LAW SCHOOL NOTICE ON
PLAGIARISM ACADEMIC
HONESTY/PLAGIARISM

Academic Rule 9.3 of the Law School provides, in part:

"Serious misconduct includes but is not limited to: . . . (b) plagiarism of
written work which is used to satisfy the academic requirements of any
law school course or activity; . . . "

In cases of plagiarism the sanctions the faculty may impose include
expulsion and suspension. In addition, the Dean will usually be called
upon to report the misconduct to the appropriate state officials when the
student involved applies for admission to the Bar.

Plagiarism involves using someone else's words or ideas and passing
them off as your own. For law school work, if proper attribution is made
for the words and ideas of others, no question of plagiarism arises.

What is proper attribution? If you use the exact words (or the exact words
with omissions) from some source you must so indicate by the use of
quotations marks or appropriate indentation, and at that place in your
work, either by footnote or textual reference, you must cite the exact
location of the source. If you appropriate an idea or thought from some
source you must, at that place in your work, indicate the source.

Two examples (as they might appear in your paper):

1. In discussing the problem of the bona fide purchaser, one authority
   has stated: Another argument for the bona fide purchaser seeks to
   claim support from what may be called the Janus-faced formula . . .
   The trouble with this formula . . . is that it does not fit the facts. The
   acts of both, the original seller and the good faith purchaser, must
   combine to 'put it in the power of' the possessor to perpetuate the
   wrong in question. Each . . . trusted the possessor not to sell goods
   that he was not authorized to sell. Either both can stand firmly upon
   this formula, or neither can. This formula does not show any basis for

2. As one authority has pointed out, the use of the Janus-faced formula
   is not helpful. Since it took the trust of both parties, the formula does
   not help us to decide the question. L. Vold, The Law of Sales 177
   (1959).

It is not enough in either example to list the source only as part of your
general bibliography. You must give proper attribution for the words or
ideas you use at the point they appear in your work. (In both examples the
source could be identified by a footnote rather than in the body of your
paper.)

The question of the academic sufficiency of a paper is different from the
question of plagiarism. Plagiarism involves misrepresentation. A writer
may be honest as to the sources of ideas discussed and still receive a
failing grade, if the project does not reflect enough of the writer's own
work.

As the nature and purpose of the written projects which you may be
called upon to prepare in law school vary, the question of how much the
project is to reflect your original thought cannot be answered simply.
Your instructor will answer this for you in each particular case.