

POST READING STRATEGIES

INTRODUCTION

As a college student, you are expected to learn large amounts of textbook material. Rereading to learn is not an effective strategy. Writing is an effective strategy. In fact, writing is an excellent means of improving both your comprehension and your retention. The two writing strategies that can help you better understand and remember the reading are paraphrasing and summarizing.

PARAPHRASING

A paraphrase is a restatement, in your own words, of a paragraph, passage, or reading selection. It is a condensed (shortened) rewording of each sentence or key idea in the order in which it appears in a reading.

Writing a paraphrase involves two skills: (1) substituting synonyms and (2) rewording and rearranging sentence parts.

Paraphrasing has many advantages:

- It is a way to record an author's ideas for later use.
- It helps you clarify an author's ideas.
- It helps you think through and learn the information the reading contains.
- Because a paraphrase requires you to use different words from those in the reading, writing paraphrases helps you develop your vocabulary.
- By paraphrasing, you are practicing your own writing skills.

HERE IS AN EXCERPT FROM A READING, FOLLOWED BY ITS PARAPHRASE

Animal species have complex forms of communication. Ants send chemical signals secreted from glands to share communication information about food and enemies with other members of the colony. When honeybees discover a source of nectar, they return to the hive and communicate its location to the other worker bees through an intricate dance that signals both direction and distance. Male songbirds of various species sing in the spring to attract a female mate and also to warn other males to stay away from their territory to avoid a fight. Dolphins talk to each other at great depths of the ocean by making a combination of clicking. Whistling. And barking sounds.

-KASSIN, PSYCHOLOGY, P. 252

According to kassin (252), animals have complicated ways of communicating. Ants can tell one another about food and enemies by secreting chemicals from their glands. Honeybees tell others in their hive that they have found a source of nectar by a detailed dance that indicates both where the nectar is located and how far away it is. In the spring, male songbirds sing to draw females and to warn other males to stay away so as to avoid a dispute. Using clicks, whistles, and barking sounds, dolphins communicate with one another.

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→ Using clicks, whistles, and barking sounds, dolphins communicate with one another.

PRACTICE (15 MINUTES)

Working with a classmate, reread paragraphs 8-10 from the textbook excerpt "Secrets For Surviving College And Improving Your Grades".

Working sentence by sentence, write a paraphrase. Then compare your work and combine both of your paraphrases to produce a revised paraphrase.

SUMMARIZING

A summary is a brief statement of the major points of a reading, and it is always shorter than the original. Unlike a paraphrase, a summary does not attempt to cover all of the reading's key points and details. Usually a summary is about one-fifth the length of the original or less.

Writing a summary improves your grasp of a writer's ideas because you must identify key ideas and explain how they relate to one another. Furthermore, writing a summary saves you time when you are reviewing or studying for an exam.

WRITING A SUMMARY

1. Complete the reading before writing your summary.
2. Review your highlighting and/or annotations.
3. Write an opening sentence that states the author's thesis or main point.
4. Explain the author's most important supporting ideas. Be sure to express the author's main ideas in your own words; don't copy phrases or sentences.
5. Include restated definitions of key terms, important concepts, procedures or principles. Do not include examples, descriptive details, quotations, or anything not essential to the main point. Do not include your opinion.
6. Present the ideas in the order in which they appear in the original source.

COMPARE THE TWO SAMPLE SUMMARIES BELOW AND DECIDE WHICH IS BETTER. EXPLAIN YOUR CHOICE.

Students commonly make two errors when reading textbooks. First. Many students do not read the textbook before going to a lecture about the material. Most instructors assume students have read the assignment and then use the lecture to provide details; students won't understand the lecture if they haven't read the assignment. Second, students try to read textbook material like a novel. Starting at the first page and reading continuously. Textbook material should be read slowly with attention paid to meaning.

Students have to read textbooks to succeed in a course; taking notes on lectures or slide presentations is not enough. Students make two common mistakes regarding textbooks. Their first mistake is not bothering to read the textbook before going to class. This is like trying to find a new place without any directions. It's especially important because most instructors assume students have read the assignment. Their lectures are used to go into detail about the textbook information. So if you haven't read the material. You won't understand the lecture.

The second mistake students make is trying to read textbook material as if it were a novel with an interesting plot and lots of 'filler.' Textbook material may be interesting but it has no 'filler': textbook material must be read slowly and with attention given to every morsel of meaning.

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- The second mistake students make is trying to read textbook material as if it were a novel with an interesting plot and lots of 'filler.' Textbook material may be interesting but it has no filler: textbook material must be read slowly and with attention given to every morsel of meaning.

PRACTICE (15 MINUTES)

Using the steps listed in the "writing a summary", write a summary of paragraphs 11-13 of the textbook excerpt "Secrets For Surviving College And Improving Your Grades".