

# TIPS & TRICKS

## DADE COUNTY TECHNOLOGY

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Week of April 21, 2014

### **Plagiarism**

pla·gia·rism - *noun* - the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas as passing them off as one's own.

There are many plagiarism-checker sites and software out there. But here's a cool trick.

If you think a student has plagiarized some or all of their work, simply type a portion of the work into Google and then compare their work to some of the top hits that return.

Here's an example:

I googled Thomas Jefferson and found an article by the Library of Congress at <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/jefferson/jeffrep.html>.

The third paragraph was as follows:

"Like many admirers of the Enlightenment, Jefferson was convinced that science and the scientific method held the keys to learning and education in the broadest sense. Jefferson promoted studies of natural history, botany, archeology, and architecture. His extensive library, the largest personal one in the United States by 1815, was a testament to his conviction that all subjects of learning fell within the purview of all learned men."

Then... pretending that this was a part of a student's document that had been turned in, I selected some of the text (the end of a sentence and the beginning of the following sentence) and googled it. "learning and education in the broadest sense. Jefferson"

The top hit was the Library of Congress article where I took the paragraph from... showing plagiarism!

One note: I did have to select text that would tend to lead me to information about Jefferson. I redid my search, leaving off the "Jefferson" that began the next sentence and the Library of

Congress article was the 29th hit (appearing on the third page of hits).

So... in order for this type of search to work, you would need to pick something that would lead you to information on the topic of the paper.

I tried to trick this technique by copying the entire paragraph and pasting it into Google (changing the words "United States" to "U.S.") just to see if the student made a small change like that if it would still catch it. Good news!!! Enough of the words appeared in the same order that the top link was still the Library of Congress article.

For more information on plagiarism... check out the Plagiarism 101 item at <http://www.plagiarism.org/>.

Happy Hunting!!!

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Please send any questions or comments about this installment of Tips & Tricks to [technology@dadecs.org](mailto:technology@dadecs.org).