

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is restating something. It is very similar to a summary; the most obvious difference between them is length. You typically use summaries for text that is too long to paraphrase. A paraphrase will usually be approximately the same length as the original source text. The page number is not required in the in-text citation for a paraphrase, but it is encouraged.

An effective paraphrase—

- is written in your own words.
- keeps the original meaning (does not add or take away important ideas or relationships).
- does not keep the structure of the original while only changing some words for synonyms.
- is approximately the same length as the original.

Below is an excerpt from a website article that describes how technology is influencing our language. It was written by Jeffery Van Camp in December 2016.

Example Source

You can reach anyone, anywhere, instantly, and you can communicate with them in ways we didn't imagine even a decade ago. <http://www.digitaltrends.com/features/dt10-language-and-tech/>

Example: Paraphrase

Communication today is very different from communication ten years ago and it is not limited by person, place, or time (Van Camp, 2016).

Here are some general steps for writing a paraphrase.

1. Read or listen to what you will paraphrase.
2. Divide the sentence into parts and make sure you understand what each part means.
3. Identify any logical connectors (e.g., *because*, *and*, *while*, *in contrast*, etc.).
4. Rephrase each of the parts of the sentence (using synonyms, word forms, etc.).
5. Put the sentence back together.
6. Compare the paraphrase to the original.

Read/Listen to source

As with a summary, before you can write an effective paraphrase, you need to have a solid understanding of the source text. You should look up any new words in the original text if possible.

Divide the sentence

Many English sentences combine clauses and phrases together, and you will need to understand each of the clauses before you can paraphrase a sentence. Start by dividing the sentence into clauses (a clause has a subject and a verb).

Example: Sentence to Paraphrase

You can reach anyone, anywhere, instantly, and you can communicate with them in ways we didn't imagine even a decade ago" (Van Camp, 2016).

Example: Sentence Divided into Clauses

"You can reach anyone, anywhere, instantly / and / you can communicate with them in ways [we didn't imagine even a decade ago]" (Van Camp, 2016).

Now you can clearly see that this sentence has two main parts. The second part has an embedded relative clause (it describes which ways we communicate now). You need to make sure you understand each part of the sentence (e.g., new words, the pronoun references, etc.).

This step becomes more important (and more difficult) when the sentence is more complicated. Consider this more complex example:

Example Source

Every new mode of communication — be it Facebook, Twitter, or new visual sharing apps like Instagram, Periscope, Reddit, or Snapchat — has its own rules and style, and we're creating sophisticated new language rules for each of them.

<http://www.digitaltrends.com/features/dt10-language-and-tech/>

How many main parts are there in this example? Can you identify the clauses? Start by identifying the main verb(s). Every clause has to have a verb, so this can help you locate the clauses.

If you can't look at the sentence and find the main verbs quickly, you can try crossing out or simplifying phrases that don't have verbs or that you can identify as adjective clauses. Remember that your goal is to find the verbs so you can find the clauses.

Here are some examples of phrases you could cross out if you are trying to identify the main verb:

1. An appositive (words that rename or give extra, grammatically unnecessary information)

Example: My teacher, ~~a recent college graduate~~, loves grammar.

2. Phrases that show when, where, and how

Examples: ~~A few years ago~~, I took a class.

~~Throughout the history of the country~~, the United States has fought for freedom.

The scientist studied the dangerous animal ~~with extreme caution~~.

We can use this approach with the more complicated quote we looked at before.

Every new mode of communication ~~—be it Facebook, Twitter, or new visual sharing apps like Instagram, Periscope, Reddit, or Snapchat—~~has its own rules and style, and we're creating sophisticated new language rules for each of them.

The verbs are *has* and *are creating*. Now it is easier to see that there are two clauses:

Every new mode of communication has its own rules and style.

We're creating sophisticated new language rules for each of them.

Dividing the sentence into clauses will be easier now.

Example: Sentence Divided into Clauses

Every new mode of communication...has its own rules and style / and / we're creating sophisticated new language rules for each of them.

Identify any logical connectors

The way that two clauses are joined shows you the relationship that they have. For example, if two clauses are joined with *because*, you know that there is a cause/ effect relationship. This step is usually simple if you are familiar with some of these relationships.

Here are some common connectors and their general relationships.

cause/effect:	because, since, due to, as a result, consequently, thus, therefore
contrast:	however, but, in contrast, on the other hand, whereas, although
example:	for example, for instance
time:	when, before, after, while, during, since, until
sequence:	then, next, last, first, second, third
possibility:	if
alternative:	or
addition:	and

Rephrase each part

Here are some strategies for rephrasing clauses and phrases. Most para- phrases combine several strategies.

1. Use synonyms
 - EX: the linguistic **impact** > the **influence** of language
2. Use equal transition words/conjunctions (if possible)
 - EX: because > since
3. Change from active to passive voice
 - EX: Nearly everyone **uses** phones. > Phones **are used** by almost everyone.
4. Change word forms
 - EX: Communication is **easy**. > Communication happens **easily**.
5. Change the subject
 - EX: **You** can be misunderstood. > **Misunderstandings** happen.
6. Change an adjective into an adjective clause
 - EX: **new** types of communication > types of communication **that are new**

Returning to the first example given, look at how each part of the sentence was changed.

you can reach anyone, anywhere, instantly	--->	it is not limited by person, place, or time
you can communicate with them in ways we didn't imagine even a decade ago	--->	communication today is very different from communication ten years ago

These clauses changed in several ways. For example, the first clause changed from active to passive voice, and in the second clause, the subject was changed.

