Academic plagiarism has a formal definition, but to state it informally simply it is using someone else's words or ideas as if they were your own. It is illegal, and unethical, but there seems to be an upward trend in this activity. According to a national survey published in Education Week, 54% of students admitted to using the internet to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own. Improper credit, the work is not original and can be considered plagiarism.

According to the Merriam Webster online dictionary the formal definition is:

"A national survey published in Education Week found that 54% of students admitted to plagiarizing from the internet; 74% of students admitted that at least once during the past school year they had engaged in "serious" cheating; and 47% of students believe their teachers sometimes choose to ignore students who are cheating."