

Paraphrasing 101

What is a Paraphrase?

- ✓ A paraphrase is used for presenting an author's ideas in *your own words*.

When should a Paraphrase be used?

- ✓ *Paraphrase* if you are trying to give the reader an accurate and comprehensive account of the ideas you have gathered from the source you are working with, especially if you tend to explain, interpret or disagree with the source in the essay.
- ✓ Use paraphrase when you are working with small amounts of information

How to paraphrase:

- ✓ Begin by Identifying the Author and the Title of the text.
- ✓ Now turn the text over, or cover it up and write down your interpretation of the text in your own words without looking at the original text. Now go back and make sure that the paraphrase is rephrasing the author's position as stated in the text. Do not include personal opinion or interpretation.
- ✓ A word of Caution: don't just substitute words- this could be considered plagiarism!!!!!! (Check Example)

Characteristics of Effective Paraphrases:

- ✓ Accurately relays the information from the original text in your own words.
- ✓ Provides the reader with the source of the information
- ✓ Paraphrases, unlike summaries, should be as long as the original document.

How to Recognize Acceptable & Unacceptable Paraphrase

The following is the ORIGINAL text from page 375: Robert L. Jackson and Doreen Jackson, *Politics in Canada: Culture, Institutions, and Behaviour in Public Policy*, second edition (Scarborough, ON: Prentice Hall Canada, 1990):

“If parliament is to maintain its status as the most important institution in Canadian political life, it has to amend its internal procedures and its external relations with other political actors.”

Plagiarism occurs when the writer -

- only moves certain words and phrases around in the sentence
- simply replaces a few words with synonyms
- uses the same sentence structure as the original
- doesn't cite the source.

The following is an example of UNACCEPTABLE paraphrasing -- or plagiarism -- of the above passage:

To maintain its status as a central institution in Canadian politics, Parliament must amend its internal procedures and external relations with politicians.

To paraphrase without plagiarizing, writers must -

- Use their own words to convey the information
- Use their own sentence structure
- Cite the source and page number.

The following is an example of ACCEPTABLE paraphrasing of the above passage:

APA Style Documentation:

According to Robert and Doreen Jackson, to retain its preeminence in Canadian politics parliament must change how it functions, inside and out. (Jackson & Jackson 1990, p.374).

MLA Style Documentation:

According to Robert and Doreen Jackson, to retain its preeminence in Canadian politics parliament must change how it functions, inside and out. (Jackson & Jackson 374).

Exercise in ACCEPTABLE Paraphrasing:

The following is the ORIGINAL text is from Linda Flower's essay, "Writing for an Audience" in *Exploring Language*, 10th edition edited by Gary Goshgarian (Pearson Longman, 2004), page 117:

Whether your purpose is to persuade or simply to present your perspective, it helps to know the image and attitudes you're your reader finally holds. The more these differ from your own, the more you will have to do to make him or see her see what you mean.

Now, following the examples above, discern which of the following paraphrases is acceptable and which is plagiarism. Why?

Example 1:

No matter what your objective or viewpoint is when writing, knowing something about the audience's ideas and feelings on the subject is helpful. If these are in contrast to your own, you face the work of making the audience see things from your perspective (Flower 117).

Example 2:

Whether you plan to persuade or only state your perspective, it's good to know the picture and attitudes your audience already has. The more they are different from your own, the more you will have to do to make the audience see things your way.