

**“Doc. You can tell me... did you have a happy childhood?” and  
59 other excuses I will not accept when it comes to plagiarism ©**

**By Paul R. Shockley, PhD  
[www.prshockley.org](http://www.prshockley.org)**

**20 May 2012**

Plagiarism, which is derived from the Latin verb, “*to kidnap*,” is stealing another’s intellectual property and claiming it as one’s own - whether intentional or unintentional.

Therefore, in anticipation of excuses I may receive from future students who violate school policy when it comes to committing plagiarism, here is a list of sixty excuses I will readily dismiss as illegitimate. But please feel free to offer additional excuses so I can update this list.

- 60. It is your fault, not mine, professor!**
- 59. I will lose my scholarship if I don’t make a good grade in your class.**
- 58. I don’t care if this paper is on the internet or not! I did not commit plagiarism!**
- 57. Why do you think you feel this need to inform me that I have plagiarized? What does that say about you, professor?**
- 56. I bet you are a Republican, aren’t you, professor?**
- 55. In my country plagiarism is acceptable.**
- 54. My paper was due at the same time I had other projects due.**
- 53. This is not about plagiarism. Let’s be honest...this is about racism.**
- 52. You don’t understand. It is against my religion to express individuality. See, I’m trying to eliminate the “self” in an effort to achieve a state of nirvana. So, what you term as plagiarism, I term as an expression of my religion.**
- 51. My girlfriend broke up with me.**
- 50. I’ve not done anything different than what I’ve done before.**
- 49. You need to face reality... we all plagiarize!**

48. **Sir, haven't you ever made an innocent mistake?**
47. **Come on, Doc... doesn't God's grace cover it all?**
46. **How was I to know plagiarism is wrong!**
45. **Sir, I do not remember you talking about plagiarism in class.**
44. **My spouse wrote this paper; I didn't.**
43. **Say again...what's a bibliography?**
42. **Why are you trying to keep me from serving the Lord?**
41. **My parents will kill me if I don't make an A in this class.**
40. **Oh, that is what a quotation mark is used for; I didn't know.**
39. **Professor, I'm under a lot of spiritual warfare right now.**
38. **Dude! That website took advantage of me! They assured me that the papers I purchase guarantee me an A.**
37. **I couldn't help it; I took too many classes this semester.**
36. **Don't you want me to succeed, professor?**
35. **Be honest, Doc! Just like there is no original word, there is no original thought! So, what is plagiarism, really?**
34. **Oh, I see! Professor, I didn't understand what you meant by plagiarism when you talked about it on first day of class. You were talking above my pay grade. Next time, you need to put the cookies on the lower shelf!**
33. **I thought you were describing the followers of Pelagius.**
32. **Because I am trying to get into law school, I have to make a 4.0 this semester.**
31. **Show me in the Bible where it expressly states that plagiarism is wrong! If the word "plagiarism" is not in the Bible, then plagiarism is permissible.**
30. **I'm trying to tell you, professor... it was a computer virus; I didn't do it.**

29. **Admit it! You are just jealous of me!**
28. **Come on, Professor, relax... dude...take it easy... go with the flow... chill. You need to smoke some pot, man!**
27. **Oh my goodness! How did *that* get in there!**
26. **You mean I should not use Wikipedia?**
25. **I paid for my tuition... that gives me the freedom to do what I want.**
24. **If you report this case of plagiarism to the Dean of Students, then I will make sure you receive a bad faculty review on every website known to mankind.**
23. **I'm sorry. I didn't know that claiming someone else's material as my own was wrong.**
22. **Who are *you* to say plagiarism is wrong?**
21. **I was confused. I was led to believe that a footnote was a certain shoe brand musicians wear.**
20. **There's nothing wrong with plagiarism because everyone is doing it.**
19. **I thought it was okay because my other professors didn't say anything about plagiarism when it came to my other papers.**
18. **Professor, come on... you know I have a learning disability!**
17. **I didn't think no one cared what I did.**
16. **You must not like me.**
15. **Look, my other professor gave me an A+ for this same exact paper! Why can't you?**
14. **I do not know how that author got a hold of my paper! I'm going to sue him because that is not right to use my work in his book without my expressed permission!**
13. **Are you trying to oppress me, professor?**
12. **Since there are no moral absolutes, plagiarism can't be wrong.**

11. **If you just made the assignments *more difficult* then I would have not been forced to plagiarize! Plagiarism was just too easy.**
10. **I am a victim of unfortunate circumstances.**
9. **You can't accuse *me* of plagiarism! I didn't write this paper!**
8. **My other professors said it is okay to cheat.**
7. **I thought a block quote had to deal with real estate.**
6. **Professor, there is more to being human than following university rules.**
5. **Prof! You know I'm on Xanax!**
4. **Okay. I will confess something to you that only my doctor and my immediate family know.... I have multiple personalities. Emily did it; it was not me!**
3. **Professor. I'm so sorry. English is not my first language.**
2. **Sir, I think you need a vacation!**
1. **Doc. You can tell me... did you have a happy childhood?**