

# Teaching Paraphrasing in Reading and English Classes

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# Our Goals for this Session

1. Collaborate on how we use or don't use paraphrasing in our developmental Reading and English courses
2. Explore similarities, differences, and connections among the skills of quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing
3. Provide concrete examples of instructional approaches to teaching paraphrasing: activities, lessons, and quiz/exam questions
4. Discussion and other thoughts....



Our initial questions for research,  
exploration, and collaboration...

- how do people do it?
- is it useful or effective?
- how do we effectively  
teach students how to do  
it?
- what are the  
consequences when  
students are not successful  
at paraphrasing?



# **JENNIFER READING & ELL**



# Why discuss paraphrasing?

- Oral or written paraphrases or summaries can help an instructor identify problem areas in students' comprehension



# Elements of a Paraphrase

- Correctly understanding the original ideas and their context
- Maintaining the original meaning
- Re-stating using different words (synonyms)
- Free from personal interpretation or changing of voice
- Simplifying information



# Common Problems Students Have

- Changing the original voice
- Inserting personal beliefs or interpretations
- Changing only a few words
- Blurring quotation, paraphrasing, & summarizing



# Paraphrasing Activities I've Tried

- Providing definitions of paraphrasing and quotation on assignments/lecture notes
- Looking at the different elements of citation needed for each ("", pg.#, Author's Name)
- Taking sample quotes from the text and asking students to re-phrase





# READ 910 Lab Activity

Directions: Paraphrasing is a skill a reader uses to translate an author's words by keeping the same meaning but using different words. Paraphrase – **re-write using your own words while keeping the same meaning** – each of the quotations below. Use an online dictionary such as [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com) or [www.m-w.com](http://www.m-w.com) if you need to look up words you don't know. Submit to the Assignment folder on D2L by the end of class today for lab credit.

- “I just want you to remember one thing. From the moment you leave this house, don't let anybody raise you. Every time you get into a relationship you will have to make concessions, compromises, and there's nothing wrong with that...Follow what's right. You've been raised.” p.74
- “I thought the Old Man blind to the wonders and potentials of the real world; could not fathom how current events or cultural habits so vital to my contemporaries could be considered so frivolous – or worse. In turn, The Old Man expected me to obediently accept his own values: show more concern over the ultimate disposition of my eternal soul, eschew easy paths when walking tougher ones might somehow purify, be not so inquisitive or damnfool dreamy.”p.77



# ELL 810 Lab Activity

Directions: Practice using quotation and paraphrasing. Quote 5 sentences from *American Ways* Chapter 4. Then, paraphrase each quote using your own words.

Here are the definitions of these terms from Merriam-Webster's online dictionary [www.m-w.com](http://www.m-w.com):

- Quotation: something that a person says or writes that is repeated or used by someone else in another piece of writing or a speech
- Paraphrase: a restatement of a text, passage, or work giving the meaning in another form

Here is an example of a quote: "Although the American civilization took over and replaced the frontier more than a century ago, the heritage of the frontier is still evident in the United States today." ( p. 73)

- Here is an example of a paraphrase of the quote:  
Even though the frontier was settled a long time ago, we still see the effects of the frontier idea in modern society.

1.Quote:

2. Paraphrase:.....(repeat 5x)



# READ 990 Paraphrasing Lecture Notes

- Re-say or re-write an idea using your own words
- You can paraphrase any statement!
- Keeping the same idea(s) only saying it with different word choice
- To avoid plagiarizing, make EVERY word different



# ELL 870 Open-Book Comprehension Quizzes

From Open Book Quiz 2:

- From *HTWF&IP* Chapter 1, what does the title “If You Want to Gather Honey, Don’t Kick Over the Beehive” mean when dealing with people?
- Paraphrase – explain in your own words – what Lincoln meant by “with malice toward none, with charity for all”.
- What is Principle 1 from Chapter 1 of *HTWF& IP*? What is another saying or way to express Principle 1 in your own words?

From Test 1:

- What have you learned about being a successful student from your reading in the *WW* book so far? Give an example, quote it, include the page number where you found your idea, and explain how you could use this idea in your life as a college student.



# Implications for readers...

- Essential for good note-taking
- Understanding citation and plagiarism
- English Language Learners
  - phrase structure rules, idiom and vocabulary deficits
  - Importance of a developed lexicon (mental dictionary)



# **SCOTT ENGLISH**



# Scott – Introducing Paraphrase – part 1

## How to Take Notes:

- Quotation
- Summary
- Paraphrase
- A combination of Q, S, P
- NOTE: each note you take should include the **author's name** and/or the **title of the source** and, if applicable, the **page number(s)** from which the note was taken.





# Scott – Introducing Paraphrase – part 1

- The Preamble to the Constitution (an example which shows changing words and structures)
- A passage from Henry David Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience* (an example which focuses on replacing synonyms)
- Selected sentences from various sources on well-known topics (as practice)





# Scott – Introducing Paraphrase – part 2

## **A Paraphrase Paper:**

- A one-paragraph paraphrase of a difficult paragraph



## Scott – Introducing Paraphrase – part 2

- The Declaration of Independence
- The Gettysburg Address (by Abraham Lincoln)
- One paragraph from “Wilderness” (by John Muir)
- One paragraph from “Pollution Control: Costs and Benefits” (from *The Congressional Quarterly*)



# How I Introduce Paraphrasing Currently

- **Paper #1 – a response and synthesis essay**
  - I introduce all three methods (Q, S, P) but we focus on quotation
- **Paper #2 – stand-alone” summaries**
  - Several one-sentence summaries and one one-paragraph summary
- **Paper #3 – a collection of paraphrases**



# My Newest Assignment

- I select passages from the sources/essays we've been reading and using for the previous assignments.

