



School of Liberal Arts

University Writing Center
"Because writers need readers"
Cavanaugh Hall 008H University Library 2125
(317)274-2049 (317)278-8171
www.iupui.edu/~uwc

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is an essential skill for any writer, as it allows you to reference another's idea without employing an unwieldy direct quotation. Paraphrasing also demonstrates your understanding of the original author's idea. Unlike a summary, which outlines an entire work (or a large amount of a work) and contains many ideas, a paraphrase focuses on only one idea. Care must be taken when paraphrasing to avoid unintentional plagiarism. This handout outlines a technique for paraphrasing.

- 1) **Read and understand the original source.** Look at the passage that you wish to paraphrase, and be sure that you understand it. If necessary, look up any unfamiliar words. Also, examine the context of the idea, to be sure that you don't accidentally misinterpret the author's meaning.
- 2) **Put the original passage aside.** Before you begin to paraphrase, put the original aside or cover it up so that you are not tempted to peek at it and use its language. Then write down what it says, using your own words.
- 3) **Compare your passage to the original.** Be sure that you have maintained the integrity of the original author's idea, without putting your own bias into the idea. At the same time, be sure that you have not accidentally plagiarized by repeating the author's wording. If you must use a piece of jargon or a key phrase word-for-word, then it should be enclosed in quotation marks.
- 4) **Cite the source.** Use the citation style appropriate to your paper. Even though the paraphrase is in your own words, you **MUST** give credit for the idea in order to avoid plagiarism.

Examples:

Original Text: Many students, beginning their first year of college, are unaware of the extreme difficulties that are caused by a lack of adequate parking spaces at a university. As a result, these students often cannot find parking in a timely manner and are tardy to their classes.

Paraphrase: A lot of freshmen do not realize how difficult it is to find parking on campus, so they are often late to their classes (Lane, 2011).

Original Text: The ability to strategize is one that some individuals have a natural aptitude for, while others must gain it through experience. Strategy, at its best, is the ability to foresee the worst circumstance while preparing for the most probable.

Paraphrase: The most effective strategy is comprised of being able to recognize the worst possible outcome, but taking action on the most likely outcome; it is a skill that some are born with, but some must learn (Lane, 2011).

SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS
INDIANA UNIVERSITY
University Writing Center
IUPUI