Dear Dean Anderson,

I am submitting this letter in reference to an assignment completed by [STUDENT NAME] in my [CLASS NAME AND COURSE NUMBER] course. The assignment for the first part of a two part final paper was to write a research paper based on a theory discussed throughout the course. The rubric for the assignment is attached to this memo. This assignment was due on November 7th, but [STUDENT NAME] was granted an Incomplete in the course and as such her paper was handed in on January 25th. While reading this assignment, I found several sections of the paper handed in that were plagiarized (ALLEGATION) from two main sources. As such, I will be giving [STUDENT NAME] a 0 on this assignment (SANCTION), which is worth x% of the course grade.

The issue of plagiarism was discovered almost immediately when I began to read [STUDENT NAME] paper. She first neglected to include a theory at all in her theory paper and immediately began to summarize the two empirical articles she had noted in the introduction. There was no reference page handed in for the paper and she neglected to correctly cite the first article by actually citing the wrong authors (those mentioned were being reviewed by the article’s authors) and leaving out the year of publication. Beyond inappropriate citing, which is a more common occurrence; [STUDENT NAME] began to discuss the purpose of the article and indicated that the authors were interested in testing a measure based on factor analysis. As a sophomore [MAJOR NAME] major it is highly unlikely that [STUDENT NAME] has ever been exposed to factor analysis methods and would know how to explain them. As I continued to read the paper it was clear that indeed [STUDENT NAME] did not understand the concept but
instead had strung together pieces of the authors’ explanation of their data and findings. Her paper was extremely difficult to follow so I was led to search for the article myself (by typing the authors’ names into Psych Info). I found that indeed most of her/his paper was worded exactly as the original paper had been written. There were full sentences, sometimes several in a row, without quotations and a heavy use of second source citations. Because the sentences on [STUDENT NAME] paper came from different sections of the original source it was difficult to follow her paper. This same issue occurred for the second empirical article being discussed. The paper [STUDENT NAME] turned in as well as the two empirical articles are attached to this correspondence and sentences used in his/her paper are highlighted.

As per the College’s policy, I asked [STUDENT NAME] to meet with me to discuss her paper. We met on Monday, February 11th and [STUDENT NAME] had some interesting remarks that confirmed my charge of plagiarism. First, she seemed unable to find the sources again because she left the hard copies of the sources at home. However, these two articles are available as full-text through Trexler. In addition, she was very honest about first not bringing home or looking up on Blackboard the rubric for the assignment. Second, she admitted that she had a very difficult time understanding each of the articles and therefore was trying her best to paraphrase. I then asked her about her understanding of the paraphrasing and plagiarism and she knew the difference. When I told her I was concerned about the fact that she had full sentences that were taken from the articles, she noted that she must have meant to include quotes. When I showed her how much of the paper I was able to highlight, she noted that she must have copied but did not realize it. I noted that I had a difficult time understanding how she did not realize it, since so much of the writing was not her own.

I explained to [STUDENT NAME] the seriousness of the offense and the different levels of sanction that could be administered for this type of academic dishonesty. I informed her that I would be giving her a 0 on the assignment and that she would be getting an F in the course. She knows and understands why she is being charged with plagiarism and is fully aware that she will be getting a letter from and meeting with Dean Huber.

Please let me know if there is any further information that you need from me or if you have any questions about this matter.

Sincerely,

Professor’s Signature

Professor’s Name
Professor’s Title

Enclosures: Copy of Assignment
Annotated Student Essay
Journal article with plagiarized passages highlighted