

**MA APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND ELT IN-SESSIONAL COURSE in ENGLISH for
ACADEMIC PURPOSES**

Paraphrasing

A paraphrase is...

- Your own rendition of essential information and ideas expressed by someone else, presented in a new form.
- One legitimate way (when accompanied by accurate documentation) to borrow from a source.
- A more detailed restatement than a summary, which focuses concisely on a single main idea.

Paraphrasing is a valuable skill because...

- It is better than quoting information from an undistinguished passage.
- It helps you control the temptation to quote too much.
- The mental process required for successful paraphrasing helps you to grasp the full meaning of the original.

6 Steps to Effective Paraphrasing

1. Reread the original passage until you understand its full meaning.
2. Set the original aside, and write your paraphrase on a note card.
3. Jot down a few words below your paraphrase to remind you later how you envision using this material. At the top of the note card, write a key word or phrase to indicate the subject of your paraphrase.
4. Check your rendition with the original to make sure that your version accurately expresses all the essential information in a new form.
5. Use quotation marks to identify any unique term or phraseology you have borrowed exactly from the source.
6. Record the source (including the page) on your note card so that you can credit it easily if you decide to incorporate the material into your paper.

Example:

The original passage:

Students frequently overuse direct quotation in taking notes, and as a result they overuse quotations in the final [research] paper. Probably only about 10% of your final manuscript should appear as directly quoted matter. Therefore, you should strive to limit the amount of exact transcribing of source materials while taking notes. Lester, James D. Writing Research Papers. 2nd ed. (1976): 46-47.

A legitimate paraphrase:

In research papers students often quote excessively, failing to keep quoted material down to a desirable level. Since the problem usually originates during note taking, it is essential to minimize the material recorded verbatim (Lester 46-47).

An acceptable summary:

Students should take just a few notes in direct quotation from sources to help minimize the amount of quoted material in a research paper (Lester 46-47).

A plagiarized version:

Students often use too many direct quotations when they take notes, resulting in too many of them in the final research paper. In fact, probably only about 10% of the final copy should consist of directly quoted material. So it is important to limit the amount of source material copied while taking notes.

Practice:

Write a paraphrase of the following passage. Try not to look back at the original passage.

Original passage:

Crystal, D. (2008). Two thousand million? *English Today*, 24(1), 3-6.

It is always dangerous making predictions about languages. Who would have dared suggest, a thousand years ago, that Latin would today be of such little consequence? And the same tentativeness must apply to predictions about the future formal character of English. But let me make a couple of guesses. For example, given the difficulty that many foreign learners have in pronouncing interdental fricatives (as in *thin, this*) I would not be surprised to see them disappear completely within the next fifty years (they are already gone in some accents, such as Cockney and Irish). And in grammar, I can see several uncountable nouns developing a countable use – usages such as *informations*, for example, which are widespread in second/foreign language situations. Some people might think these ‘un-English’, but in fact *informations* was in English once: *an information* and *informations* can be traced back to Middle English, and are found in Chaucer, Shakespeare, Swift, and many other authors. It may only be a matter of time before they are back.