

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is rewriting information that you learned from an external source such as a book, journal or webpage into your own words. It is used alongside quoting and summarising to form arguments or discuss topics.

How to Paraphrase?

You must focus on retaining the meaning of the information but apply your own language to reflect your understanding of the concepts. In-text citations and references are required for **any** paraphrased material.

Example

Original Material	Paraphrased Material
<p>How to Paraphrase?</p> <p>You must focus on retaining the meaning of the information but apply your own language to reflect your understanding of the concepts. In-text citations and references are required for any paraphrased material.</p>	<p>Paraphrasing involves using your own words to blend the author's original meaning into your writing, demonstrating that you understand their ideas. You should always cite and reference paraphrased ideas (DCU Writing Centre, 2020).</p>

Steps in Paraphrasing¹

1. Read the paragraph or section which you want to paraphrase.
2. Focus on understanding the main ideas.
3. From memory, briefly bullet point the key concepts.
4. Using the information in the summary bullet points, try to write your own version, blending it into your existing writing. The information may not necessarily be in the same order as the bullet points.
5. Double check the original text to make sure that you have understood and conveyed the author's meaning correctly, and that you are not missing any essential facts.
6. Make sure that your wording is different from the original and truly your own.
7. **Always** add the correct citation after the paraphrased material.

¹ Adapted from Oshima, A. and Hogue, A. (2006) *Writing Academic English*. 4th edn. White Plains, NY: Pearson Longman. The Longman Academic Writing Series, Level 4.

Basic paraphrasing techniques²

If you are struggling to come up with alternative wording to convey the author's ideas, you can apply some of the techniques below.

Please note that **none of these techniques on their own constitute effective paraphrasing**. Some of the examples below are too similar to the original and might be considered plagiarism. You should **always use a combination of various techniques** and aim to paraphrase the paragraph or section **as a whole**, not sentence by sentence.

1. Use synonyms

Synonyms are words or expressions which convey the same or very similar ideas:

Students often find paraphrasing difficult.

It is common for students to find paraphrasing challenging.

2. Change the word class

E.g. acquire (verb) > acquisition (noun):

University students should acquire effective writing skills.

The acquisition of effective writing skills is essential for university students.

E.g. plagiarism (noun) > plagiarise (verb); accidental (adjective) > accidentally (adverb):

Poor paraphrasing can be the cause of accidental plagiarism.

Students can sometimes plagiarise accidentally due to poor paraphrasing.

3. Change the word order

E.g. change active to passive structures:

Students should adhere to their School's citing and referencing guidelines.

The School's rules on citing and referencing should be followed.

E.g. change the order of cause and effect:

Cause first: Poor paraphrasing can be the cause of accidental plagiarism.

Effect first: *Students may plagiarise accidentally due to poor paraphrasing.*

² Adapted from Bailey, S. (2011) *Academic Writing: A Handbook for International Students*. 3rd edn. Oxon: Routledge.