

TWO COMMON EXAMPLES OF PLAGIARISM

Word Substitution

Below is an example of a sophisticated attempt to replace specific words, in a paper on Macbeth, with a corresponding synonym. The upper excerpt is a portion of the original text; the lower paragraph is the same excerpt with the substituted words highlighted in red (or underlined if printed in black and white).

Macbeth Manuscript from the Internet (Intro Paragraph)

Macbeth is presented as a mature man of definitely established character, successful in certain fields of activity and enjoying an enviable reputation. We must not conclude, there, that all his volitions and actions are predictable; Macbeth's character, like any other man's at a given moment, is what is being made out of potentialities plus environment, and no one, not even Macbeth himself, can know all his inordinate self-love whose actions are discovered to be-and no doubt have been for a long time-determined mainly by an inordinate desire for some temporal or mutable good.

Same Manuscript with Modified Words

Macbeth is shown as an empowered man of well-established character, prosperous in several fields of life and enjoying an esteemed reputation. We mustn't conclude, therefore , that all of his volitions and actions will be foreseeable ; Macbeth's essence , like most other men at any given time, is what's being created out of potentialities and his environment, and no one, not even Macbeth himself, can discern all his immoderate self-love whose behaviors are found to be-and without doubt have been for some time-determined primarily by an extreme desire for a temporal or changeable good.

Source: http://www.plagiarism.org/plag_solutions.html (accessed 2010)

Sentence Addition

The replacement or addition of new content is the most typical form of manuscript alteration. At what point does a manuscript with added or altered sentences or paragraphs become original?

The first paragraph (below) is an excerpt from an internet paper (A) on Macbeth. Below that is the same paragraph with new material cut-and-pasted directly into the body of the paragraph; the new material was from a second paper and is indicated **in red (or underlined if printed in black and white only)**.

Paper A

Macbeth Internet Derived Paper (Intro Paragraph)

Macbeth is presented as a mature man of definitely established character, successful in certain fields of activity and enjoying an enviable reputation. We must not conclude, there, that all his volitions and actions are predictable; Macbeth's character, like any other man's at a given moment, is what is being made out of potentialities plus environment, and no one, not even Macbeth himself, can know all his inordinate self-love whose actions are discovered to be-and no doubt have been for a long time-determined mainly by an inordinate desire for some temporal or mutable good.

Paper A + B

Macbeth Modified Test Paper with Combined Added Content

Shakespeare's famous play, Macbeth, is one of his great tragedies based around the classic theme of the hero's fatal flaw. Macbeth is presented as a mature man of definitely established character, successful in certain fields of activity and enjoying an enviable reputation. **Yet, like any man, he is human, and thus in possession of flaw and foibles, hidden that they may be from public eye, and hinted at by foreshadow only by the author.** We must not conclude, there, that all his volitions and actions are predictable; Macbeth's character, like any other man's at a given moment, is what is being made out of potentialities plus environment, and no one, not even Macbeth himself, can know all his inordinate self-love whose actions are discovered to be-and no doubt have been for a long time- determined mainly by an inordinate desire for some temporal or mutable good. **This desire being as strong under certain circumstances as to override all others, even, as is usually the case in tragedy, the ultimate desire of self-preservation.**

Source: http://www.plagiarism.org/plag_solutions.html

Permission to distribute these extracts to students at Wits was granted via email by Chris Harrick (charrick@iparadigms.com) on 17.1.2012.