

Paraphrasing

How does paraphrasing differ from quoting and summarizing?

1. **Quoting** is copying a section of an original source. The author must be credited and the wording set off with quotation marks.
2. **Summarizing** is putting the main ideas of the information into your own words and citing the author. A summary is shorter than the original but usually gives a bigger view of the whole idea.
3. **Paraphrasing** is writing a small section of the original source *in your own words*. It may include certain words or phrases from the original, which are set off with quotation marks. The author must be credited.

Why use paraphrasing?

- It makes complicated or highly technical information more clear.
- It helps avoid the use of too many quotations in your paper.
- It demonstrates your understanding of the subject matter.

How do I paraphrase successfully?

1. Read and reread the passage you plan to paraphrase until you understand it fully.
2. Without looking at the original, write the passage in your own words. Be sure to change both the wording and the sentence structure from the original version.
3. Note where you might use the information in your paper next to your paraphrase. For example, you might use the information in your introduction or one of the body paragraphs.
4. Compare your paraphrase with the original section. Make sure you did not change the author's meaning.

5. If the original material contains specific terms that you cannot paraphrase or do not want to change, put them in quotation marks in your new version.
6. Make sure that you cite your original source.

EXAMPLES:

1) **Original Source:**

The student requested that the professor excuse her absence, but the professor refused.

Paraphrase:

The professor denied the student's request for an excused absence.

2) **Original Source:**

Of the more than 1000 bicycling deaths each year, three-fourths are caused by head injuries. Half of those killed are school-age children. One study concluded that wearing a bike helmet can reduce the risk of head injury by 85 percent. In an accident, a bike helmet absorbs the shock and cushions the head.

Source taken from "Bike Helmets: Unused Lifesavers," Consumer Reports (May 1990): 348.

Paraphrase:

Notice how the wording and the sentence structure are different.

The use of a helmet is the key to reducing bicycling fatalities, which are due to head injuries 75% of the time. By cushioning the head upon impact, a helmet can reduce accidental injury by as much as 85%, saving the lives of hundreds of victims annually, half of whom are school children ("Bike Helmets" 348).

For More Help:

- See the WRL Center handout on **Avoiding Plagiarism**.
- Attend a WRL Center workshop on paraphrasing.