To all current students

Careless acts can come back to haunt you . . .

– Plagiarism is not only unfortunate, it's painful (>_<)



Academic Affairs Division, Student Affairs Division,
Ritsumeikan University

Revised June 2026

Beyond Borders

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1. Introduction

"Reports" are one type of graded task for students. Like final exams and other tasks, they are designed to measure students' degree of attainment of learning outcomes.

Your class instructors will explain the conventions and points to note when writing reports, but you can also find information on your college/ graduate school students page (https://sp.ritsumei.ac.jp/studentportal) on RITSUMEIKAN STUDENT PORTAL. If you have any difficulties with writing reports, please seek the advice of your instructors and friends.

Under no circumstances should you engage in conduct such as copying and pasting information from the internet or receiving and using data from your friends and the like. This is known as "plagiarism" and may result in disciplinary action.

We hope that you will read through this guide carefully and maintain attitudes and behaviors consistent with an awareness of your position as a responsible learner.



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2. What do “plagiarism” and “assisting plagiarism” mean?

If I change the wording a bit, the instructor won’t notice . . .



A-kun

B-sempai! You took that class on XYZ, right? Can you show me the report you wrote for it?

Of course! I’ll just use it as a reference.

OK, A-kun, but don’t just copy it! It’s for your reference only.

I’m sure A-kun will do the right thing, won’t he?



B-sempai

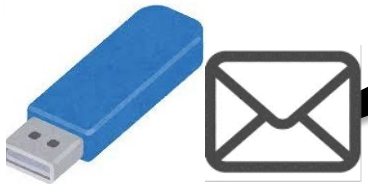
But A-kun went ahead and copied it, or a large part of it, for the report he submitted.





Submission





Hand-over online, by email, USB, hard copy, etc.

Do the acts of A-kun and B-sempai constitute “plagiarism” and “assisting plagiarism” respectively?

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2．What do “plagiarism” and “assisting plagiarism” mean?

Plagiarism

To improperly use, replicate or transcribe material from a report/essay produced by a friend or other person, or copy/paste information from the internet.
Improper use/replication is a clear breach of rights of the copyright holder.
This also applies to cases of students paying another person to write their report for them.

Assisting Plagiarism

To assist someone to improperly use, replicate or transcribe a report/essay.
→Does this kind of assistance really “help” the other person?



A-kun’s conduct is “plagiarism”, and B-sempai’s is “assisting plagiarism.”

Taking screenshots of online text, images, etc. and including them in a report is also a form of plagiarism.

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3. Case Study: What happens if you plagiarize?

Please read the case below and think about the different things that could happen to A-kun and B-sempai. In addition, please think about what action B-sempai should take.

A-kun, a second-year student in the College of ABC, is taking the class “Special Studies in XYZ II” in spring semester. The class instructor tells A-kun and other students that they need to submit a report that will form part of their grades for the class.

A-kun is busy with extracurricular activities, part-time work, and socializing with friends. He’s unable to attend classes regularly, so is unsure about how to write his report.

A-kun remembers that B-sempai, a co-worker at his part-time workplace, took the same class last year, and had said to him: “I’d be happy to give you some advice if you’re having trouble with writing your report.” A-kun decides to contact B-sempai.

A-kun asks: “I’d like to use your report from last year as a reference: can you send me the file?”. B-sempai responds “OK, if you just want to look at it for reference,” and she sends the file to A-kun right away.

A-kun feels a little hesitation, but goes ahead anyway and copies most of B-sempai’s report, adds some information he found online, and submits it.

After receiving this help from B-sempai, A-kun feels that next year, he should do the same thing and pass his report on to junior students.

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3. What happens if you plagiarize?

What will happen to A-kun:

Submitted reports are checked to ensure they haven't been plagiarized!

(1) The university will call him up for an interview.
Because he has been found to have transcribed another student's report and copied information from the internet (infringement of copyright), A-kun will be interviewed to confirm the facts.
(2) If plagiarism is confirmed, he will be subjected to **official punishment**.
Moreover, his **grade** for the class in question will be **F (Fail)**.



