

# ES1103

## English for Academic Purposes

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### TUTORIAL 1 (PART B)

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# Paraphrasing and Summarising

## Tutorial Learning Outcomes

By the end of this tutorial, you should be better able to:

- paraphrase texts
- summarise texts
- understand how to avoid plagiarism

## Introduction

One of the key features of academic writing is the use of, and reference to, the work and writing of others to provide a context, to support a particular point, or to convince the reader of the validity of a point being stated. The work and writing of others are often referred to as 'sources', and the inclusion of sources is the hallmark of good academic writing.

Let's consider the following questions.

- What are 'sources' in Academic writing?
- What types of sources are there?
- Why do we use sources in Academic writing?
- What are reputable and reliable sources?

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Academic writers integrate the work of others into a text by

- paraphrasing
- summarising
- quoting directly

How are paraphrasing, summarising and quoting directly different?  
Complete the following table with your own ideas.

	...is defined as...	...is used to or is used when...
paraphrasing		
summarising		
quoting directly		

Now that you have clarified in your own mind what paraphrasing, summarising and quoting directly are, we will consider each one in more detail and practise these essential academic writing skills.

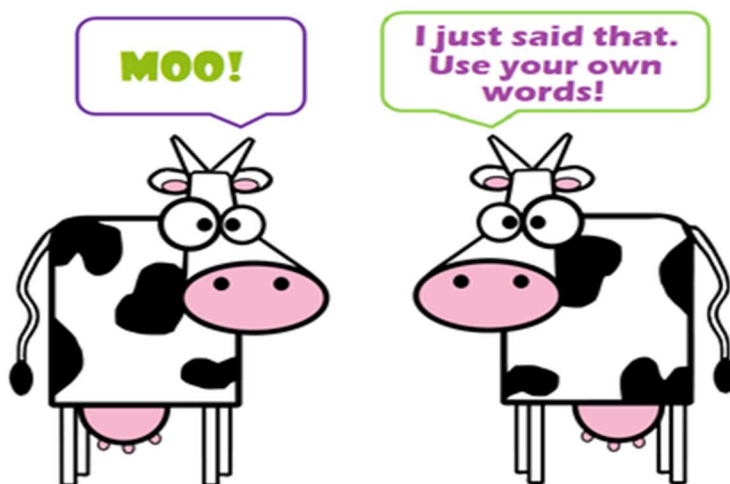
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## Paraphrasing

Writing for academic purposes often involves conducting secondary research (completing a survey of the existing literature on a topic) and incorporating the findings or ideas in these readings into your original writing. The most common way to integrate someone else's ideas in your writing is through the process of paraphrasing. **In a paraphrase, a writer puts another writer's ideas into his or her own words.**

### *Why use a paraphrase (and not a quote)?*

As you paraphrase, **you must use your own words**. To do this satisfactorily, **you must understand the meaning of the original thoroughly**. Your readers can evaluate the way you understand the original materials through your paraphrases. You might not be able to reach, and do not demonstrate, the same level of understanding of concepts if you use direct quotes frequently; hence, there is often a limit on the number of direct quotes in an academic essay.



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## ***Paraphrasing strategies***

To paraphrase a short item, such as a clause, a sentence or several sentences, apply the following steps.

- Highlight the main points.
- Pay attention to the meaning carried in each word.
- Pay attention to the meaning relation. Is there a cause, a consequence, a sequence relation between ideas?
- Imagine re-telling a friend the ideas of the passage in your own words.
- Rewrite in your own words.
  - ✓ Change sentence structures.
  - ✓ Change the order of major ideas.
  - ✓ Be careful with synonyms: the thesaurus is not your friend when paraphrasing because it could prompt you to use synonyms which might not be appropriate for your specific context.
- Use synonyms which are appropriate for academic writing. For example, avoid phrasal verbs such as *point out* when a one word equivalent, *explain*, can be used.
- Do not paraphrase technical terms or proper nouns.
- Compare the original version and your paraphrase to ensure enough rewording has taken place and the meaning is the same.
- Credit the original author(s) by using recognised citation method, such as APA style.

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## ***Analysis of paraphrased texts***

The following example shows how a paraphrased text is substantially different from the original in terms of vocabulary, sentence structure, and sequence of ideas.

### **Task 1**

Look at the three examples of paraphrasing below.

How successful is each of the paraphrases?

What, if any, suggestions do you have to improve the paraphrases?

### **Example 1**

Original text:

“Most people who work closely with animals, such as animal trainers, take it as a matter of fact that animals have emotions.”

Paraphrase:

Masson and McCarthy (1995) state that almost all people who have interacted intimately with animals know that they have the capacity to feel.

Source:

Masson, J., & McCarthy, S. (1995). When elephants weep: The emotional lives of animals. New York, NY: Dell Publishing.

## Example 2

Original text:

“The current constitutional debate over heavy metal rock and gangsta rap music is not just about the explicit language but also advocacy, an act of incitement to violence.

Paraphrase:

According to Kennedy and Smith (2000), lyrics that are obscene or promote violence have generated constitutional debate.

Source:

Kennedy, M.L. & Smith, H.M. (2000). *Reading and writing in the academic community*. New York, NY: Prentice Hall College Division.

## Example 3

Original Text:

“The biggest potential setback to English as a global language, it has been said with more than a little irony, would have taken place if Bill Gates had grown up speaking Chinese.”

