

Paraphrasing and Summary Writing

Paraphrasing and summarising are two key academic writing skills. In order to do these well, there are some simple techniques that can be followed.

Read through the description of each paraphrasing technique below and do the practice exercises. These will help you to successfully summarise the essay at the end of this worksheet.

Four paraphrasing techniques

1. Use synonyms

Using synonyms is the most essential paraphrasing technique. All other techniques are inadequate unless they are combined with synonyms. Refer to a good thesaurus or dictionary to help you, but pay attention to the correct word usage. Not all words that are synonyms are used in the same way or have the same exact meaning. For this reason, be wary about selecting synonyms that you are not familiar with. You do not need to use synonyms for specialist or technical terms that cannot be changed such as the word 'arbitrage'.

A. Paraphrase the following sentence using appropriate synonyms from the table.

A particularly difficult part of paraphrasing is choosing an appropriate synonym.

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|--------------------|-------------|---------|-----------|-------------|
| difficult | challenging | hard | demanding | complicated |
| part | feature | facet | point | aspect |
| choosing | selecting | picking | | |
| appropriate | correct | fitting | relevant | |

2. Use different parts of speech

Consider changing words into different parts of speech such as changing nouns into verbs or adjectives into adverbs. Doing so will also involve changing the sentence structure.

B. Paraphrase the sentence below using different parts of speech shown in the table.

Using synonyms is a helpful and easy method for turning another person's words into your own.

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| | Noun | Verb | Adjective | Adverb |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|---------------|
| using | use | use | useful | usefully |
| helpful | help | help | | helpfully |
| easy | ease | ease | easy | easily |
| turning | turn | turn | | |

3. Change the sentence type

Sentences can be changed by altering such things as word order, the number of clauses in a sentence, the kind of clauses in a sentence, and the kind of linking words used.

It is worth noting here that sentences can be viewed as belonging to one of four types.

The four sentence types are as follows:

1. Simple sentences (one independent clause)

Example: Paraphrasing is not too difficult.

2. Compound sentences (more than one independent clause)

Example: Paraphrasing techniques are easy to learn, but you must practice them regularly.

3. Complex sentences (a combination of an independent clause and a dependent clause)

Example: Although using synonyms is the most important technique, you cannot just use it by itself.

4. Combination sentences (a combination of compound and complex sentences)

Example: Although using synonyms is the most important technique, you cannot just use it by itself, and you must remember to employ more than one method.

C. Rewrite the sentences using the linking words.

Summarising can look difficult at first. However, if you learn some basic techniques, it gets easier.

1. but

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2. although

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3. despite the fact that

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4. even though

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Paraphrasing and Summary Writing

Paraphrasing is an essential academic skill, and it is also helpful in improving your overall English ability.

5. furthermore

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6. not only...but also

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7. apart from

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The student did not paraphrase the material she used for her term paper. Therefore, the teacher failed her.

8. so

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9. because

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10. as a consequence

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4. Change active voice to passive voice or vice versa

In some cases, you may be able to change sentences written in the active voice into the passive voice and vice versa.

Active voice = subject + verb

Passive voice = to be + past participle

Active to passive: He paraphrased the sentence. > The sentence was paraphrased by him.

Passive to active: A paraphrasing and summarising workshop is being held by the student support office. > The student support office is holding a paraphrasing and summarising workshop.

D. Change the following sentences from active to passive or vice versa.

Traditionally, the most successful college students have used paraphrasing to produce high scoring papers. Furthermore, online tools are now used by many teachers to detect plagiarism.

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