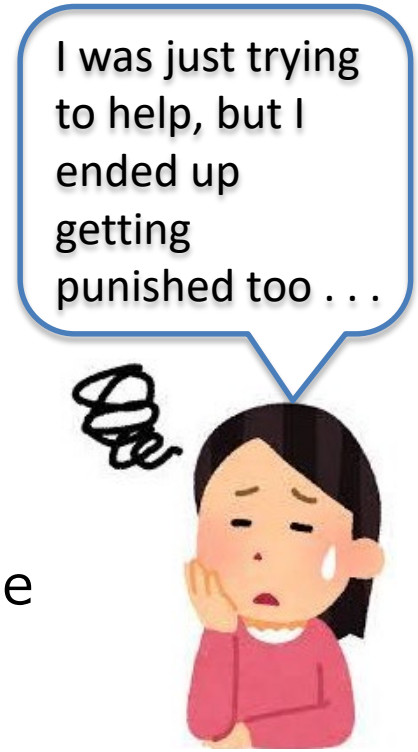
If he is subject to official punishment:
(1) He will receive strict guidance until he is judged to have shown remorse and be fully committed to preventing further occurrences.
(2) The suspension from university will begin once the above guidance is completed. During the suspension, he will not be allowed to attend university.
In other words, he will not be able to go to class or (depending on the timing) sit final exams, participate in extracurricular activities, or use the library or other university facilities.

Plagiarism is a serious offense with heavy consequences. The heaviest of these is the loss of opportunity to learn.

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3. What happens if you plagiarize?

What will happen to B-sempai:



(1) The university will call her up for an interview.
By passing her report to A-kun, B-sempai has “assisted” an act of plagiarism, so will be <u>interviewed to confirm the facts</u>.

(2) If assistance is confirmed, she may be subject to **official punishment.**
In this case, B-sempai took the class last year, but if she had been in the same class as A-kun this semester, her **grade** for the class would have been **F (Fail)**.

<u>This is an official punishment, so like A-kun, B-sempai would also be subject to guidance from the university.</u>



<u>Rather than simply giving her report to A-kun, as a senior peers B-sempai should have taken action that would contribute to A-kun’s learning, such as teaching him the proper way to write reports, giving him hints, encouraging him, and other things that would help him write it on his own.</u>

You might simply have thought that you were helping out, but . . .
If you assist plagiarism you’ll be punished, and the other student will be denied the opportunity to learn, which will have a damaging impact on their academic development and future prospects.

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Other forms of misconduct in graded assignments and tasks

● Using data from cloud storage

Obtaining data and other material that does not belong to you from a shared cloud or another person's cloud, and using it in your own report. This is a form of misconduct.



● Using a report-writing service (having your report written by somebody else)

There are services online that offer to produce reports for students for a fee.

Your instructors know your attitude in class and degree of understanding of the material, so can tell whether the reports you produce are your own work or not. Moreover, statements not related to class content tend to stand out.

Copying a report written by somebody else is a form of plagiarism.

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Other forms of misconduct in graded assignments and tasks