Paraphrase:

Crystal (1997) ironically suggests that the continued dominance of English in global society would have significantly decreased if Bill Gates had been born a Chinese speaker.

Source:

Crystal, D. (1997). *English as a global language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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## ***Paraphrasing Practice***

### **Task 2**

Review the steps given on page 4, and use them to paraphrase the following two texts.

#### **Text 1**

In the nineteenth century, approximately 30% of the British population lived in poverty.

Paraphrase:

#### **Text 2**

The remittances of expatriates make a considerable contribution to the Philippines' economy.

Paraphrase:



### Task 3

Carefully consider the following two texts and write a paraphrase of each one.

#### Text 3

“Latin became an international language throughout the Roman Empire, but this was not because the Romans were more numerous than the peoples they subjugated. They were simply more powerful.”

Source: Crystal, D. (1997). *English as a global language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Your paraphrase:

#### Text 4

“The earth's oceans hold enough uranium to power all the world's major cities for thousands of years—if we can extract it. Scientists have developed a material that can effectively pull uranium out of seawater. The material builds on work by researchers in Japan and consists of braided polyethylene fibers coated with the chemical amidoxime.”

Source: Jennifer Hackett's Water Power (2016), taken from *Scientific American*, June, Vol 315, issue 17

Your paraphrase:

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## Summarising

In a summary, a writer covers the main ideas from a longer text. The main purpose of a summary for academic purposes is to **show an understanding of the text's thematic discussion**. It has **fewer details than the original text**, which means it takes a broad overview of the source material, making it **significantly shorter than the original**. The vocabulary is changed as it is in paraphrasing. Be sure that the ideas in the summary are the author's ideas and not your own. The source of information is also acknowledged.

### Task 4

Consider Text 5 below. What differences do you notice between the paraphrase and the summary?

#### Text 5

“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.”

Source: Lester, J.D. (1976). Writing research papers (2nd ed.). pp. 46-47.

#### 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, 1976).

Source: Retrieved from UEFAP. Academic Writing. <http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm>

#### Summary:

Students should only make a limited amount of notes in direct quotation in order to help minimize the amount of quotes used (Lester, 1976).

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## ***Summarising Strategies***

After reading an item (e.g., a paragraph, several paragraphs, a chapter, an essay, a report or even a longer piece of writing such as a book), you should break it down into the following three levels of information.

Level 1: **Central claims**

Level 2: **Main ideas**

Level 3: **Supporting details**

Let's look at these three levels of summarising in more detail.

**Level 1: Central claims.** Examine the title. The title gives you an overview of the topic and the writer's main viewpoint.

**Level 2: Main ideas.** Look for the reasons or points that the writers use to support the central claims. The main ideas are *usually* in topic sentences.

**Level 3: Supporting details.** There are two elements of supporting details.

- 1. the explanations for reasons or points that the writers use to elaborate on the central claims
- 2. the examples (case studies, statistics, illustrations) that are used to support the explanations

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### **Task 5**

Read the summary of 'The Value of a College Degree' below. (You may refer to Tutorial 1 (Part A) Notes pages 9-11 for the full text.)

Do you see any examples of Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 information in the summary?

Highlight the examples you find.

### **Text 6**

#### Summary of 'The Value of a College Degree'

Porter (2002) argues that despite the rising tuition fees, a college education brings many benefits. First, financial benefits are undeniable in the long run, with college degree holders earning in average double the salary of a high school graduate over the span of their career. Benefits go beyond this, and include better quality of life and better outcomes for one's family. The author also describes that society is benefitted as college graduates tend to contribute more and rely less on the government.

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## Summarising Practice

### Task 6

Read Text 7 below and write a summary of the text.

#### Text 7

Title: Elegant Equations

Are equations beautiful? To scientists, formulas ability to represent fundamental truths or concisely capture complexity is indeed exquisite. To many in the public, though, they can be the opposite of beautiful—intimidating, utilitarian and opaque. Yet for others, the very mystery can be alluring: even when we cannot understand what equations say, we can be moved by knowing they have meanings beyond our comprehension. And mathematicians and non-mathematicians alike can be drawn in by the purely aesthetic appeal of these expressions, whose graceful and sometimes inscrutable symbols combine in visually satisfying ways.

Source: Moskowitz, C. (2016). Elegant Equations. *Scientific American*. 314(1), 70-73. doi:10.1038/scientificamerican0116-70

Your summary

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### ***Direct quoting in a summary***

It is important to note that the **original text must be used word for word** when quoting. A short quotation of a few words can be integrated into one of your own sentences while longer ones stand alone.

However, it is better to **use direct quotes sparingly**.

Remember that paraphrasing and summarising show your understanding of the original text while direct quotation does not.

#### **Examples of direct quoting in a summary**

##### **Example 1**

In his book on social problems, Kendall mentions a number of “quality-of-life indicators”.

##### **Example 2**

According to Crystal, the Latin language dominated in education for a thousand years thanks to “the ecclesiastical power of Roman Catholicism”.

##### **Example 3**

Lester (1976) advised that “only 10% of your final manuscript” should be directly quoted material from the literature.

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In this tutorial, we have considered how to use the work of other writers in our own work while avoiding plagiarism. We have seen that two key skills for integration are paraphrasing and summarising. These are two skills that need to be practised to ensure accurate and smooth integration of our ideas and others' ideas in our writing.

In the next tutorial, we will explore more ways of integrating others' ideas into our own work.