

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is restating a passage in simpler language. In order to paraphrase well, you must read the passage carefully, understand the meaning of the passage, and rewrite the passage in your own words. This process will help you improve both your reading and writing skills, for it forces you to read the passage closely and allows you to practice your writing skills.

It is important to remember two things when you are writing a paraphrase. The well-written paraphrase has the same meaning as the original passage and is approximately the same length.

How to Paraphrase a Written Passage

1. Preview and read. Preview and read the passage closely. You will need to read the passage three or four times for thorough understanding.
2. Underline the key words. Underlining key words will help you decide what is important in each sentence and, consequently, in the entire passage. Remember to look up any words you do not know.
3. Rewrite the passage in your own words. Go through the selection and rewrite each sentence, using different words with the same meaning.
4. Read the paraphrase aloud, correcting any mistakes. To check for a well-written paraphrase, ask yourself the following questions:
 - a. Is the paraphrase approximately the same length as the original passage?
 - b. Has any part of the passage been copied word for word? (If so, then you must rewrite this part.)
 - c. Does the paraphrase have the same meaning as the passage?

Sample: Passage and Paraphrase

The Koala Bear

The koala bear of Australia is a living "Teddy Bear." Its thick coat of gray fur is just as soft as the beloved toy. The koala has a large head, big ears and small, dark eyes that look at you without expression. Its nose, as black as patent leather, seems too big for the rest of its face.

The koala is a gentle little animal. It is almost defenseless. Only its color protects it from enemies. The koala makes no nest. It just sits in the forked branches of a tree. Unlike a bird, it cannot balance itself with its tail—because it has no tail. It likes gum trees the best because it lives entirely on the leaves of the tree. Sometimes the supply of its special diet is used up. The koala, rather than seek food elsewhere, will stay in its own area and starve to death.

Paraphrase of The Koala Bear

The koala bear lives in Australia. It is really a “Teddy Bear” that is alive. It has thick gray fur that feels as soft as that of the toy bear. The koala has special features: big head, large ears, and little, dark eyes without expression. As black as shiny leather, the koala’s nose appears to be too large for his face.

A gentle small animal, the koala has only one way to defend itself from its enemies. Its color is its only protection. Making no nest, the koala just sits where branches fork in a tree. Without a tail, the koala cannot keep itself balanced like a bird. The koala eats only the leaves of gum trees which it likes best. If all of its special food is eaten, the koala will not look for food outside its own area. It will remain where it is and die of starvation.