

THIS PRESENTATION WAS PREPARED BY...



Room 2300 (Inside the Library)
(734) 432-5304
writingcenter@madonna.edu

SUMMARIZING & PARAPHRASING

Saying It In Your Own Words

THE CHALLENGE

You're asked to use outside sources for a paper, and your professor wants to see more summaries and paraphrases than direct quotations.

THE FRUSTRATION

But didn't your original source already write it best? How else could you possibly rephrase this?

THE SOLUTION

Practice! Like any other skill, the more you summarize and paraphrase effectively, the easier it gets.

FOR BOTH SUMMARY AND PARAPHRASE...

1. Re-read the text until you completely understand it.
2. Write the material in your own words and sentence structure; and
3. Cite your source.

SUMMARY

In a summary, you:

1. Highlight the key ideas.
2. Delete minor supporting details and repeated information.
3. Collapse lists (replace a long list of items with a general category—precious gemstones instead of diamonds, rubies, emeralds, sapphires, etc.).

SUMMARY STRATEGY

Check the topic sentence of a paragraph to get a clue about the “big” idea.

Example:

Original: **Writing things in a calendar helps me manage my time better.** For example, instead of napping in the afternoon, I’m more likely to start working on my sociology paper that’s due in 10 days. I fit my grocery shopping in before a busy weekend. I plan my visits to the laundromat during the football game when more machines are likely to be open.

SUMMARY EXAMPLE

Summary: I get more school work and chores done by keeping track of my obligations on a calendar.

SUMMARY AND OBJECTIVITY

Objectivity matters!

- When you're summarizing someone else's text, you need to leave your opinion out of it. When proofreading your summaries, replace biased words such as the following:
- “positive, negative, conservative, liberal, well-supported, disappointing, not surprisingly.”
- Consider the following two examples to see how easily a writer's bias can slant a summary.

OBJECTIVE/NON-OBJECTIVE SUMMARIES

- **Non-objective summary:** “*Not surprisingly*, students get bad grades on tests *because they are stupid* and do not know how to study .”
- **Objective summary:** “The article reveals that students who perform poorly on tests are more likely to not ask questions in class because they do not want to be seen as not understanding the information

Both examples summarize the author’s viewpoint, but the first example does not talk about the author at all. The italicized words above suggest that the summary writer believes the students were stupid and lazy.

PARAPHRASE

Summaries and paraphrases have a lot in common.

However, in a paraphrase, you not only rewrite information in your own words and sentence structure, you also provide more detail than you would in a summary.

PARAPHRASE STRATEGY

In a paraphrase, you are using your own words to explain someone else's idea. One strategy for doing this is to:

- Read your original source over three, four or more times.
- Turn the page or book over so you can't see the text.
- Imagine someone has walked into the room and asked, "What were you just reading?"
- Write down what your response would be.
- Check it against the original to make sure you've used your own words, and that you've captured the gist of the material.

SIX PARAPHRASING TOOLS

1. Replace some of the words with **synonyms**.

Example:

Original: The fat cat ate the babysitter.

Paraphrase: The corpulent feline consumed the child care employee.

SIX PARAPHRASING TOOLS

2. Make a positive verb into a negative verb.

Example

Original: The furious young woman **ignored** her boyfriend's phone call.

Paraphrase: The furious young woman **didn't answer** the phone when her boyfriend called.

SIX PARAPHRASING TOOLS

3. Change active constructions to passive, and vice versa.

Example

Original: Excess stress **accelerates** aging.

Paraphrase: Aging **is accelerated by** excess stress.

SIX PARAPHRASING TOOLS

4. Change words into other parts of speech: adjectives into verbs, verbs into nouns, etc.

Example

Original: Denny participated in **dancing** at the reception.

Paraphrase: Denny **danced** at the reception.

SIX PARAPHRASING TOOLS

5. Combine sentences with connecting words.

Example:

Original: Ted plays classical guitar. **He's** learning to play the mandolin.

Paraphrase: Ted plays classical guitar, **and** he's learning to play the mandolin.

SIX PARAPHRASING TOOLS

6. Move parts of sentences around.

Example

Original: Last night, I gave the cat extra food so it wouldn't eat the next babysitter.

Paraphrase: To make sure the cat wouldn't eat the next babysitter, I gave it extra food last night.

COMBINING PARAPHRASING TOOLS

Generally, we use a couple of these methods at once.

Example

Original: Excess stress accelerates aging.

Paraphrase: We lose our youth quickly when we worry too much.

WHEN TO USE QUOTATIONS

When using outside sources, use direct quotations sparingly. Quotations can be used:

- When the specific language of the source is critical, as in the wording of certain laws.
- When the quotation is particularly eloquent or colorful.
- When the author or speaker is well-known in the area you're writing about.

WHETHER YOU SUMMARIZE,
PARAPHRASE, OR QUOTE...

...*always* cite your sources!

Even though you're using your own words,
you're borrowing your facts and ideas from
another source.

AVOID PLAGIARISM!

Failing to cite your sources violates the tenets of academic integrity. At most universities, including Madonna, plagiarism leads to serious consequences.

TIPS

- When you're jotting down notes from your sources, write out all the bibliographic information in the appropriate documentation style (APA, MLA, Turabian, etc.).
- If you decide to use a direct quotation, use large quotation marks to show this.
- Summarize and paraphrase the rest of your material *right away* on your note cards.
- If you're jotting down your own ideas, clearly mark them as your own. (Perhaps circle them.)

In the long run, following these tips will save you time and reduce the risk of accidental plagiarism.

WHY DO WE BOTHER?

1. **Reading comprehension.** When we summarize and paraphrase, we're pushed to *deeply* understand the material we're reading.
2. **Demonstration.** By summarizing and paraphrasing, we're demonstrating that not only do we thoroughly understand our research sources—we also understand their relationship to our own ideas.
3. **Flow.** If we just plop in one direct quotation after another, our paper will sound choppy and disconnected. In addition, it won't sound like our work. In contrast, when we write most of our paper in our “voice”—citing sources as needed—we'll dramatically improve the flow of our writing.

REFERENCES

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