

Academic writing: Paraphrasing and summarizing scientific /academic texts + Avoiding plagiarism

Part 1: Introduction to summaries



A: Paraphrasing

Study the texts below. What do you understand by the term 'paraphrase'?

Original	Paraphrase
Because of their unique perspective, Americans fear globalization less than anyone else, and as a consequence they think about it less than anyone else. When Americans do think about globalization, they think of the global economy as an enlarged version of the American economy.	Lester Thurow (1993) maintains that because Americans see globalization simply as a bigger form of their own economy, they are less concerned with it than is the rest of the world.

(Source: <https://integrity.mit.edu/academic-writing/avoiding-plagiarism-paraphrasing>)

Task 1a

Consider the following list of possible strategies involved in paraphrasing. Circle the tick  next to those strategies which the writer of the paraphrased text did and circle the cross  next to those strategies which the writer did not do.

The writer of the paraphrase ...

- removed or replaced unusual words.
- reduced the content of the paraphrase to keep it simple and concise.
- used the same words/sentences as the original.
- reformulated the main ideas by using synonyms for non-generic terms.
- kept generic terms from the original text.
- used a suitable reporting verb and provided in-text reference details.

Task 1b

Find and highlight examples in the paraphrase of each strategy with a tick.

Task 2

Read the following paragraph and try to find an alternative for the phrases in bold.

Original Text

The United States, Germany and Japan and other **industrial nations** are being **transformed**

from industrial economies to knowledge and information based service economies, whilst manufacturing **has been moving to low wage countries**. In a knowledge and information based economy, knowledge and information are the **key ingredients** in creating wealth.

B: Being Concise – Summarising Paragraphs and Ideas

Task 3a

Read the following text and highlight the keywords:

Time management is a critical skill for all students to develop. Weekly and semester timetables are an excellent way to plan a study program. Students can use them to manage their most important study, work and social commitments and to set themselves study goals. Blocks of time can then be set aside for study, reading, researching and writing. The most urgent tasks can be addressed, whilst work continues on preparing for lectures, tutorials and assignments. If time has been allocated for specific purposes, it is easier to avoid unexpected demands like phone calls, visitors and invitations. Assignments can be finished and submitted on time and to a satisfactory standard.

Task 3b

Now read the 1-sentence summary of the passage and find an example (sentence) for each phrase in bold.

Effective time management (1) allows students to **utilise their time (2)** in order to **successfully complete (3)** their **study requirements (4)**.

QUALITIES OF A GOOD SUMMARY

A good summary should be **comprehensive, concise, coherent, and independent**:

- **A summary must be comprehensive:** You should isolate all the important points in the original passage and note them down in a list. Review all the ideas on your list, and include in your summary all the ones that are indispensable to the author's development of her/his thesis or main idea.
- **A summary must be concise:** Eliminate repetitions in your list, even if the author restates the same points. Your summary should be considerably shorter than the source. You are hoping to create an overview; therefore, you need not include every repetition of a point or every supporting detail.
- **A summary must be coherent:** It should make sense as a piece of writing in its own right; it should not merely be taken directly from your list of notes or sound like a disjointed collection of points.
- **A summary must be independent:** You are not being asked to imitate the author of the text you are writing about. On the contrary, you are expected to maintain your own voice throughout the summary. Don't simply quote the author; instead, use your own words to express your understanding of what you have read. After all, your summary is based on your interpretation of the writer's points or ideas. However, you should be careful not to create any misrepresentation or distortion by introducing comments or criticisms of your own.

TECHNIQUES FOR WRITING SUMMARIES

- Outline the text. Break it down into its major sections/ paragraphs and list the main supporting points for each section/ paragraph.
- Write a one or two sentence summary of each section/ paragraph.
- Formulate a single sentence to summarize the whole text, looking at the author's thesis or topic sentences as a guide.
- Write a paragraph (app. 150 words): begin with the overall summary sentence and follow it with the section/ paragraph summary sentences.
- Rewrite and rearrange your paragraph as needed to make your writing clear and concise, to eliminate relatively minor or repetitious points, and to provide transitions (linking devices) and an objective (passive) voice. Make sure that your summary includes all the major supporting points of each idea. The final version should be unified, cohesive and coherent.

Task 4

Read the following paragraph and select one correct summary from the options below:

Studying in a new environment is different and therefore can be stressful. Tertiary students come from a variety of backgrounds and are studying for different purposes. Students may have come straight from secondary school, they may be a 'mature age' student who has decided to pursue another career, or they may be an international student and have just arrived in Australia. For many students whatever their background, tertiary learning is different from their previous studies. Students may be worried about the amount of reading required, or whether they will be able to study efficiently enough to get through their exams. They may also worry about the tertiary learning expectations and requirements.

1. Students from different backgrounds, including secondary, mature age and international, are concerned about the amount of reading required in tertiary study.
2. Tertiary learning is often a new environment for students, particularly internationals as they are unsure of what is expected of them.
3. For many students, including those from diverse backgrounds, it is often difficult to adapt to new tertiary learning environments. Managing workloads, understanding expectations and how to study effectively for exams can be extremely stressful.

Why is this summary the correct option? Can you find and highlight the paraphrasing strategies and determine the summary techniques used?

More on Summarizing Scientific Articles

Task 5: Paraphrasing

5a Study the three texts below. Which student - Student A or Student B - produced the better paraphrase? Why?

