Is it Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is defined in the UNLV Student Conduct Code as "using the words or ideas of another, from the Internet or any source, without proper citation of the source(s)." There are two types of plagiarism that writers can commit, intentional and unintentional plagiarism. Both are considered to be plagiarism, and both are problematic. Below we will go through the two types so you can get a better idea of what types of plagiarism fall into these categories.

Intentional Plagiarism

Intentional plagiarism occurs when you intend to plagiarize. This is what most students think of when they think about plagiarism. It is pretty clearly cheating. While the consequences for intentional plagiarism are severe, intentional plagiarism is also easy to avoid. Write your own papers, and when you have other people review your work ask them to make comments only, not to rewrite your paper. Here are some examples of intentional plagiarism:
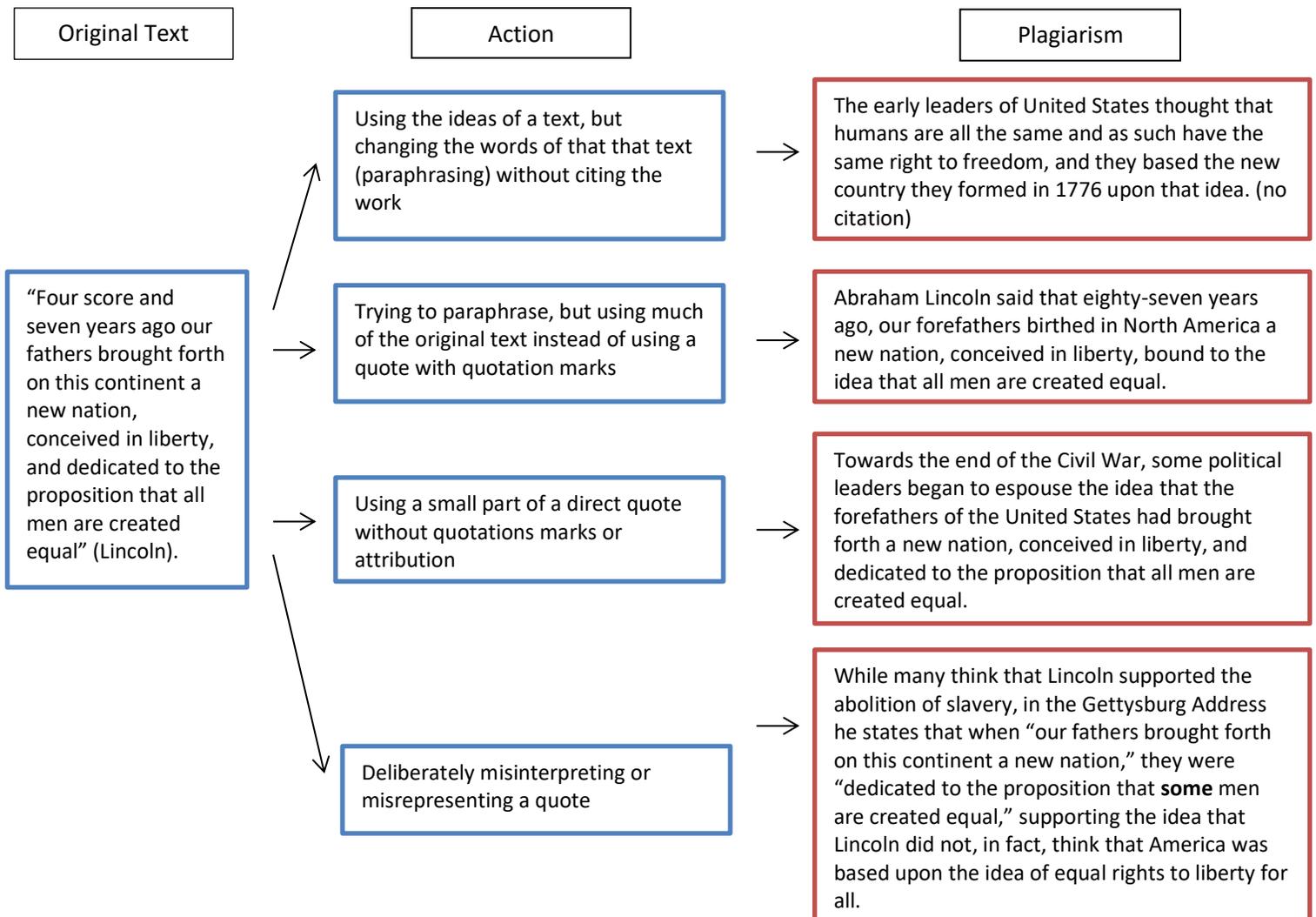
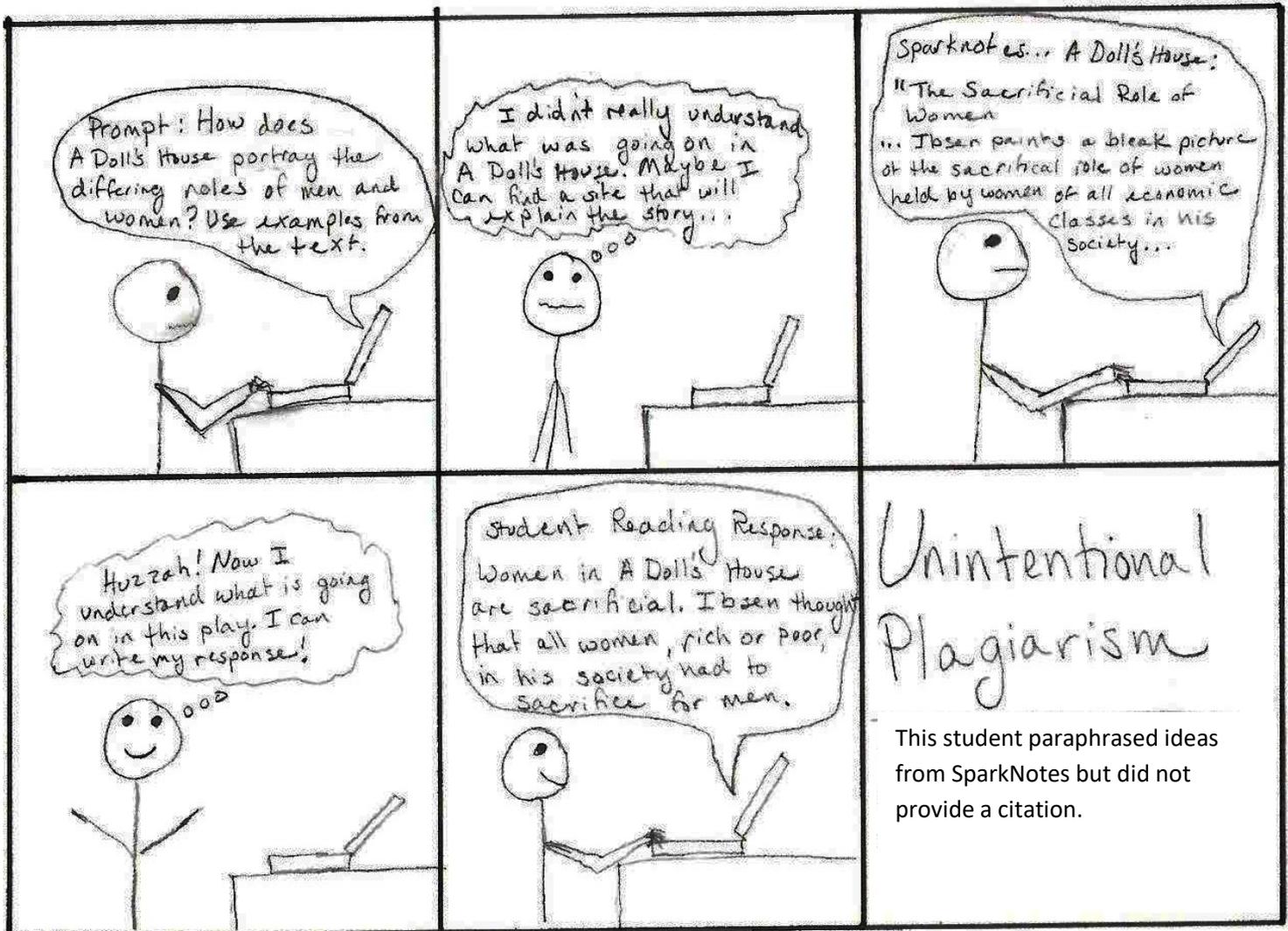|		
Passing off **all or part** of a paper written by another person (a fellow student, a roommate, a friend, a parent, a sibling, etc.) as your own	Using directly quoted text from a source, such as an internet site, a textbook, a journal, a book, etc., in your paper without proper attribution	Buying **all or part** of a paper or finding one for free on the internet

