verbal source, such as a classroom lecture, a conference or seminar presentation, you must give credit to the speaker.
Sometimes a citation is not necessary.

It is not necessary to cite common knowledge. Common knowledge includes information that is generally accepted as fact, such as information you might find in a standard encyclopedia.

Consider your readers. Specialized information can count as common knowledge when your readers are knowledgeable in that field.

When in doubt, provide a citation.
unintentional plagiarism

- Accept only limited assistance
- Submit content only once
- Sharpen your note taking skills
- Be alert to the risk of cryptomnesia

Plagiarism is academic misconduct even if it is unintentional. Here are some tips for avoiding unintentional plagiarism.

Accept only limited assistance; a heavily edited work is not your own.

Submit content only once. If you would like to submit a paper or even substantial content more than once, you must seek approval, from both the initial and the subsequent recipient.

Sharpen your note taking skills. If you keep track of your sources from the earliest stages in your research, you’ll be less likely to paraphrase too closely or blur your original thinking with your source information.

Be alert to the risk of cryptomnesia. Sometimes an idea that you’ve come across in your research becomes separated from its source and can appear to you as your own idea. Careful note taking practices will reduce this risk of unconscious plagiarism.
It is important to credit the sources you use.

Crediting your sources demonstrates how your work is connected with other scholarly work on your topic.

These connections contribute to the development of your own ideas.

Demonstration of the connections between your work and other scholarly works on your topic adds to the authority of your work.

Documenting your trail of thinking will enable further research in the area. Your readers will know where to locate your sources.

Avoid penalties. Failure to give credit to your sources is academic misconduct and subject to penalties imposed by the University, from reprimand to expulsion, as outlined in Policy 71.