Source text:

Governments have interests in companies for a variety of reasons. Firms provide the economic basis of the society and are both nourished and regulated by government with the intent of keeping the economy healthy enough to sustain the society and, of course, the government. Government may attempt to control the harms of business activity to other members of society. In some societies, government runs the economy via central planning mechanisms and state ownership of enterprise. The role of government is so important, in fact, that we have already devoted chapter 3 to it. (**Wartick and Wood, 1998**)

Student A's paraphrase:

Wartick and Wood (1998:103) point out that governments can have a wide range of interests in companies, from supporting them in order to help the economy, to regulating them in order to stop them harming the rest of society.

Student B's paraphrase:

According to Wartick and Wood (1998), governments have interests for a variety of reasons. They are both nourished and regulated by government, in order to keep the economy healthy enough to sustain society. On the other hand, the government may also attempt to control the harms of business activity to others in society. In some countries there is a centralized economy, which the government runs.

(Source: https://www.elanguages.ac.uk/los/sst/using_paraphrase_in_writing.html)

5b Consider the following list of possible actions involved in paraphrasing. Circle the tick next to those actions which Student A did, and circle the cross next to those actions which Student A did not do.

The writer of the better paraphrase ...

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | removed or replaced unusual words. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | adopted the same sentence structure as the source writer. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | reduced the content of the paraphrase to keep it as simple as possible. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | expressed the main idea concisely. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | used the same words as in the original. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | reformulated the main ideas in their own words. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | copied useful pieces of the original text. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | used a suitable reporting verb and provided an in-text reference detail. |

5c Find examples in Student A's paraphrase of each sentence with a tick. Highlight these in the text.

Task 6: Practice

Look at the extract below and paraphrase it by identifying its main point(s), paraphrasing each into a sentence or two, using a suitable reporting verb and including a reference to the source material.

The process of development of any customer satisfaction programme is a tentative one and even allowing for experienced development teams and careful planning, there is likely to be a need for review and revision during the process. The input of front-line members of staff should be seen as a vital part of the process and may inform necessary modifications as well as enhancements to be made to the programme. ([Shaw, 2002](#))

Possible paraphrase:

Task 7: Deciding what is relevant

7a Read the text and say which 2 topics it is concerned with.

On a Mediterranean yacht two years ago, a group of South Asian businessmen decided to develop the overseas Indian television market. Why not use satellite technology to launch a 24-hour digital channel? Last autumn, B4U was launched in Britain and the Arab Gulf, and then in the United States.

B4U has competition. Zee Television is now making shows, movies, music and Internet sites. Received in 23 million homes, the channel reaches 30 million viewers in 130 other countries too. Attracted by the growing buying power of India's middle class and possible foreign sales, foreign money has poured into the TV industry.

Foreign companies are interested in Indian musicians too. The country's pop-music industry sold 300 million records last year, making it the world's second largest after the United States. 'People here are able to buy things like music,' says one local expert. 'Before, the middle class was small and didn't have any spare money.'

With an eye on the global market, companies like Sony are backing Indian singers. MTV and other Western media giants are showing Indian videos across Asia; over the past decade Indipop, a mixture of South Asian folk and Western beats, has become hugely popular. Indian music stars appear on stages in New Jersey, California and even Chicago. Many of the fans are Asian, but they bring non-Asian friends with them – the beginnings of a new market.

7b Read the notes below and decide which paragraph of the text they refer to. Which of the notes is not relevant for the summary?

1. There may be money from sales abroad.

2. Foreign companies have invested in Indian TV.
3. Zee Television is broadcast at home and abroad.
4. Indian singers perform in the US.
5. The businessmen who had the idea were on a yacht in the Mediterranean.
6. Some fans are non-Asian.
7. Large corporations are promoting Indian singers.
8. Many Indians have more money to spend.

7c The three summaries below focus on the first two paragraphs of the text. Read the summaries and decide which one is best. What is wrong with the other two?

A Indian television used satellite technology to launch a 24-hour digital channel. Received in 23 million homes, the channel reaches 30 million viewers in 130 other countries too. Attracted by the growing power of India's middle class and possible foreign sales, foreign money has poured into the TV industry.

B Indian television uses satellite technology. It is now seen in over 100 countries. Foreign companies are making huge investments in Indian television. There is potential for sales abroad. Many Indians are increasingly wealthy.

C Indian television is now seen in over 100 countries because of satellite technology. Moreover, foreign companies are making huge investments in Indian television owing to the potential for sales abroad, as well as the increasing wealth of many Indians.

Vocabulary _ Week 9

[AWL Sublist 7 Definitions and exercises](#)

[AWL Sublist 7 Word families](#)

[AWL Sublist 7 More exercises](#)

Sublist Seven— this list of words contains the seventh most-frequent words in the Academic corpus

adaptation	empirical	phenomenon
adults	equipment	priority
advocate	extract	prohibited
aid	file	publication
channel	finite	quotation
chemical	foundation	release
classical	global	reverse
comprehensive	grade	simulation
comprise	guarantee	solely
confirmed	hierarchical	somewhat
contrary	identical	submitted
converted	ideology	successive
couple	inferred	survive
decades	innovation	thesis
definite	insert	topic
deny	intervention	transmission
differentiation	isolated	ultimately
disposal	media	unique
dynamic	mode	visible
eliminate	paradigm	voluntary