

# How to address Plagiarism & Academic Dishonesty in Online Classes

## Who Cheats?

About 75% of students surveyed admit to cheating at least once in college. This has held steady since 1963.

## Online Cheaters?

There is little if any evidence that cheating is more common in online classes. But, with the base rate of cheating so high already, this isn't great news.

## Demographics and Cheating

- Men self-report cheating more than women
- Younger students are more likely to cheat than older students (and freshmen more than sophomores)
- Students who are struggling and the high achievers are most likely to cheat
- Students with higher workloads are more likely to cheat

## External factors that...

### Promote Cheating

Intrinsically motivated  
Low self-efficacy  
Can't do the work  
Views teacher as incompetent/uncaring  
Believes cheating is normal  
Unclear about definition of academic dishonesty  
Able to rationalize cheating  
High stakes assessment  
Performance-based assessment  
Few/no formative assessments  
Cheating is easy and getting caught unlikely

### Promote Honesty

Extrinsically motivated  
High self-efficacy  
Views teacher as competent/caring  
Cheating is not an accepted norm  
Believes academic dishonesty is taken seriously  
Understands cheating is not necessary  
Low stakes assessment  
Mastery-based assessment  
Lots of formative assessments  
Cheating is difficult or impossible and cheaters get caught

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## Making Cheating Difficult or Impossible

### Homework

- Consider the goal. Is it formative? for self-assessment? busy-work?
- Make it meaningful: practice for quizzes, exams, or projects.
- Be clear about whether it is collaborative or individual.
- Make sure you understand how online websites handle online homework.
- Ask for an honor pledge.

### Exams

- Use open-book exams. Consider issues with cell phones and calculators, books, papers, internet resources, etc.
- Lower the pressure by making clear what the exam will cover and be like. Offer practice!
- Tell students that you are employing strategies that will make cheating difficult.
- Use a question bank to create multiple versions of an exam and reorder questions on various exams.
- Ask for an honor pledge.
- Require proctored exams?

## Addressing Plagiarism

- Talk openly about what it is and how you will check for it. Make it clear that plagiarizers will be caught and sanctioned.
- Help students understand and guard against plagiarism with online tutorials.
- Assign papers on topics that can't be plagiarized - tie in current events, specific class topics, or unique perspectives.
- Give students some choice in the topic so they can find something that sparks their interest.
- Focus on the paper-writing process, not just the final product.
- Consider the use of honor pledges for essays.