

PARAPHRASING

What is paraphrasing?

Paraphrasing is expressing someone else's idea or set of ideas in your own words.

Paraphrasing is an essential academic writing skill and is the best way to demonstrate that you have **understood** the ideas you have been reading about.

To paraphrase effectively you will need to change words, grammatical constructions and the sentence order of the text you want to paraphrase. Make sure you keep the original meaning.

TIP

Use a thesaurus to find synonyms.

Before paraphrasing?

- Write down 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 and then check them against the original. Take care not to change the author's meaning.

TIP

Remember to include a citation when paraphrasing.

How to start paraphrasing?

You can use these steps as a guide:

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 where possible.
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 correctly reference the text you have paraphrased using the referencing style recommended by your discipline.

TIP

It takes time and effort to become good at paraphrasing. These steps may seem time consuming to start with but become much simpler and quicker with practice.

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.*

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.

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.

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.

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.

* *Harvard referencing style used.*

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.

TIP

All paraphrases must be referenced correctly using the required referencing style.

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