

DETECTING CONTRACT CHEATING IN NARRATIVE ASSIGNMENTS

Contract Cheating occurs when a student arranges for another student to complete (in part or total) their assignment or exam on their behalf.

Evidence	Why This Can Be Considered Evidence	Limitations of this Evidence	Suggested Types of Questions	Making Sense of the Answer
<p>Strange paper properties such as no or few minutes of editing time, no author name or an author name different from the student's or even a different author name on each assessment</p>	<p>If the properties are blank, this means that they could have been purposefully stripped from the document. It is highly unusual for the author information to change if one person wrote all of the assessments.</p>	<p>If the student wrote their paper in Google Docs and then downloaded it to Word to submit, there will be no properties indicated. If the student doesn't own their own computer and has to borrow others' computers, the author information might change.</p>	<p>In what platform did you write this paper? Whose computer did you use?</p>	<p>If they answer Word or their own computer, it may suggest that they didn't write the paper themselves. If they answer Google Docs, ask them to show you their Google Doc including all of the versions as they worked on the paper.</p>
<p>The assessment is "too good to be true" because it is written at a higher level than expected (for that individual student or for students in that class).</p>	<p>While students can improve their writing over the course of a quarter, big jumps in improvement from one assessment to another (e.g., whole letter grades) or large gaps in understanding from one assessment (out-of-class) to another (in-class) is uncommon</p>	<p>The student could have: a) worked really hard on one paper, making it better than their other papers; b) had legitimate help on the paper from the Writing Hub; or, c) had a stellar secondary education which puts them heads above the rest.</p>	<p>Your use of language and your writing ability are surprising for someone at your level, I'd like to hear more about your process of writing this assessment...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) and why it differs so much from your other assessments? b) Including if you received help from anyone on this assessment c) and how you learned to write this well! 	<p>If the student cannot describe their process or explain the differences, it may suggest that they didn't write the paper themselves.</p> <p>If they said that they received "help" from someone, you will need to probe more about that "help". Who helped them? What kind of things did they do to help (e.g., translate your paper, rewrite sentences, add material, correct grammar)?</p>

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The language, ideas and/or readings used in the assessment were not covered in class	It is not uncommon for Contract Cheating providers to use materials that they know, rather than the materials the student was supposed to use in writing the assignment	The student could have studied this topic in another class or on their own	<p>It's a very interesting topic/theme/angle you chose to explore, how did you go about choosing it?</p> <p>I find it odd that you didn't use any of the readings assigned to you in this class, choosing instead to only use other sources. Please tell us your process for choosing your sources, including your rationale.</p>	If the student cannot explain the sources or how they chose them, it may suggest that they didn't write the paper themselves.
The specific word choices used in the assessment are unusual or particularly sophisticated	When a Contract Cheating provider writes another person's paper, they often use words that are not common for the class (because they didn't attend the class) or are more sophisticated because the student asked for a high grade on the paper.	If there is only one assessment as evidence, this could just be indicative of the student's style.	In the assessment, you used X word and it was just a unique choice. Can you tell me more about your use of that word and how you decided to use it?	If the student cannot define or describe their word choices, or use them again in a sentence, it may suggest that they didn't write the paper themselves.
The assessment doesn't address the prompt	If a student buys a pre-written essay (cheaper than a custom essay), the paper may not fully address the prompt. Even if it was a custom essay, often times Contract Cheating providers will not fully attend to the assignment prompt.	Students who are academically struggling with the course content could write a paper that does not address the prompt.	Professor – you mention that the paper doesn't address the prompt accurately – can you tell us more about how you came to that assessment?	If the student cannot adequately explain to your satisfaction why they wrote a paper that doesn't address the prompt, it may suggest that they didn't write the paper themselves.

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			Student – can you address this issue of your paper not addressing the prompt?	
The handwriting differs from assessment to assessment	A person’s handwriting doesn’t change significantly from occasion to occasion. If the ways in which the person writes their numbers in their PID or the letters in their name, for example, change from one assessment to another, this suggests two different writers.	Perhaps the student is ambidextrous and wrote one assessment with their left hand and one with their right! (definitely not “more likely than not” though)	Please write out your name and PID. Can you tell me why your handwriting is so different between these two assessments? Choose a concept from the assessment and ask the student to explain it.	This piece of evidence may be easy to “fake” because a student could practice writing to match or study the concepts ahead of the Review.

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