



Writing Centre

PARAPHRASE: Write it in Your Own Words

Learn to borrow from a source without plagiarizing.

A paraphrase is:

- a. your own rendition of essential information and ideas expressed by someone else, presented in a new form
- b. one legitimate way (when accompanied by accurate documentation) to borrow from a source
- c. a more detailed 'restatement' than a summary, which focuses concisely on a single main idea

Paraphrasing is a valuable skill because...

- a. it is better than quoting information from an undistinguished passage
- b. it helps you control the temptation to quote too much
- c. the mental process required for successful paraphrasing helps you to grasp the full meaning of the original

6 Steps to Effective Paraphrasing:

1. Read the work to be sure that you understand it.
2. Without looking at the original work, write your paraphrase on a separate piece of paper.
3. On the paper, make a note of the key information and how it might be used in your work.
4. Compare your paraphrased work with the original to make sure that you properly communicate all the important information in the new version.



5. Be sure to distinguish any unique terms or phrases you have borrowed word-for-word from the source with quotation marks.
6. Write down the source, including page numbers, with your paraphrase. This way if you decide to use the work later, you can easily give credit to the original author.



The following passage is an example of an original passage that was rewritten:

The original passage:

Students frequently overuse direct quotation in taking notes, and as a result they overuse quotations in the final [research] paper. Probably only about 10% of your final manuscript should appear as directly quoted matter. Therefore, you should strive to limit the amount of exact transcribing of source materials while taking notes. Lester, James D. Writing Research Papers. 2nd ed. (1976): 46-47.

A legitimate paraphrase:

In research papers students often quote excessively, failing to keep quoted material down to a desirable level. Since the problem usually originates during note taking, it is essential to minimize the material recorded verbatim (Lester 46-47).

An acceptable summary:

Students should take just a few notes in direct quotation from sources to help minimize the amount of quoted material in a research paper (Lester 46-47).

A plagiarized version:

Students often use too many direct quotations when they take notes, resulting in too many of them in the final research paper. In fact, probably only about 10% of the final copy should consist of directly quoted material. So it is important to limit the amount of source material copied while taking notes.

Source: Driscoll, D.L. & Brizee, A. (2016). Paraphrase: Write it in your own words. Retrieved from <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/563/02/>