MDPI Author Services Plagiarism Check Service and a Guide to iThenticate for Authors

Thank you for using the plagiarism check service offered by MDPI Author Services. This service will provide you with an annotated reported generated using the industry-standard iThenticate software. This report will alert you to any areas of your manuscript where there may be issues related to copyright or plagiarism and will provide you with suggestions to help you address these concerns.

What is copied text?

Copied text refers to text in a manuscript that has been published elsewhere. If something is highlighted as copied text in a similarity report, it does not necessarily mean there is a problem. However, sections flagged as containing copied text may require rephrasing by the author(s) to ensure that the wording is acceptable.

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism refers to the act of representing someone else's ideas as your own. This could mean using the same words or approach without giving proper acknowledgment or without citing the other work properly. However, iThenticate cannot detect all forms of plagiarism. It cannot detect:

- Plagiarism of general ideas or approaches where different words and terms are used.
- Any plagiarised work that is not included in its database, including unpublished work, very recently published documents, and work that is not published online.
- Copied figures, although copied text in captions can be detected.

It can detect:

- Direct copying of one source, ranging from short words or phrases up to whole paragraphs.
- Most cases where a paragraph has been modified superficially (small changes to wording or punctuation instead of rephrasing).

Copied text may be the result of inadvertently removing or forgetting to add a citation; however, it is important that no sections of the text have been intentionally copied with the intention of using the ideas of another author.

What is copyright infringement?

Copyright infringement refers to the illegal reuse of certain kinds of work, including writing. Note that it is not exactly the same as plagiarism, which is more concerned with ideas; copyright is concerned with how something is concretely expressed—the exact words used. All published text is covered by a license that determines when and where it can be reused. Papers published in subscription journals typically have a license that does not automatically allow reuse, whereas for those in open access journals, reuse with citation of the original paper is typically permitted.

iThenticate can detect copyright infringements, but the license of the original needs to be checked to see whether the text was legally copied or not.

It is the responsibility of the authors to determine whether a text is subject to copyright or ownership rights and to obtain permission from the copyright holder/owner of the text if this is the case.

What is self-plagiarism?

Self-plagiarism refers to copying from one's own work. In reality, it is not plagiarism since it does not copy the view of another author. However, i**t may breach copyright law if the author does not hold the copyright of the original piece**. Self-plagiarism is **considered unethical** because it means that the new paper shows **limited novelty**. However, most publishers tolerate larger amounts of self-plagiarism than they would plagiarism of other authors' work.

The authors of a document are indicated for most iThenticate sources, so self-plagiarism can be detected in many cases.

What does an iThenticate report show?

iThenticate reports highlight parts of a text where a match with previously published work has been found. Each work that has been copied from is numbered, and each match is assigned the number corresponding to that work. If multiple texts were copied from, iThenticate usually shows only the top result, i.e., the one with the largest number of matching words.

Your iThenticate report will show a percentage noting the level of plagiarism.

Please note that this percentage is not a reliable indicator of the level of plagiarism and that it is necessary to review the comments made by the plagiarism checker, who will be able to determine which sections may require modification.

Common Issues Found in iThenticate Reports and Suggested Guidance

While looking at your annotated report, you will notice comments from the plagiarism checker on certain passages of the text. Please go through all of these comments carefully, as they are integral to determining the level of plagiarism in your work and provide potential solutions to any issues that may be present.

Rephrasing

Problem	Text has been taken from a paper and only superficial changes have made such that it does not look identical to the original. This is unethical, as the ideas and expression of the original work are plagiarised.
Solution	Check that the original text has been cited properly. You may be recommended to rewrite the paragraph in your own words or to change it back to the original and use quotation marks.

Short direct quotes

Problem	Phrases that are more than simple and standard expressions have been copied directly from another paper. This is usually not a problem from a copyright point of view, as short quotes count as 'fair use' (under US law; other jurisdictions have similar exemptions). However, it may count as plagiarism if it contains a significant idea that readers may interpret as coming from your work due to its current phrasing. This is more likely to be acceptable if the text is from one of your own papers; **however, publishers vary regarding their policies on self-plagiarism**.
Solution	Check that the original paper has been cited properly; you may be advised to consider rewriting the passage or to place the section in question in quotation marks.

Long direct quotes

Problem	Several consecutive sentences or paragraphs from another piece of work have been copied into the text without modification. Unless indicated by a quotation, this is considered plagiarism, **even if the other paper is properly cited**. This situation may also result in copyright infringement. In cases where this is self-plagiarism, most publishers would reject

	such long passages repeated from previous work. **Note: This may be appropriate in certain experimental fields, especially in the Materials and Methods section, provided that the original source is properly cited (i.e., mathematical statements and theorems would fall under this category).**
Solution	The section should be removed and rewritten in your own words. You may also consider using a smaller portion of the text taken from other work, summarising the main points and referring readers to the other publication for more details. In instances where the use of these longer passages is acceptable, you may be asked to confirm that the text has been properly and clearly cited to avoid any confusion or impressions by readers that the text presented in your work is the original version.

Multiple combined sources

Problem	Many short words and phrases (from several words all the way up to full sentences) have been taken from several

	different publications with little to no original text in between.
	This indicates that multiple sections from multiple works have been copied into your manuscript during writing.
	Even when these are properly cited, this is considered plagiarism, as the ideas have not been expressed in your own words.
	Note: This issue is commonly found in review papers and in the Introduction section, where you may be providing background information related to your field.
Solution	These sections should be rewritten, and you should reconsider your approach to writing in order to ensure that—rather than piecing together text from multiple sources—you are expressing your ideas in your own original words, backed up by the findings of other work, instead of using the phrasing of other authors. In addition to simply listing previous results obtained in other work, more analysis and critique should be offered.

Common phrasing and terminology

Please note that the reported percentage match is not necessarily a reliable indicator of the level of plagiarism in your work. This is because common phrases and fixed terminology that are used frequently in your field will be picked up by iThenticate. Because of this, it is important that, after receiving your report, you check all of the comments present. A high percentage that is due to the use of common or fixed terminology is not cause for concern, and it is possible that you may need to take no further action. Additionally, a lower percentage does not necessarily mean that the manuscript is free from plagiarism concerns.

What to do after receiving your annotated report

Your annotated report will be sent to you via the email address used to make your submission. To access your report, click on the link included in the "Plagiarism check results" email.

Download the "iThenticate Report" and check all of the comments left in the report by the plagiarism checker. You should also check the comments left in the "Comments for authors" box, as this is where the plagiarism checker might have left general comments regarding the level of plagiarism in the manuscript.

If you have paid for services such as language editing or layout work, you will need to modify your manuscript accordingly based on the report and then reupload the report using the link provided in the "Plagiarism check results" email.

Note: It is possible that no further revisions may be required on your part.

Reducing the level of plagiarism in your report

Please note that MDPI Author Services cannot reduce the level of plagiarism in your manuscript for you, nor do we offer any services that do this for you.

As the expert in your field, you as the author should be the one to reduce the level of plagiarism in your manuscript.

This is because, in order to be able to reduce the level of plagiarism without altering an author's intended meaning or the meaning of other authors in the field who have been

referenced in a paper, our plagiarism checkers would need to be experts in each author's individual field of research, and would need to have read and clearly understood each paper referenced by an author in order to be able to accurately and appropriately rephrase or reword any referenced content to reduce the plagiarism percentage, which is simply not possible.