● Misconduct in final exams

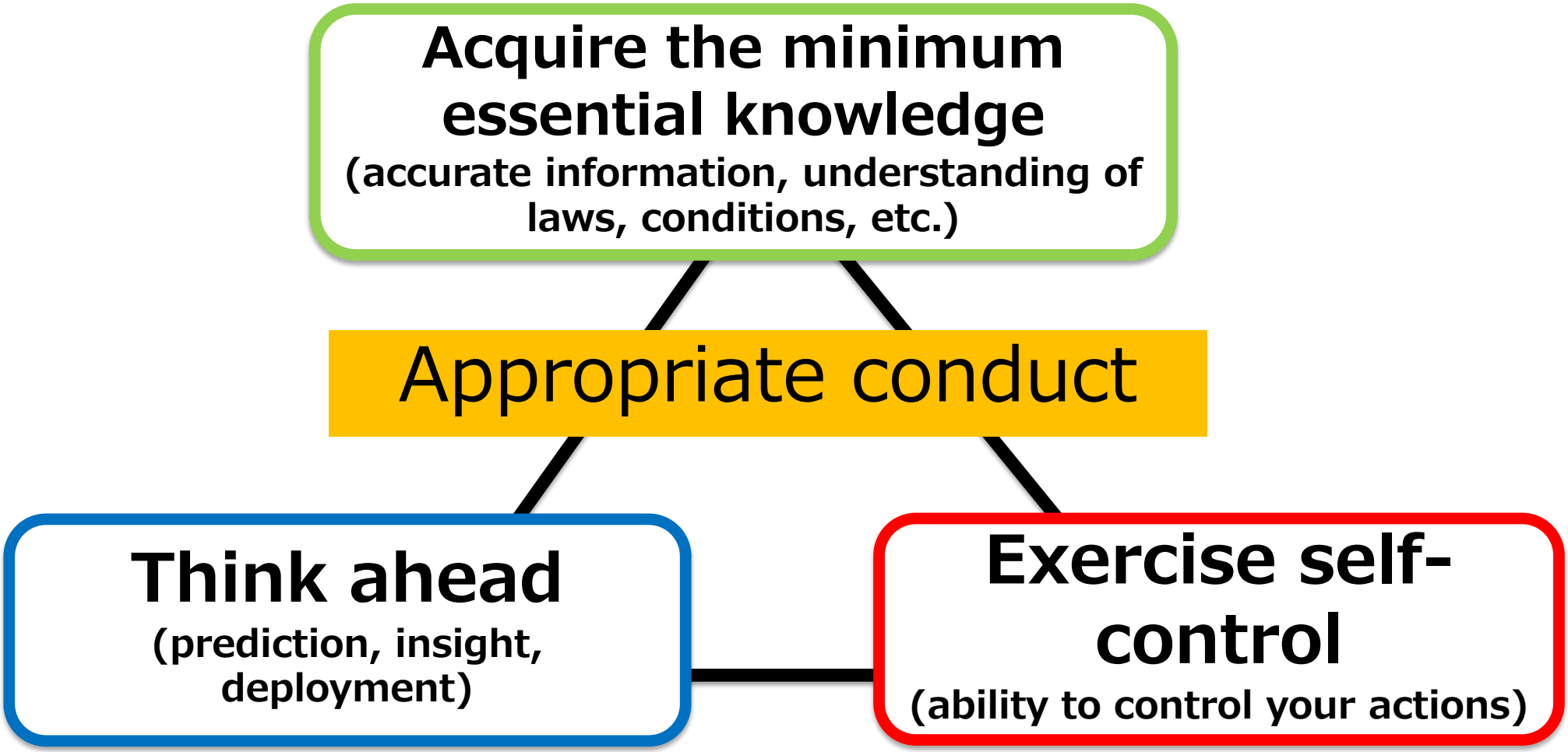
The acts shown below are considered to be misconduct.
These acts constitute an abandonment of learning rights and a loss of eligibility to learn at university. If you engage in any of them, pursuant to the exam regulations, you will have your grades for the subject in question, or all subjects taken in the semester, annulled (graded as F). These grades will be counted toward your GPA. Other harsh penalties may also apply, including punishments under the student discipline regulations.

(1) Showing or exchanging answers with another student
(2) Bringing unauthorized items into the exam venue or writing on desks, your own possessions, etc.
(3) Talking or peeping at other students' answers
(4) Having another person sit the exam for you
(5) Not following the invigilator's directions with regard to writing your answers
(6) Other conduct judged to impede the impartial implementation of the exam

Misconduct in final exams is subject to official punishment.

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Attitudes and mindsets essential for university life



Source: Ritsumeikan University, *TIPS ON CAMPUS LIFE FOR STUDENTS 2020*
http://www.ritsumei.ac.jp/infostudents/campus-diary/

These attitudes and mindsets will not only help you avoid risks: they'll be useful in all kinds of situations throughout your life!

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Relationship between knowledge, foresight, and self-control
– Explained in the context of plagiarism –

Why did A-kun plagiarize B-sempai's report in his own report?

Conduct

Plagiarism

Awareness/ emotion

You feel "guilty" and know it's something you shouldn't be doing.

Knowledge

・What plagiarism is
・If I plagiarize, I'll be subject to guidance and punishment (suspension)
・My student life will be restricted if I'm suspended
・ Plagiarism may be an infringement of copyright
・Rules regarding legitimate use, referencing, etc.

Why do people plagiarize even when they know they shouldn't?

Desires and feelings:
・I haven't been attending class, so I don't know how to write the report.
・I have been attending class, but I don't know how to write the report.
・It's too much trouble; I want to take it easy.
・That's all I need to do for a class like this.
・I want to spend time on other things, not this report.

Self-serving thoughts:
Baselessly optimistic thinking such as . . .
"As long as I don't copy it word-for word, nobody will notice"
"It's not a problem if I only do it once"
"They'll let me off if it's only minor plagiarism"
. . . And assumptions such as . . .
"Everyone does it"
. . . Leading to dangerous habits and mindsets, where if nothing happens the first time, you continue doing the same thing over and over until somebody finds you out.

