

PARAPHRASING

Paraphrasing is expressing someone else's idea or set of ideas in your own words. It is an essential academic writing skill.

It is the best way to demonstrate that you have **understood** the ideas you have been reading about.

All paraphrases must be referenced correctly.

To paraphrase effectively you will need to change words, grammatical constructions and the sentence order of the text you want to paraphrase. However, make sure you **KEEP** the ORIGINAL MEANING.

It takes time and effort to become good at paraphrasing. Here are some tips. But you'll get better as the time goes by.

Tips on how to paraphrase

- Write down all the bibliographic details of the text you are taking notes from.
- Read the text you want to paraphrase several times so that you understand its key points.
- Close the text.
- Make notes, in your own words, of the key points then check them against the original.

Now it's time to begin paraphrasing. Use the steps in the next column as a guide.

NB: These steps may seem hard and time consuming to start with but, as with learning any new skill, it becomes much simpler and quicker with practice.

1. Find synonyms to replace the original words of the key points and phrases (except technical words).
2. Change the word order, sentence structure and grammar wherever you can.
3. Change the way the ideas are combined if you can do so without changing the meaning.
4. Put quotation marks around any string of words that you could not change without significantly altering the meaning.
5. Compare your paraphrased text with the original.
6. Check that your paraphrase is **sufficiently different** from the original and that **you have retained its overall meaning**.
7. Check that the paraphrase is relevant to your assignment topic.
8. Make sure that you have correctly referenced the text you have paraphrased using the referencing system recommended by your discipline or faculty.

Useful resources

This guide is part of a series of Survival Guides on referencing and related topics. You might find the following useful.

Avoiding plagiarism, Avoiding academic misconduct, Quoting, Critical thinking, Mind mapping

Original text

Domestic water use increases as people earn more money. Compared with 30 years ago, water usage in Perth has increased 40%. In the same period, average weekly earnings have risen by 35%. As a result, more people can afford to live in larger houses. About 50% of houses built after 2000 have at least two bathrooms and more and more people have their own swimming pools. A study (Tap 2007) conducted in Perth in 2006 showed that the increase in these two factors accounted for most of the rise in domestic water consumption.

Reference

Board, HO 2007, 'Water consumption in Western Australia', *Journal of Water Use*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 10-20.

Reference constructed for teaching purposes.

Read the comments & find out why this paraphrase is unacceptable

Household water use goes up as people earn more money. Compared with 30 years ago, water usage in Perth has increased nearly 50%. In the same time, average weekly earnings have risen by 35%. This has resulted in more people living in bigger houses. About half the houses built after 2000 have at least two bathrooms and their own swimming pools. A Perth study conducted by Tap (2007) showed that the two factors mentioned above accounted for the increase in domestic water use.

Read the comments & find out why this paraphrase is acceptable

According to Board (2007)*, as an individual's income rises so too does the amount of water they use for household purposes. Board states that "compared with 30 years ago, water usage in Perth has increased 40%" (p. 15) and weekly earnings have risen by just over a third.

Citing Tap's (2007) study of domestic water use in Perth, Board suggests that the increased number of swimming pools in private homes and a 50% rise in the number of homes with more than one bathroom can explain most of the increase in household water usage.

* *Harvard referencing style used.*

Although two synonyms have been used, the sentence has not been changed enough.

This figure is inaccurate.

This sentence is not sufficiently different.

This changes the meaning - 50% don't have swimming pools.

Some attempt to make changes but not enough. No in-text citation for Board provided.

The in-text citation refers to the author and the date of the original text.

Order of information has been changed.

Page number of quote has been included.

Mentioning the original author's name again makes it clear who the ideas come from.

Ideas combined differently from the original but they convey the original meaning.

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