

A paraphrase is...

- Your own rendition of essential information and ideas expressed by someone else, presented in a new form.

Paraphrasing is a valuable skill because...

- It helps you control the temptation to quote too much.
- The process required for successful paraphrasing helps you to grasp the full meaning of the original.

4 Steps to Effective Paraphrasing

1. Reread the original passage until you understand its full meaning.
2. Set the original aside and write out your paraphrase.
3. Check your rendition with the original to make sure that your version accurately expresses all the essential information in a new form.
4. Include the source in the in-text citation.

Some examples to compare

The original passage:

‘Students frequently overuse direct quotation in taking notes, and as a result they overuse quotations in the final essay. 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 1976, p. 46).

A legitimate paraphrase:

In essays, 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 1976, p. 46).

An acceptable summary:

Students should take just a few notes in direct quotation from sources to help minimize the amount of quoted material in an essay (Lester 1976, p. 46).

A plagiarised version:

Students often use too many direct quotations when they take notes, resulting in too many of them in the final essay. 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.

The above notes are adapted from Purdue University, Online Writing Lab.

Dr Paul O'Brien

Academic Learning Centre

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