

Paraphrasing & Summaries Part 1 of 2

Day 4 Thursday 2/7

Handout

A. Paraphrasing

With the use of only your own words, you take an outside source and rewrite it. Paraphrasing is used when proving support in essays, and when it is done correctly, one avoids issues of plagiarizing.

There are many benefits to paraphrasing:

- a) Rephrasing a source using your own words and different grammatical structure, helps to reinforce your comprehension of the text
- b) Helps retention of the material you are tackling

Guidelines to successful paraphrasing:

1. Retain the original meaning of the source
2. Rewrite the source such that it stays about the same length as the original
3. Write the events in the order as the original source
4. Use your own words and sentence structure
5. Substitute words in the original with synonyms, making sure the language in your paraphrase is appropriate for your audience.
6. Combine or divide sentences as necessary.
7. *Document the paraphrase—give formal credit to the original writer

Examples of Paraphrasing incorrectly to correctly done:

Inadequate paraphrases

1. Original

The current constitutional debate over heavy metal rock and gangsta rap music is not just about the explicit language but also advocacy, an act of incitement to violence.

a. Paraphrased inadequately

Today's constitutional debate about gangsta rap and heavy metal rock is not just about obscene language but also advocacy and incitement of acts of violence.

b. Correctly paraphrased:

Lyrics in some rap and heavy metal songs that appear to promote violence, along with concerns about obscenity, have generated a constitutional debate over popular music.

Inadequate paraphrases

2. Original

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. Paraphrased inadequately (in fact plagiarized)

Students overuse direct quotation when they take notes, and as a result they overuse quotations in the papers. Probably only about 90% of your final manuscript should not appear as directly quoted matter. Thus you should strive to limit the amount of exact transcribing of source materials while taking notes. Lester, James D. *Writing Research Papers*. 2nd ed. (1987): 46-47.

b. Correctly paraphrased:

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).

Examples of paraphrasing from the original texts:

a) Original

Second, numerous studies done all over the US show that the recidivism rates for inmates who earn degrees are much lower than those of their uneducated peers.

Paraphrased:

In addition, research proves that prisoners who become educated are less likely to return to jail than prisoners who don't.

b) Original

Without the "stick" of an attendance policy, a sizable number of my students would fall woefully behind in the course, not realizing that the material and skill development that they miss in class is integral to their success in the course.

Paraphrased:

Many students would get far behind in class without an attendance requirement because they don't understand that the coursework and skill building they miss is essential to their success in the class.

Exercise 1: Paraphrase the following sentences.

1. The student requested that the professor excuse her absence, but the professor refused.

2. There will be a music concert next to Starbucks coffee shop. Would you like to go?

3. The car with tinted windows doing 80 miles an hour we saw last night slammed into an Amtrak train that was going 200 miles an hour down the tracks.

4. If it weren't for other people and our need to challenge, agree with, or otherwise respond to them, there would be no reason to argue at all.

5. The best academic writing has one underlying feature: it is deeply engaged in some way with other people's views. Too often, however, academic writing is taught as a process of saying, "true" or "smart" things in a vacuum, as if it were possible to argue effectively without being in conversation with someone else.

B. Summary writing

An academic summary tells the main points of a source text in brief form. As a condensed version of the source material, it can range anywhere from a couple of sentences to a short summary article, depending on the length of the source and your purposes for writing. In writing a summary, you need to select the most important points of the source text and report on (vs. react to) them using your own words. You can combine several important points from the source into a brief general statement, or go more in depth and relate minor points as well, again depending on the purpose of your summary. Experts suggest, however, that a good rule of thumb to follow is that a summary is never more than about one-quarter the length of the original, though in most cases it is much briefer. Also, keep in mind that a summary must always be written in your own words, or if not, should contain direct quotations. To ignore this rule is plagiarism.

Guidelines for writing a summary

1. Preview then read essay several times before starting a summary.
2. From previewing reading along with the annotations, *you should be able to piece together the summary.
3. You write in the order of the essays events
4. Rewrite the thesis in your words, while stating the most important issues that support it, many times using the topic sentences as the major points
5. Make use of transitions.
6. Reread your summary to determine if it contains sufficient information.
7. Ask yourself: Would my summary be understandable and meaningful to someone who has not read the work?
**note the best annotations you write are those that sum up the various parts of an essay*

Purposes of summaries

- exam preparation
- annotating and taking other various notes
- gathering information researching
- integrating sources into essay writing

A Sample summary from “Purse Snatching”

Although the right to participate in women’s professional sports is now well established, financial equality with men participants does not exist. In both World Cup soccer and pro tennis, there are vast differences between men’s and women’s salaries. In professional basketball, women players earn a fraction of what men players are paid. Auto racing, the most lucrative of all sports, has few, if any, women participants. Women are at a financial disadvantage not only in salary but also for endorsements, winnings, and profit sharing. Financial inequity may exist because women are treated as sexual objects, as shown by the recent media coverage of Brandi Chastain removing her shirt. The media and the medical profession suggest that women are physically inferior to men. The author contends that boxers in different weight categories are not compared and, likewise, that men and women participating in the same sport should not be compared. Sex discrimination should be less important than financial considerations, but financial inequity still exists.

Example paragraph to summarize:

Overall, the first two quarters of 2008 have been profitable to the company. Nineteen of twenty departments report cutting costs at least twenty percent, and sales from fifteen departments have risen five percent, or about \$5 million. Despite these positive developments, most department heads believe that they will not be able to maintain these levels for the remainder of the year.

Acceptable summary

The company has driven profits from January to June of 2008, but the rest of the year is not expected to be as good.

Example

The original passage:

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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).

