Interpreting the similarity score

Turnitin checks a user's work against its extensive database. If instances are found where a user's writing is similar to or matches against a source this will be flagged for your review in the match overview.

The database includes billions of web pages: both current and archived content from the Internet, a repository of works students have submitted to Turnitin in the past, and scholarly publications, which comprises thousands of periodicals, journals, and publications.

The color of the similarity score in ▤ My Files is based on the amount of matching text in a document.

What do the similarity score colors indicate?

The percentage range is 0% to 100% with the possible similarity groupings being:

Light blue: 0% matching text
Dark blue: 1-24% matching text
Yellow: 25-49% matching text
Orange: 50-74% matching text
Red: 75-100% matching text

> A document's quotes and bibliography can be [excluded from the similarity score](#).

Similarity scoring scenarios

A high similarity score does not always suggest that a piece of writing has been plagiarized, just as a low similarity score does not always indicate that no plagiarism has occurred. Consider the following scenarios:

1. Submitting a document of considerable size could result in a 0% similarity score with a report that still contains matches. This is because the similarity score has been rounded to 0%, rather than being exactly 0%.

2. You may have submitted multiple drafts of the same paper to your institution's private repository, meaning your final draft has resulted in a score of 100%. To avoid this issue, we advise that you only submit your final draft to the private repository.

3. An individual within your institution has managed to acquire a copy of your document. They submit this document to the institution's private repository and receive a similarity score of 25%. You submit your original document a week later to the private repository but receive a 100% similarity score.
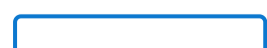
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