Handouts:

- The assignment sheet
- Sample formatting
- The grading rubric



# Student Reactions

- When they get the assignment
  - It's unusual, challenging, etc.
  - They continue to confuse paraphrase with summary
- When they have completed the assignment
  - They like that it's not a typical "paper" (essay)
  - They report improvement in close-reading and critical-thinking skills
  - I see better paraphrases in their essays



# When to Choose Quotation

- Use for wording that is so memorable or expresses a point so perfectly that you cannot improve or shorten it without weakening the effect you need
- Use for an author's opinions you wish to emphasize
- Use for respected authorities whose opinions support your ideas
- Use for authors whose opinions challenge or vary from others in the field
- Use for any text that you are going to analyze, evaluate, directly comment on, etc.



# Notes on Quotation

- **Quotation is NOT to be a shortcut for lack of time!**
- Quotation is to be used **sparingly** – “no more than \_\_\_\_ quotes per page” – or “no more than \_\_\_\_% similarity index on TurnItIn.com.”
- Always prefer summary and paraphrase over quotation!
- **What is the effect on the reader when reading a paper with too many quotes?**



# Quoting Too Much

- Sometimes called the “scotch-tape special” or the “cut-and-paste job”
- “Too many ‘voices’ talking in the paper”
- Readers will begin to skip over quotations, especially if there are too many of them, and especially if there are several “long” quotations (block quotes)
- Readers might also (perhaps mistakenly) assume:
  - The writer doesn’t have any ideas of his or her own
  - The writer is lazy and does not want to, or is unwilling to, do the hard work of reading, thinking, and writing
  - The writer is incapable of critical reading, thinking, and writing





# Rules for Quotation

- Everything must be copied accurately – capital letters, spellings, punctuation, etc.
- “Quotation marks” must be used.
- ALL quotations must be introduced with a “signal phrase” (a.k.a. “attribution phrase”). Sometimes, a complete sentence with a colon (:) at the end can also do this.
- Most quotations will also require a parenthetical citation.
- Things can be removed from a quotation by using . . . ellipses dots (3 spaced periods).
- Things can be changed within a quotation, but [square brackets] must be used to indicate these changes.
- No changes can be made which alter the meaning of the quotation.



# Summary

- Use summary when you just want to highlight the “gist” of a passage – the “central idea” (the thesis) – or the “main point(s)” (the main ideas, the topic sentences) – or both – in a text.
- Do **not** include examples and details.



# Paraphrase

- Use paraphrase for passages that you do not wish or need to quote but whose examples or details you wish to note fully
- Or, think about paraphrase as a “translation” (or a “clarification”) of the original passage – you might be taking a complex or technical passage and rewriting it in easier-to-understand language



# Notes on Paraphrasing

- Paraphrasing is hard work and takes time. You must read very closely and understand what you are reading.
- It is NOT enough to simply substitute synonyms into a passage – it is also NOT enough to simply change the sentence structures – both will be considered PLAGIARISM
- A good paraphrase will change BOTH the words AND the sentence structures of the original passage.



# Summary/Paraphrase – **Similarities**

- Both are in your own words
- Both can contain brief quotations of significant language (varies by instructor)
- Both are “selective” – you are focusing on what you need most for your purpose and audience
- Both do not distort the meaning of the original passage
- Both must be documented – even though they are in your own words, the original ideas are not yours



# Summary/Paraphrase – Differences

- A summary is a **brief** restatement of the content of a passage, focusing on the central idea and/or the main idea(s)
- A paraphrase is a **precise** restatement, in your own words, of the content of a passage, focusing on the main idea(s) and the example(s) and/or details(s)



# Summary/Paraphrase – Differences

- **A summary “condenses” information:**
  - A summary of an entire book → a 10-page paper
  - A summary of an article or chapter → 1-2 paragraphs
  - A summary of paragraph → 1-2 sentences
- **A paraphrase is roughly the same length as the original passage:**
  - A paraphrase of a paragraph = a paragraph
  - A paraphrase of 2-3 sentences = 2-3 sentences





# Summary/Paraphrase – Differences

- A summary usually follows the **same order** of ideas as the original passage
- A paraphrase changes not only the **words** but also the **sentence structures** of the original passage





# How to Paraphrase – Step 1

- Read and study the **original**:
- In 1968 the Kerner Commission released a report that talked of two Americas, one black, one white, separate and unequal.



# How to Paraphrase – Step 2

- Change the **sentence structure**:
- In 1968 the Kerner Commission released a report that talked of two Americas, one black, one white, separate and unequal.
- There were two Americas, one black, one white, separate and unequal, according to the 1968 Kerner Commission report.



# How to Paraphrase – Step 3

- Change the **wording**:
- There were two Americas, one black, one white, separate and unequal, according to the 1968 Kerner Commission report.
- There were two very different and unequal Americas, a white America and a black America, according to the Kerner Commission's 1968 report.



# How to Paraphrase – Step 4

- **Review** your work, and then **document** the paraphrase:
- There were two very different and unequal Americas, a white America and a black America, according to the Kerner Commission's 1968 report (Quindlen E17).
- Quindlen reminds us that there were two very different and unequal Americas, a white America and a black America, according to the Kerner Commission's 1968 report (E17).



# Discussion

- Questions?
- Comments?
- What works for you?



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