What happens if the professor says I plagiarized?
Accusations of plagiarism are very serious. They require students to speak with the professor in person. This in-person discussion has three possible outcomes:

1. You somehow convince the professor that you did not cheat. Once plagiarism has been identified this outcome is quite rare, but it is possible.

2. If it is your first offense and the professor believes that you made an unwise (but one-off) mistake, the professor will review with you in detail what you did wrong and remind you of all the class materials (syllabus, assignment instructions, etc.) that warned you not to do what you did. You will then have the option of signing a document stating that such materials were reviewed with you and that you will not plagiarize again. This document will remain with the professor. You will receive a grade of 0 for the assignment in question, but the professor will not escalate the matter to department chairs, deans, provosts, etc. As stated in the syllabus, assignments that have earned a grade of 0 due to plagiarism cannot be made up – please don’t ask. The student who receives this option may be disappointed, but should recognize that they are actually receiving an immense favor due to the local, contained nature of the punishment.

3. Students who refuse the above option, or accepted it but violated the terms by plagiarizing again, or whose first offense constitutes egregious, unmitigated plagiarism as decided by the professor, will be reported in accordance with university policy. They will receive an official letter from the university, with copies also sent to the department chair, college dean, and university provost, among other university officials. This letter will stipulate the punishment chosen by the professor (usually a zero in the entire course) and inform the student of their options in the matter. It will be included in the student’s permanent academic file.

What if I get a plagiarism letter?

Option A: If you know you cheated, you will need to accept this punishment and try to take the course again another time.

Option B: If you feel the punishment is unfair, you have the right to meet with the professor and the department chair (together). If you present evidence that you did not cheat, the professor may change her mind and rescind the punishment. The department chair may weigh in, but is not empowered to overrule the professor. You have 10 business days from the date of your letter to pursue this option.

Option C: If the professor still believes you cheated after Option B, or if you choose not to meet with the professor and department chair, you may go to the Vice Provost to file an appeal of the decision. Note that you may go directly to the provost after receiving your plagiarism letter (skipping Option B). If the provost agrees with the professor, your final option is to ask the provost to convene a panel to appeal her decision. Only the panel may overrule the professor and rescind punishment. You have 10 business days from the date of your letter to pursue this option.