

University of Anbar
College of Dentistry



Year: First

Course: English Language

Asst. Inst. Noor H. Aljanaby

Paraphrasing

What is paraphrasing?

- ▶ **Paraphrasing** is **expressing someone else's idea in your own words**, while keeping the **MEANING** of the original text. When you paraphrase, you include the ***most important information*** (key ideas) but state it in another way, using different vocabulary than the source. This helps you to avoid **plagiarism** and shows that you understand the source.
- ▶ To paraphrase is to rewrite something using different words without changing the original meaning. This is what is usually meant by the phrase 'in your own words'. The **paraphrase** should be **clearer** and **more easily understood** than the original and is often about the same length.
- ▶ To paraphrase means to express that author's main ideas in your own words and in your unique writing style, demonstrating to the reader that you understand the information researched.

Why do you need to paraphrase?

- ▶ Paraphrasing allows you **to convey ideas from academic sources.**
- ▶ Paraphrasing helps you to **clarify ideas.**
- ▶ Paraphrasing shows you **understand concepts.**
- ▶ Paraphrasing **demonstrates deep knowledge.**
- ▶ Paraphrasing is a good **alternative** to using **direct quotations.**
- ▶ Paraphrasing is a technique used to **avoid plagiarism.**

Plagiarism means copying someone else's words and/or ideas without giving credit to the author.

Paraphrase vs. Summary

The words ‘**paraphrasing**’ and ‘**summarizing**’ are sometimes used interchangeably, but usually they are used to mean two different techniques.

A **paraphrase** is **rewriting a piece of text in your own words, while retaining the meaning**. It is usually **similar in length** to the original text.

A **summary**, in contrast, is a **description of the main ideas of a text**, and so it is **shorter than the original text**. A journal article might be summarized in a single paragraph, for example, or a whole book summarized in a few paragraphs. To summarize something – like a TV show or an article – is to condense it down to the ‘bare bones’.

Both paraphrasing and summarizing are important techniques in academic writing.

Paraphrase	Summary
Should be about the same length as the original text	Can be very short
More detailed than summary and can include supporting ideas and examples	Communicates only the main ideas, leaving out supporting ideas and examples
Uses different words to the original text	Uses different words to the original text

Steps for Paraphrasing

- ▶ Read and reread the text carefully to understand the meaning of the text properly. Note any important subject-specific words.
- ▶ Select important points of the source text to transform them into their new meaningful and accurate form.
- ▶ Now it is the time of the transformation which can be done by using different **techniques**
 - Look up any difficult words and find synonyms for them.
 - Find different ways of expressing the information in the groups of words (phrases).
 - Rewrite sentences. Simplify the sentence structure and the vocabulary without changing the meaning.
- ▶ Put your text out of sight and write your paraphrase from memory.
- ▶ Revise your paraphrase and compare to the original. Is it written clearly in your own words?
- ▶ Do not forget to use an in-text reference (or footnote) at the start or end of your paraphrase.

Examples of commonly used paraphrasing techniques:

- Changing **positive statements to negative statements** and vice versa.
- Changing the **word forms** and **word order**.
- Changing the **sentence structure**: using *gerunds*; changing from *direct speech* to *indirect speech*, from *active to passive*, from **a clause to a phrase** and vice versa.
- Changing **vocabulary**: synonyms & keywords.
- Change **order of ideas**.
- **Preserving technical terms** that don't have appropriate synonyms.
- Leaving out **unnecessary** words and information.
- Break **long** sentences into **short** ones.
- Making **abstract** ideas more **concrete**.

Note: You can use all the above techniques at the same time.

Paraphrasing techniques

Changing the sentence structure

- *After he studied, John took a nap.* → *After studying, John took a nap.* (from finite clause to non-finite clause: -ing participle clause)
- *The house that is across the street is new.* → *The house across the street is new.* (from finite clause to non-finite clause: verbless clause)
- *The researcher write the article.* → *The article is written by the researcher.* (from active to passive voice)
- *A hotel employee will carry your bags.* → *Your bags will be carried by a hotel employee.* (from active to passive voice)
- *He said, "I'm ready for lunch."* → *He said he was ready for lunch.* (from direct to indirect speech)

Changing vocabulary: synonyms & keywords

- ▶ Replace the original words with words that have the **same meaning**.
 - A **hotel employee** will **carry** your **bags**. *bags* → *luggage*; *carry* → *pick up*; *a hotel employee* → *a bellboy*
 - The stallion was **content** with the mare. *content* → *happy*
- ▶ When you can't find a synonym, replace the original word with a **definition**.
 - The **stallion** was content with the **mare**. → The **male horse** was happy with the **female horse**.
 - Students seem to be under serious stress because they have **so much homework**. → Students seem to be under serious stress because they have so **many assignments**. (*so much homework = so many assignments*)

► Change word forms

Change word class: Change **nouns** to **verbs**, **verbs** to **nouns**, **adjectives** to **adverbs**, **adverbs** to **adjectives**, etc.