Put the sentence back together.

After you have changed the sentence parts, you can put it back together. Many people change the order of the clauses at this point. Make sure that the structure of the paraphrase is different than the original structure.

Example: Paraphrase

Communication today is very different from communication ten years ago and it is not limited by person, place, or time (Van Camp, 2016).

Compare to the original.

Make sure you changed the structure, but not the meaning.

Example Source

You can reach anyone, anywhere, instantly, and you can communicate with them in ways we didn't imagine even a decade ago. <http://www.digitaltrends.com/features/dt10-language-and-tech/>

1 Exercise: Choose the best paraphrase.

Choose the best paraphrase for each original quote:

1. "In much the same way that we're becoming bilingual, we're also learning to swap between other, new types of communication" (Van Camp, 2016, para. 21).

- A. Changing from one new type of communication to another is becoming easier for us, as is changing between languages (Van Camp, 2016).
- B. We are learning to change languages and change communication (Van Camp, 2016).
- C. In the same way as we are learning multiple languages, we are learning how to change between types of communication that are new (Van Camp, 2016).
- D. Because we can change types of languages, we can now similarly also change between types of communication that are new (Van Camp, 2016).

2. "No social or political movement of the twentieth century has had as profound an effect on the legal and political institutions of the United States as the Civil Rights Movement did" ("Civil Rights Movement, 2005, para. 1).

- A. No political or social effort in the 1900's has had such a big impact on the political and legal institutions of the United States ("Civil Rights Movement," 2005).
- B. The Civil Rights movement had a more significant legal and political influence than any other campaign for social or political change in the twentieth century ("Civil Rights Movement," 2005).
- C. The Civil Rights movement was the biggest change in America in the twentieth century ("Civil Rights Movement," 2005).
- D. The twentieth century didn't change a lot socially ("Civil Rights Movement," 2005).

3. "Since offense is easily avoided by remembering a few simple rules, it's worth your time making sure you're up to date on modern U.S. norms (Clark, 2012, para.3).

- A. Norms change a lot in the U.S., especially in business (Clark, 2012).
- B. Because you can easily avoid offense by remembering a few easy rules, it's very important to make sure you are current with U.S. customs (Clark, 2012).
- C. Learning current U.S. norms is worthwhile because if you know some basic rules, you won't offend people (Clark, 2012).
- D. Your time is well spent if you learn the most current rules for behavior because business can not be conducted well if you have offended people (Clark, 2012).

2 Exercise: Write a paraphrase

Write a paraphrase for the original quote below.

"These days, an ordinary phone owner sends 65 texts every two days, and more than half of all internet browsing takes place on a smartphone" (Van Camp, 2016, para 4).

3 Exercise: Write a body paragraph with paraphrases

Use these two paraphrases to create a comparison paragraph.

1. "According to the Oxford English Dictionary, many of the common spelling differences are in the ends of words like center, color, organize, and defense" ("British and American Spelling," 2017).

*In British English, these words would be spelled centre, colour, organise, and defence.

2. "These spelling differences were introduced into American English by Noah Webster, who changed the traditional British spellings when he created the Webster Dictionary" (Fogarty, 2009).

4 Exercise: Write a quote, summary, or paraphrase

Using each paragraph below, write a quotation, a summary, or a paraphrase.

For the quotation and the paraphrase, choose one sentence. For the summary, summarize the entire paragraph. Include the correct citation for each.

Author: Reed

Year: 2014

Paragraph: 2

"The words that surround us every day influence the words we use. Since so much of the written language we see is now on the screens of our computers, tablets, and smartphones, language now evolves partly through our interaction with technology. And because the language we use to communicate with each other tends to be more malleable than formal writing, the combination of informal, personal communication and the mass audience afforded by social media is a recipe for rapid change."

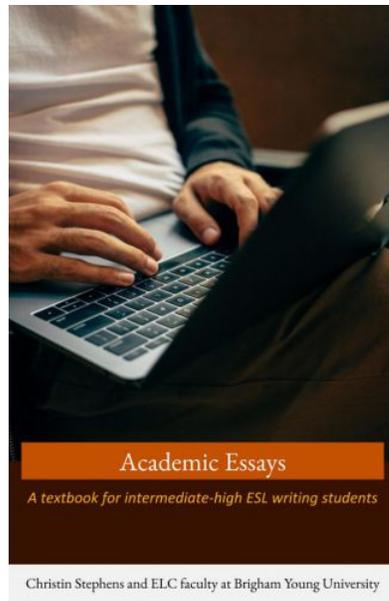
Author: NASA Year: 2017

Paragraph: 1-2

Original:

Most climate scientists agree the main cause of the current global warming trend is human expansion of the "greenhouse effect"—warming that results when the atmosphere traps heat radiating from Earth toward space.

On Earth, human activities are changing the natural greenhouse. Over the last century the burning of fossil fuels like coal and oil has increased the concentration of atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂)...To a lesser extent, the clearing of land for agriculture, industry, and other human activities has increased concentrations of greenhouse gasses.



Stephens, C. (n.d.). *Academic B Writing*. BYU Open Textbook Network.
https://open.byu.edu/academic_b_writing_p