

Cheating Discussion Activity

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Cheating is the act of taking an unfair or unearned advantage, usually through deception. In academics, it most typically means taking unearned credit.

Read each of the following scenarios. As a group, decide whether each is

- A. Clearly not cheating
- B. Clearly cheating
- C. Not exactly cheating but not exactly not-cheating either

Case 1: The Extra Point

An instructor has marked an answer on your algebra exam correct, but when she goes over the exam in class, you see that the answer is wrong. You decide not to say anything.

Case 2: Group Work Sucks!

You hate group work. Your sociology class includes a group project in which each of four students must find three sources on a topic and the four students together write a twelve-page literature review on the topic. Two of the students in your assigned group are struggling with the material. You and the other good student in the group decide to find six sources each and to write up the paper. You submit it with all four names on the project.

Case 3: The Exam Preview

At the University of Central Florida, 200 students (from a class of 600) recently admitted to cheating on a business exam. The mechanism was this: a few students hacked exam questions and answers from a teacher guide that went with their textbook. They sent these questions out to much of the class. Students receiving these questions claim they thought that these were simply study questions, not the real questions, since the professor had said on the first day of class that he would be writing the exam. These students did very well on the exam, since they had seen the questions before. When the professor asked all who had participated to come forward, 200 students did. Do you think the students really did participate in cheating? Source: <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2010/11/17/cheating>

Case 4: Prescription Exam Preparation

It's finals week. You had a rough semester and you have a brutal exam schedule. Your friend is selling his prescription doses of Adderall, a stimulant designed to improve brain function and concentration. You buy three doses and take one per day on each day you have exams. You get A's on your exams.

Case 5: Getting Ideas Online

You're having a really hard time with this paper assignment, and you're stuck with only a few hours to finish. You have a good thesis, but you're having trouble proving it. You decide to look around on the internet for articles about the text, just to get ideas. Two articles make points that relate to your thesis, and you don't have time to think about how to expand upon them. You put the authors' ideas into your own words and include the articles on your Works Cited page, but since you're using their ideas so extensively, you end up making the other authors' ideas sound like they're your own.



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Case 6: Identical Exams

Your grandmother died and so has your car, so you've missed several classes, including an exam for which you received an excused absence from your instructor. She hands the exams back to the class and you and she set up a makeup exam for you. You check in with a classmate about the last exam and study it. She gives you the identical exam as a makeup. You know all the answers and earn an A.

Case 7: Securities Fraud?

An investment bank constructs sub-prime mortgage securities, sells them to its customers, but bets against them by buying insurance that far exceeds the value of the securities should they fail. The Security Exchange Commission (SEC) argues that although the bank technically has the right to bet against its own products, it should have revealed to the clients that it was doing so. The bank argues there was no law saying that it needed to reveal its multiple deals to clients. However, many clients have lost huge sums of money on the deals, while the bank has made a tidy profit. (Source: http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704307804575234562129592010.html?mod=WSJ_WSJ_US_PoliticsNCampaign_4).

Case 8: Lab Separation

You and your lab partner just completed a lab assignment. You're a natural at getting good clean results from the lab, but not so good at writing the lab assignment up. Your partner, who's not as adept with lab work as you are, says he's very good at writing. Your professor hasn't explained *how* you're supposed to work together, just that you are supposed to work together. You therefore decide to both play to your strengths, so you do the lab work alone and your partner does the write-up alone.

Case 9: The Ubiquitous Quotation

The introduction to your paper is pretty boring, and you decide to use a famous quotation to spice things up a little. You find a quotation website on the internet and choose a line that suits your ideas perfectly. The website says the line is by Friedrich Nietzsche, but it doesn't say which book. You begin your paper with "As Friedrich Nietzsche once said..." but don't include anything in your Works Cited.

Case 10: The Dueling Exams

Unfortunately, you have your two hardest exams on the same day: physics and chemistry. You know that if you had more time between exams, you could easily memorize all the formulas you would need for the exams. You need to do well on both classes in order to apply for medical school, even though you really won't be using physics beyond your undergrad. You ask to reschedule one of your exams, but your request is denied. Therefore, you memorize all the chemistry formulas and take that exam. For the physics exam, though, you enter the formulas into your graphing calculator.

Case 11: Helping an Artist

Your friend is a brilliant artist but a not-so-great writer. As a philosophy major, you're an excellent writer. She's put together an excellent portfolio to apply for an MFA program and drafted an application letter. She shows you the letter, and it's very weak. You take the basic ideas from the letter, but change



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the wording and organization to make it much more effective.