Unintentional Plagiarism

In unintentional plagiarism, you plagiarize without meaning to do so. Here are some examples:

Original Text	Action	Plagiarism
"Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal" (Lincoln).	Using the ideas of a text, but changing the words of that that text (paraphrasing) without citing the work	The early leaders of United States thought that humans are all the same and as such have the same right to freedom, and they based the new country they formed in 1776 upon that idea. (no citation)
	Trying to paraphrase, but using much of the original text instead of using a quote with quotation marks	Abraham Lincoln said that eighty-seven years ago, our forefathers birthed in North America a new nation, conceived in liberty, bound to the idea that all men are created equal.
	Using a small part of a direct quote without quotations marks or attribution	Towards the end of the Civil War, some political leaders began to espouse the idea that the forefathers of the United States had brought forth a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.
	Deliberately misinterpreting or misrepresenting a quote	While many think that Lincoln supported the abolition of slavery, in the Gettysburg Address he states that when "our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation," they were "dedicated to the proposition that **some** men are created equal," supporting the idea that Lincoln did not, in fact, think that America was based upon the idea of equal rights to liberty for all.

How Unintentional Plagiarism Often Happens:

Text from: "A Doll's House Themes, Motifs & Symbols." *SparkNotes*. SparkNotes LLC, n.d. Web. 24 July 2013.

This student paraphrased ideas from SparkNotes but did not provide a citation.

What is not Plagiarism

There are, of course, many things that are not plagiarism. Here are some common uses of information that are not considered to be plagiarism:

Generally, you can use ideas from a textbook for reading comprehension exercises or exams concerning **that specific textbook**. For essays, however, you should cite information in your textbook.

You can use the same **source** for different papers. However, turning in the same assignment for two different classes can count as plagiarism. Always check with your instructors before you do this.

You do not need to provide citations for commonly known dates and facts. One guideline is that if you find the same information in more than five different sources, it is common knowledge. However, you may want to cite all information you find from research, regardless of whether or not it could be considered common knowledge.

You do not need to provide citations for common turns of phrase or idioms, such as "One in the hand is worth more than two in the bush."

Corresponding Exercise: Is It Plagiarism?

Name_____Section_____

For the following questions, identify whether or not plagiarism occurred. Some of these examples may be ambiguous, so be sure to include an account of why you think plagiarism has or has not occurred.

1. Bob is taking two classes in the history department. He found a great book on the history of the French Revolution, and uses cited quotes from the same book for different papers for each class. Is this plagiarism? Why or why not?

2. Madison has done a lot of research for her paper, but is having a hard time writing her essay. She talks with a friend who has taken the same class before and who offers to write the paper for her. Madison turns in the paper her friend has written. Is this plagiarism? Why or why not?

3. Dan finds some useful information about casualty rates during the Civil War in a specialized academic book. He uses this information in his paper without a citation, but he is careful to change the wording of his paper so that he is not directly quoting the original text. Is this plagiarism? Why or why not?

4. Michelle is writing a reading response about the "To be or not to be" speech in *Hamlet*. She doesn't really understand the speech, so she looks up *Hamlet* on a study-aide website and discovers that the speech is about the contemplation of suicide. Is this plagiarism? Why or why not?