**Larbi Ben M’hidi University**

**English Department**

**Research Methodology/ 2nd Year**

**S. AROUF**

**Avoiding Plagiarism2**

**Common Knowledge**

It is not always clear what “common knowledge” is. Generally, common knowledge is information that someone finds undocumented in at least five credible sources. For example, ”writing is difficult,” is considered common knowledge in the field of composition studies because at least five credible sources can back the claim up. Moreover, many sources only consider facts — current and historical events, famous people, geographic areas, etc. — to be potentially common knowledge. Others also include nonfactual material such as folklore and common sayings. So, common knowledge is likely to be known by many people.

Remember the golden rule: When in doubt, just cite.

Examples of common knowledge:

* January is the first month of the year.
* Tokyo is the capital of Japan.
* The earth revolves around the sun.
* The Eifel Tower is located in Paris.
* Facebook is a social media network.
* The sun sets in the west.
* The French word for the English word "cat" is "chat”.

**Further practice**

**Task 1:** **Compare the work submitted by this student with the original text:**

Original

Reality TV claims to feature 'ordinary' people doing 'ordinary' things. As a genre, the 'people' show minimises the distance between the audience and the 'actors' through its emphasis on everyday life so that the viewer is invited to recognise the participant as belonging to her or his own habitus. A viewer sitting at home is not only invited to identify with the actors; she or he can become one of them by volunteering to tell her story, become a contestant, or by taking part in the show as one of the studio audience (Tincknell and Raghuramm 2004, p. 258).

Student text

Reality TV claims to feature 'ordinary' people doing 'ordinary' things. The emphasis on everyday life minimises the distance between the audience and the actors making the viewer feel like they too could become one of them by becoming a contestant, or being in the studio audience. (Tinknell & Raghuram)

In your opinion has the student:

* written about the original text in their own words
* copied phrases from the original text without quotations marks
* failed to provide a correct citation
* provided a correct citation
* included many words from the original text
* used the author's ideas without providing a citation

**Task 2: Compare the work submitted by this student with the original text:**

Original

Having a home is a basic human need; we all need somewhere to live. For those without a home life is barely tolerable, and for a society (especially a modern welfare state) a continuing problem of homelessness is an indictment of its ability to meet one of its citizens' key welfare needs. Yet homelessness remains a significant issue in the UK, with people still sleeping rough on the streets of some town and cities because they do not have a home to go to. (Alcock and May 2014, p. 142)

Student text

"Having a home is a basic human need; we all need somewhere to live" (Alcock and May 2014, p. 142). However, as Alcock and May (2014) point out, despite the fact that Britain is a wealthy society with an established welfare state, there are still many homeless people living on our streets.

In your opinion is the student text plagiarised?

* Yes
* No

**Task3: Tick the correct answer**

1 What is plagiarism?

A Citing sources incorrectly

B Paraphrasing someone else's work

C Presenting someone else's work as your own

D Summarizing a text

2 Which of these is NOT a form of plagiarism?

A) Paraphrasing without citation

B) Quoting a source with proper citation

C) Copying and pasting from an online source

D) Submitting another student's work as your own

3 What is the purpose of a citation?

A) To make your work look more professional

B) To give credit to the original source

C) To fill space in your paper

D) To improve your writing skills

4 In which scenario would you NOT need to provide a citation?

A) Quoting a famous speech

B) Paraphrasing a paragraph from a book

C) Stating a well-known fact

D) Summarizing an article

5 Common knowledge (composed of facts that can be found in a variety of sources and which many people know) does not need to be cited.

1. True
2. False

6 If I change a few words within a section of source text and then use that in my paper, then I am paraphrasing and not plagiarizing.

1. True
2. False

References

*Common Knowledge & Attribution* retrieved from [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/avoiding\_plagiarism/common knowledge\_attribution.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/avoiding_plagiarism/common%20knowledge_attribution.html)

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