

English 183

Paraphrasing

1. Definition

A paraphrase is the restatement of an idea that you have read or heard in your own words. In other words, it is expressing someone else's ideas truthfully/correctly using your own words but, at the same time, ensuring that you acknowledge the source of the ideas without plagiarising. Refer to Chapter 2 of your course book for further explanation of plagiarism.

2. Purpose

Paraphrasing helps you to show that you understand the ideas that you have read in your sources. Whether you are preparing to write an essay or a research paper, paraphrasing the ideas of authors from different sources is necessary in supporting your own.

3. Techniques

It is important that you do not plagiarise, that is, you do not copy the author's work word-for-word. When paraphrasing, you must express the author's ideas in a different way. Furthermore, as paraphrasing is a skill, it requires the use of several techniques. Here are some of them:

- **Change the sentence type.** You can do this by using different transitions and linking words such as but, although, in spite of, in addition to, etc.
- **Change the type of verb.** You can change a passive form into an active form.
- **Change the type of word.** You can change a noun to a verb or a noun to an adjective or adverb.
- **Change the word order.** You can do this by changing the position of words or clauses in a sentence.
- **Change the type of phrase.** You can express, for example, a possessive structure using an apostrophe and 's' or the preposition 'of'.
- **Change the words.** You can use synonyms.

Note: When paraphrasing, you are allowed to retain **medical/scientific terms** and do not have to change them.

WARNING

- Using only one of the above techniques is not enough. You must use **a combination of techniques** – otherwise, you may be accused of plagiarism.
- When you change words, sentence structures, etc., you need to ensure that you are not changing **the meaning** of the original ideas.

4. Paraphrasing a source

For further explanation and examples, read the following article:

How to paraphrase a source

http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/QPA_paraphrase2.html

5. Good or bad paraphrasing?

What is a good paraphrase? To find out, read the following article which focuses on a health sciences related example:

Successful vs. unsuccessful paraphrases

http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/QPA_paraphrase.html