Case 12: The Clever Classmate

You have a really good idea for a paper topic, and you're happy with how it's turning out so far. Today's class discussion relates to your paper idea, and one of your classmates makes a great comment about the novel. It's something you never would have thought of on your own, and it's a great example of what you're trying to show in your paper. When you get home, you add your classmate's idea to your paper. As you're incorporating his idea, you work hard to put your own spin on it and put it in the context of your own thesis. Since your classmate has never published his idea, and what you said is actually different from what he said, you don't cite him specifically.

Case 13: A Response to the Q Requirement

You and a friend are both paying your own way through school. You both have very busy work schedules that compete with your full-time academic schedules. You're both humanities majors and feel that the requirement that all UConn students do 3 Q courses is unreasonable and totally irrelevant to your major. Therefore, you decide that you will swap physics online assignments, with one of you turning in the work for both one week, and the other for the following week.

Case 14: Killing Two Birds

You're taking two upper-level sociology classes this semester. For one of your sociology classes, you wrote an excellent paper that used some of the sources from your other class, properly cited. Toward the end of the semester, the second sociology instructor assigns you a paper with an open topic. Since you've already written a good paper that would fit the general parameters of the course, you decide to turn in the paper that you've already written, implementing the small suggestions that your prof recommended when grading the paper.

Case 15: Tricky Translation

You have a ridiculously busy week with papers or exams happening in every single class. You have a translation due in your Spanish class; you're good at translations, but they take a lot of time. You promise yourself you'll do the work later, but you need to get a good grade now. Therefore, you do about half of the translation yourself, and use an online translator to do the rest.

Case 16: Common Knowledge

You're a huge baseball fan, and you read a lot of books about baseball. As a result, you have a lot of historical facts and statistics memorized, and you're not sure where you originally learned most of them. When you read the latest assignment for your English 1011 class, you realize that a paper incorporating your knowledge of baseball would be a perfect way to answer the question. Your instructor has explained that if a fact is "common knowledge," you don't have to cite it. However, you know more about baseball than most people do, and you're not sure if your knowledge is really "common." But since you don't know where the information originally came from and it would be a huge amount of work to figure it out, you don't cite specific sources.



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Case 17: Helping a Friend

Your roommate is deeply depressed after a bad breakup. She's a whiz at math, but she keeps forgetting about deadlines and getting further and further behind in the calculus class you're both taking. In fact, she's now missed so many homeworks and quizzes that she's failing the course (even though you know she's more than capable of doing the work). You're a B student at calculus, but you're worried that she's going to go from an A to an F, which will seriously hurt her chances of getting into grad school. You decide to submit a few of the homeworks and online quizzes on her behalf.

Case 18: The Questionable Neighbor

You're doing well in your English 1011 class: at midterm, your instructor says you have an A average so far. Unfortunately, you're also spending more money than you expected to. A student who lives next door to you at Country Glen is struggling in her 1011 class, and she offers you \$200 to write her paper for her. This sounds like trouble, so you turn her down and resign yourself to a weekend of eating in and studying. A couple of weeks later, the student is bragging that she got an A on her paper, and you suspect that she paid someone for it. You don't know who to tell, though, and your evidence is circumstantial, so you keep your suspicions to yourself.

Case 19: Putting Yourself in Their Place

It's Monday morning. You have just overheard two students in the Academic Center talk about how they plan to cheat on Wednesday's calculus test. Assume one of the following roles: what would the academic and emotional impacts be if you are a:

- Student (peer) tutor
- Course instructor
- Student in the class
- Member of the public

What's your next step?

Case 20: Quiz Fatigue

Your English professor requires multiple quizzes for every single day. And some of the questions are about really nit-picky details; you didn't do that great on your first few quizzes because of this. The quizzes are open-book and the prof hasn't mentioned one way or the other whether you're allowed to work on them together. You and a friend work on the quizzes together, talking about each of the questions. You're both doing the work and the conversations you're having help you prep for class. Your grades are also improving because of this practice. But then a classmate sees you doing this and says it's totally cheating. Yay or nay?

Case 21: Formatting Fun

You've worked all night trying to finish a ten page paper for your professor, but it is still one page too short. You realize that by slightly changing the margins and the line spacing, adding a few spaces, and altering your font, you stretch the paper half-way down the 10th page. Relieved, you send it in and then get a few hours of sleep before tomorrow's class.

