

Self-plagiarism: Case Study 3

I was seriously struggling with the jump from A levels to University, and I felt really overwhelmed. I didn't understand how to properly reference my work, and I honestly thought reusing material from previous essays was an acceptable thing to do.

At the time of completing my coursework, my father had been hospitalised, and with him being the main earner of the family, I had to continue working my part time job. This put an immense amount of pressure on my studies. I thought I was being clever, and noticed that I had some relevant points in a previous essay that were also relevant to this current piece of work. I didn't even bother changing bits around, I just thought 'well it's still my work, so why not?'. I was then accused of self-plagiarism.

When I first received the academic misconduct allegation letter I was shocked and confused. I kept imagining all sorts of awful scenarios. I immediately booked a meeting with the Students' Union's Advice service, and they helped me to understand where I went wrong.

After admitting everything in the academic misconduct meeting with my School, although I was given a sanction, I was also directed to a wide range of support. I wish I had reached out to my tutors when I first started to struggle. I recall attending a couple academic integrity and referencing sessions at the start of term, but I didn't really understand the content. Out of embarrassment I didn't ask anyone for guidance, which is silly because I imagine so many other students felt the same. I advise all students to attend these guidance sessions to avoid being in the position I found myself in.

Don't risk committing self-plagiarism. Give yourself a range of different topics to choose from, and please ask for help if you need it!