**Paraphrase: Write it in Your Own Words**

Source: [Purdue University Online Writing Lab](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/index.htm)

**A paraphrase is...**

* your own rendition of essential information and ideas expressed by someone else, presented in a new form
* one legitimate way (when accompanied by accurate documentation) to borrow from a source
* a detailed restatement which focuses concisely on a single main idea

**Paraphrasing is a valuable skill because...**

* it is better than quoting information from an undistinguished passage.
* it helps you control the temptation to quote too much.
* the mental process required for successful paraphrasing helps you to grasp the full meaning of the original.

**5 Steps to Effective Paraphrasing**

1. Reread the original passage until you understand its full meaning.

2. Set the original aside, and write your paraphrase on a separate sheet of paper.

3. Check your version with the original to make sure that your version accurately expresses all the essential information **in a new form**.

4. Use quotation marks to identify any unique term or phrase you have borrowed exactly from the source.

5. Record the source so that you can credit it in your paper.

**Examples to Compare**

*The original passage:*

Students frequently overuse direct quotation in taking notes, and as a result they overuse quotations in the final [research] paper. Probably only about 30% 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. From Lester, James D. Writing Research Papers. 2nd ed. 1976, pp. 46-47.

*An unacceptable paraphrase:*

Students often use too many direct quotations in taking notes, resulting in the overuse of quotations in the final paper. Only approximately 30% of your final paper should be direct quotes. Consequently, you should try to limit how many quotes you write when taking notes.

*A legitimate 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 46-47).

*A shorter version:*

Students should take just a few notes in direct quotation from sources to help minimize the amount of quoted material in a research paper (Lester 46-47).

**Practice with Paraphrasing**

*Directions: On a separate piece of paper, write a paraphrase of the following passage. Try not to look back at the original passage after you have finished reading.*

2. The twenties were the years when drinking was against the law, and the law was a bad joke because everyone knew of a local bar where liquor could be had. They were the years when organized crime ruled the cities, and the police seemed powerless to do anything against it. Classical music was forgotten while jazz spread throughout the land, and men like Bix Beiderbecke, Louis Armstrong, and Count Basie became the heroes of the young. The flapper was born in the twenties, and with her bobbed hair and short skirts, she symbolized, perhaps more than anyone or anything else, America's break with the past. From Kathleen Yancey, English 102 Supplemental Guide 1989, p. 25.