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Relationship between knowledge, foresight, and self-control
– Explained in the context of plagiarism –

Why did B-sempai give A-kun her report?

Conduct

Assisting Plagiarism

Awareness/ emotion

You feel sorry for the other student, and don't notice that you've done something wrong by handing over your report.

Knowledge

- What plagiarism and assisting plagiarism are
- If I contribute to plagiarism, the student involved will lose the opportunity to learn
- Assisting plagiarism is punishable, even if I didn't intend to do so
- Rules regarding legitimate use, referencing, etc.

Why do assist others to plagiarize?

Desires and feelings:
- I can't see him face-to-face, so I don't know what other kind of support I can offer.
- I'm too busy with other things to give him attention.
- I want to spend my time on other things, not helping out junior students.

Self-serving thoughts:
Baselessly optimistic thinking such as . . .
"I've been given reports by seniors in the past, so it must be OK"
"I'm sure he'll just use it for reference, not copying"
"Even if he plagiarizes, nothing will happen to me"
. . . And assumptions such as . . .
"Everyone does it"
. . . Leading to dangerous habits and mindsets, where if nothing happens the first time, you continue doing the same thing over and over until somebody finds you out.

So: How can you control yourself to ensure that plagiarism doesn't happen?

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How to improve your powers of self-control

If I plagiarize this report . . .

Foresight (imagination, insight)

- I'll miss out on the opportunity to acquire new knowledge. My tuition fees will be wasted.
- If I'm suspended, I might not be able to live a regular student life. I might have to stay back a year.
- I'll create trouble for the student who provided me with the report.
- My friends and others around me might see me as a cheat.
- It might encourage other students to plagiarize, which means actions might affect their studies too.

You can foresee these consequences, but what do you need to do in order to control your desires and feelings?

Self-control: effective strategies

(1) Listen to others' opinions, discuss things with others until you're convinced.
→Looking at your own thoughts objectively

(2) **Calculate how much you'd lose if suspended.**
→Assess the trade-off for your actions
(being unable to attend classes, take exams, participate in extracurricular activities, and other restrictions on your activities as a student = you can't study, earn credits, or live your regular student life →You'd be wasting your life!

Is it really worth getting involved in plagiarism?

(3) Think about the impact on others, and whether it's even appropriate to be having a meet-up at a time like this.
→Considering moral and ethical perspectives

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4. What's so bad about plagiarism?

Being punished (suspended) and having your student life restricted is a major loss, but there are other things that are even more of a waste.



Think back on your own resolve when you entered university, and what you should be doing as a student (what's the most important thing for a student to do).

That's right. A university is a place of learning, and a student's job is to engage fully and sincerely in their studies to cultivate their general and specialized capabilities.

The knowledge, insights, and attitudes you acquire through this learning will be useful after you graduate. All students are expected to be committed to their learning from day to day in order to acquire these socially useful capabilities.

As explained thus far, giving into temptation and getting involved in plagiarism, cheating and the like is an abandonment of your right to learn, and a disappointing, painful, and wasteful thing to do. We hope you will all continue to conduct yourselves appropriately, keeping in mind your duties as a student and the reasons you came here in the first place.

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5. The only person who thinks they can get away with it is the perpetrator

○It's easy to see when a student has cut corners

For a student there is only one report – the one they submit – so they might think they can get away with it. But the instructor sees every report that's submitted, so can easily pick out the students who've cut corners.

○It's easy to see when reports aren't based on class learning

Sometimes students think it's too much trouble to pay attention in class or to do the assigned work, so they search up keywords online and use the information they find there to write their reports. Most reports prepared in this way have little connection with class content and are easily identified.

○It's easy to identify an irresponsible approach to learning

As with the two points mentioned above, a student who feels like slacking off might find it easier to do so with online classes than face-to-face. However, it's easy to pick up signs of a bare-minimum attitude and an assumption that there's no point trying hard because nobody will notice. Instructors have to evaluate all students, from the ones trying their best through to the ones slacking off, so they can identify the latter with ease.

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Useful websites and other resources when working on reports

If you are having trouble with report-writing or don't understand the rules, first consult with the instructor of your seminar or other small-group class.

○You can also make use of the SSP (Student Success Program) "Exams and Reports Strategy Sheet"
http://www.ritsumei.ac.jp/ssp/english/

○RITSUMEIKAN STUDENT PORTAL "College of XX / Graduate School of XX Students Page" https://sp.ritsumei.ac.jp/studentportal

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