

## Paraphrasing

Strong academic and professional writers use various methods to incorporate findings and information from other sources to effectively communicate their own ideas.

**Quoting** may be best when the writer wants to highlight the expertise of a source and/or if the wording from the original is very effective or memorable. Quotation marks must be used, and the source must be referenced.

**Summarizing** is best used when the writer wants to highlight the main points another author made and show the relationship of those main points to the focus of the paper. The source must be referenced.

**Paraphrasing** is most effective when the writer wants to modify the language from the original source to make the writing more understandable and more in keeping with the style of writing being used. The source must be referenced.

### What is Paraphrasing?

Paraphrasing what you read is an essential skill at college, as it allows you to demonstrate your understanding of the material you have read. Paraphrasing involves taking a passage from an original source and restating it in your own words and with a different sentence structure, while keeping the main idea and details the same. Paraphrasing takes time and practice, but once you have reworded the original material, you can then integrate the material into your own writing more effectively. Paraphrased material often ends up being the same length or slightly longer than the original source material.

### Steps for Writing a Paraphrase

1. **Read** the text several times to get a good sense of its meaning.
2. **Use** a dictionary to look up any new or difficult words. Use a thesaurus to find a synonym for the new words.
3. **Make** point forms notes about the content of the material.
4. **Re-read** the original. Make sure your point form notes capture the essential information.
5. Without looking at the original, use your point form notes to **write** differently structured sentences.
6. **Check** your paraphrase against the original to ensure that the structure of the sentences and the vocabulary are different but that the essential meaning is the same.
7. **Reference** the source in text and on a Works Cited/References page.

## Examples

### Original Material

One function of a paper's introductory paragraph is to "engage readers with the topic, and another function is to focus readers' attention on the particular aspects of the topic that matter to the writer" (Wysocki, Lynch, & Doyle, 2011, p. 238).

### Unacceptable Paraphrase #1

One role of an essay's introductory paragraph is to engage readers with the topic. Another function is to keep the reader's attention focused on the parts of the topic that are important to the writer (Wysocki, Lynch, & Doyle, 2011, p. 238).

### Why # 1 is Unacceptable

This paraphrase is unacceptable; although some synonyms were used, the structure and vocabulary are almost identical to the original. If this paraphrase were used in a paper, it could be considered plagiarized material because it is too similar to the original text.

### Unacceptable Paraphrase #2

The introduction in an essay has one purpose: to interest the reader in the topic so that he/she will want to read more.

### Why # 2 is Unacceptable

This paraphrase is unacceptable because the meaning has been changed. The original authors indicated that the introduction has two functions while the author of the paraphrase only wrote about one function. Additionally, the original source hasn't been referenced, so it would be considered plagiarism.

### Acceptable Paraphrase

In an essay, the purpose of an introduction is to get the reader interested in the topic and to help the reader see the significance of the writer's approach to the topic (Wysocki, Lynch, & Doyle, 2011).

### Why it is Acceptable

This paraphrase is acceptable because the **structure and the vocabulary are different** from the original. The paraphrase has also retained the **same meaning** as the original. Finally, the source has been **referenced** after the paraphrase.

## Paraphrasing Checklist

- Did I read the material until I had a good understanding of its meaning?
- Did I look up difficult words in a dictionary and use a thesaurus to find synonyms for those words?
- Did I write down point form notes to capture the ideas from the original?
- Did I compare my notes against the original to make sure I noted the key information?
- Did I rewrite the sentences without looking at the original?
- Do my sentences have a different structure and different vocabulary than the original?
- Did I retain the meaning from the original?
- Did I reference the material both in text and in a References/Works Cited page at the end of my document?
- Did I get help if I wasn't sure about how to paraphrase correctly?

## References

- The OWL at Purdue University. (2012). *Paraphrase: Write it in your own words*. Retrieved March 28, 2012, from <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>
- Wysocki, A. F., Lynch, D. A., & Doyle, S. M. (2011). *The DK handbook: Canadian Edition*. Don Mills: Pearson.