
Paraphrasing and Summarizing

An effective academic paper should demonstrate what you have learned and understood. It is NOT a string of quotations with little input of your own (in which case, you are only copying). Your paper needs to show that you have a perspective of your own on the subject. Writing an academic paper requires you to find texts on the subject and use them to support your writing.

Paraphrasing

Most of your paper should be your writing about your understanding of the subject matter (paraphrase more than you quote). A successful paraphrase is your explanation or interpretation of another person's ideas. You will rephrase a short passage from a text in about the same number of sentences (or less) so that:

- the concepts are the same, and
- they are not taken out of context.

This paraphrase is a complete rewording from the original into your own voice!

1. Reread the original passage you wish to paraphrase, looking up any words you do not recognize, until you think you understand the full meaning of and intention behind the author's words.
2. Next, cover or hide the passage (this is Important!).

Once the passage is hidden from view, write out the author's idea, in your own words, as if you were explaining it to your instructor or classmates.

3. After you have finished writing, check your account of the author's idea against the original.

While comparing the two, ask yourself:

- Have I accurately addressed the author's ideas in a new way that is unique to my writing style and scholarly voice?
- Have I tried to replicate the author's idea or have I simply changed words around in his/her original sentence(s)?

4. Next, look for any borrowed terms or particular phrases you have taken from the original passage. Enclose these terms and phrases in quotation marks to indicate to your readers that these words were taken directly from the original text.

Cite them! (See: <http://libguides.kpu.ca/citations> for more information.)

Summarizing

A summary is always a shorter form of the information provided. This can include reducing a whole article to a paragraph in some cases.

- Only the main points are included.
- Text is condensed without losing the essence of the material.
- Examples and explanations are omitted.
- The summary writer's own words are used. (NOTE: Do not change technical terms.)
- Reporting verbs (such as 'suggests' and 'contends') are used to discuss and comment on ideas in the text.

It will all be in your own words and will only capture the overall ideas in the original writing.

Good Luck with all your writing!

For more information see: <http://writingcenter.waldenu.edu/295.htm> and
<http://www.deakin.edu.au/current-students/study-support/study-skills/handouts/ideas.php>