

UTS:

HELPS

HIGHER EDUCATION LANGUAGE AND PRESENTATION SUPPORT

Paraphrasing, summarising & quoting to avoid plagiarism

Objectives:

- To be familiar with paraphrasing, summarising and quoting
- To be aware of the distinctions among the three writing techniques
- To be familiar with when to use the three writing techniques
- To be familiar with how to cite when using the three techniques

Discussion questions

1. Why do you quote?
2. Why do you paraphrase?
3. Why do you summarise?
4. What are the distinctions among quotations, paraphrases and summaries?
5. Which of the three do you find most challenging? Why?

Incorporating other writers' work into your writing

- Much of the work you produce at university will involve the important ideas, writings and discoveries of experts in your field of study.
- The work of other writers can provide you with information, evidence and ideas, but must be incorporated into your work carefully.
- **Quoting, paraphrasing** and **summarising** are different ways of including the works of others in your assignments. Each of these methods, combined with the correct use of a referencing system, will help you to avoid plagiarism.

The distinctions

Quotations	Paraphrasing	Summarising
Match the source word for word	Does not match the source word for word	Does not match the source word for word
Are usually a brief segment of the original text	Involves putting a passage from the original source into your own words	Uses the main ideas of the original source into your own words, but using only the main points
Appear between single quotation marks unless more than 30 words	Changes the words and sentence structure, but fully communicates the original meaning	Presents a broad overview, so is usually shorter than the original text
Must be attributed to the original source, and include the page number(s)	Must be attributed to the original source	Must be attributed to the original source

Quoting

- Quoting involves using someone else's words (spoken or written) exactly as they appear in their work, and is clearly identified by the use of quotation marks.
- Reasons for quoting:
 - to show that an authority supports your point
 - to present a position or argument to critique or comment on
 - to present a particularly well-stated passage whose meaning would be lost if paraphrased or summarised.
- Quotes need to fit in with the point you are making. Reporting verbs indicate to your reader how you feel about the person's idea and should be selected carefully.

It has been suggested that ‘the taxation advantage enjoyed by superannuation funds, relative to private investment in shares, was somewhat neutralised in 1988’ (McGrath & Viney 1997, p. 137).

We see evidence of this in Ulysses:

Mr Bloom stood far back, his hat in his hand, counting the bared heads. Twelve. I’m thirteen. No. The chap in the macintosh is thirteen. Death’s number. Where the deuce did he pop out of? He wasn’t in the chapel, that I’ll swear. Silly superstition that about thirteen. (Joyce 1992, p. 139)

Activity: Quoting to avoid plagiarism

Refer to pp. 1-3 of the handout – Paraphrasing, summarising and quoting to avoid plagiarism.

Summarising

- A summary captures the general idea, main points found in your source material without providing a lot of details.
- Summarising a single source or a collection of related sources can provide your reader with background or supporting information that helps them better understand your chosen topic. It is also a useful method to point out material that either supports or contradicts your argument while not distracting your reader with irrelevant details.
- As with quoting and paraphrasing, you must document the sources you summarise. A summary reduces the material into a more concise statement. To be effective, you must choose your words carefully, be **accurate**, **objective**, **focused** and **concise**.

- Being accurate requires that you fully understand the information presented in your source material. If an author's tone of voice or the information he or she has extrapolated from numerical data is misinterpreted you will misrepresent their point of view, ideas, opinions or position.
- Being objective is as important as being accurate. It's a matter of fairness. Interjecting personal opinions into the ideas or information in your summary confuses the reader by obscuring the information in the original source material.
- Expressing your attitude toward it, whether negative or positive, is inappropriate and self-serving. You may express your own opinions, of course, but that should be done in the surrounding comments framing your summary.
- Be focused and don't wander off-topic. It's easy to do. Stick to what's important. A good summary highlights only those facts, ideas, opinions, etc., that are useful for your topic. Including minute details hinders the reader's ability to understand why the summarised information is relevant to your document, and they may conclude you do not fully understand your topic.
- Being concise means being as brief as possible. Details, examples and descriptions contained in the original source material should be removed, as well as repetitive information.

Activity: Summarising to avoid plagiarism

Refer to pp. 3-6 of the handout – Paraphrasing, summarising and quoting to avoid plagiarism.

Paraphrasing

A paraphrase is writing the ideas/article in your own words without changing the original meaning. It is usually about the same length as the original. The sentence structure and the vocabulary must be different.

Why paraphrase?

- Quoting too much is a sign of bad writing. It indicates that you can't write well, or you are too lazy, or you do not have a strong understanding of the material.
- Paraphrasing shows the lecturer you have greater understanding and can analyse. Ideas and facts are incorporated into the text logically and intelligently using paraphrases and summaries.

- The sources of paraphrased ideas need to be acknowledged using the appropriate reference style.
- A common question students ask is, ‘How much do I need to change the original wording for it to be considered “acceptable paraphrasing”?’ This indicates that the student is focusing on a section of text rather than on the idea.
- Until you fully understand the idea that you are interested in using, you are not ready to incorporate it into your work. If you understand it, then you will be able to express it in your own way.
- It sometimes helps to tell someone about the idea first (or even just say it to yourself) before writing it down. If you cannot, you are not yet ready to write about it. Write down the words you used to talk about the idea, and then make it more academic in the next draft.
- Even competent, native speakers may have several attempts before they can get it right when paraphrasing. Be prepared to have a few attempts at it. It is all part of the drafting process of producing good writing.

How to paraphrase?

- Change the sentence structure
- Change the words

Changing the sentence structure

- In note form – not a sentence – write down only the main ideas and concepts. Be sure you understand what the text is saying.
- Put the original away so you can't see it. Write down your paraphrase from memory. This helps make sure you are not copying out the text word for word.
- Check your version against the original. Check that you have not accidentally written exactly the same words. Check that you have not left anything out. Check to see if you have captured the meaning of the writer (as closely as you can).

Changing the words

- Circle the specialised words. Specialised words carry the main meaning. You will need to include them in your paragraph; otherwise you will change the meaning completely. So make sure that these specialised words are still in your paraphrase.
- Underline keywords that can be changed.
- Identify the key words that can be changed without changing the meaning.
- Find alternate words and phrases that have similar meanings so you can use to replace the words in the text. Use a thesaurus or dictionary to help you.
 - Use synonyms
 - Use different parts of speech and different word order
 - Change the sentence type
 - Make abstract ideas concrete
 - Change active voice to passive voice and vice versa

Activity: Paraphrasing to avoid plagiarism

Refer to pp. 7-8 of the handout – Paraphrasing, summarising and quoting to avoid plagiarism.

Activity: Paraphrasing

Paraphrase the following paragraph:

The development of successful marketing strategies depends to a large extent on the planner's ability to segment markets. Unfortunately, this is not a simple process. Segmenting usually requires considerable management judgment and skill. Those marketers who have the necessary judgment and skill will have a real advantage over their competitors in finding profitable opportunities.

Source: McCarthy, E. J., Perreault, W. D. Jr & McGuiggan, R. L. 2000, *Learning aid to accompany basic marketing*, 2nd edn, McGraw-Hill, Sydney, p. 4.11.

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