- *Mark is an **accurate typist**. → Mark **types accurately**.*
- *Students seem to be under **serious stress** because they have so much homework. → Students feel **seriously stressed** because they have so much homework.*

► Combined techniques:

- *After he ate lunch, Mike took a nap. → After **eating lunch**, Mike **slept a little**.
(Change a finite clause to non-finite and add synonyms or definitions)*
- *The house that is across the street is old. → The house **across the road** is **ancient**.*
- *Students seem to be under serious stress because they have so much homework. → Because **so many assignments** are being **given** to students, they **appear** to be **seriously stressed**.*

► **Interpreting meaning:** to identify the underlying meaning of a statement.

- **Original:** The wolf said, “I’m ready for lunch.” The sheep looked very worried.

Paraphrase: *The wolf complained about being hungry which made the sheep extremely anxious.*

- **Proverb:** Don't cry over spilled milk.

Paraphrase: *When something bad happens that you can't control, it doesn't help to get upset.*

► **Change transitions**

Change the structure or order of the sentence and/or paragraph:

- **Although** it was raining, Bob walked to work.

*It was raining, **but** Bob walked to work.*

*It was raining; **however**, Bob walked to work.*

Despite the rain, Bob went to work on foot. (change word forms)

- *Students seem to be under serious stress **because** they have so much homework.*

Since they have so much homework, students seem to be under serious stress.

After paraphrasing

ASSESS YOUR PARAPHRASE:

- The MEANING is the same.
- Most of the words have been changed.
- The sentences have been significantly restructured.
- This is about the same length as the original writing.
- The information is correctly referenced.

Three Criteria for a Good Paraphrase

- ▶ A good paraphrase has the **same meaning as the original**.
 - **All main ideas** included.
 - **No new ideas** added.
- ▶ A good paraphrase is **different enough from the original** to be considered **your own writing**.
 - Uses **no more than four or five words** in a row from the original source.
 - Changes **grammar** and **vocabulary** as much as possible.
- ▶ A good paraphrase **refers directly to (or cites) the original source**.
 - Include the **name of the author** and/or the name of **the source**.

Now try:

1- Here is an original sentence and two paraphrases of it. One of the paraphrases is well done, but the other does not meet all the criteria for a good paraphrase. Decide which of the two paraphrases is weak. Identify which of the criteria is missing.

- **Original:** A global village was upon us that more and more resembled an American buffet table - even if chills, chutney and kimchee were added to the mix.

-Rifkin, Ira, *Spiritual Perspectives on Globalization*, 2003

- **Paraphrase 1:** *We came to a big table with food from many different countries, but it was really a lot like an American meal.*

Does the paraphrase meet all three criteria? Yes / No (circle one)

If no, what is the problem?

- **Paraphrase 2:** *In this article, Rifkin (2003) says that the whole world seemed increasingly like the United States, although it also included contributions from many other cultures.*

Does the paraphrase meet all three criteria? Yes / No (circle one)

If no, what is the problem?

2- The following are sample paraphrases, but which is acceptable, and which is not? Why?

- **Original:** “Color blindness is a visual defect resulting in the inability to distinguish colors. About 8% of men and 0.5% of women experience some difficulty in color perception. Color blindness is usually an inherited sex-linked characteristic, transmitted through, but recessive in, females”

(Columbia Encyclopedia, 2000).

- **Paraphrase 1:** *Color blindness is a visual impairment resulting in the disability to distinguish colors. About 8 percent of men and a half percent of women experience problems in color viewing. Color blindness is usually a hereditary sex-linked characteristic, transmitted through, but usually recessive in, women.*

- **Paraphrase 2:** *Color blindness, affecting approximately 8% of men and 0.5% of women, is a condition characterized by difficulty in telling one color from another, most often hereditary (Columbia Encyclopedia, 2000).*



Eight pitfalls of paraphrasing

1. Forgetting to acknowledge source or author.
 2. Misreading the original.
 3. Including too much of the original.
 4. Leaving out important information.
 5. Adding your opinion.
 6. Summarizing rather than paraphrasing.
 7. Substituting inappropriate synonyms.
 8. Expanding or narrowing the meaning.
- 