

Paraphrases: Writing and Formatting

Purpose of Paraphrases

Why should you identify the source of a paraphrase? There are three main reasons to properly identify your sources:

1. To avoid _____.
2. To help you (and your readers) distinguish between your ideas and those of your _____.
3. To _____ your overall argument by calling attention to the qualifications or experiences of the person whose ideas you are using

Should I paraphrase or quote?

In general, use direct quotations only if you have a good reason. Most of your paper should be in your own words.

In research papers, you should quote from a source

- to show that an _____ supports your point
- to present a position or argument to critique or comment on
- to include especially moving or historically significant _____
- to present a particularly well-stated passage whose meaning would be _____ or _____ if paraphrased or summarized

You should summarize or paraphrase when

- what you want from the source is the _____ expressed, and not the _____ language used to express it
- you can express in _____ words what the key point of a source is

Methods of Paraphrasing

A. Look away from the source then write.

Read the text you want to paraphrase several times until you feel that you understand it and can use your own words to restate it to someone else. Then, look away from the original and rewrite the text in your own words.

B. Take notes.

Take abbreviated notes; set the notes aside; then paraphrase from the notes a day or so later, or when you draft.

If you find that you can't do A or B, this may mean that you don't _____ the passage completely or that you need to use a more structured process until you have more experience in paraphrasing.

The method below is not only a way to create a paraphrase but also a way to understand a difficult text.

Rules of MLA Citations of Paraphrases:

1. Reference the original _____ or _____ (if no author) and _____ number or line number (verse).
2. Place punctuation _____ the parenthetical citation.
3. Include _____ reference to the source on Works Cited page

Directions: The following excerpts of a paper are paraphrases that need citations – correctly format each of the following paraphrases by focusing on the citation format. Necessary source information is provided before each paraphrase.

1. Author: James Welch pages 17 and 18

Although he believes his dream was “a sign” given to him, his uncertainty and fear prevent him from sharing his vision and passing on the warning gift to the other members of his tribe

2. Author: James Welch pages 187 to 201

When Fools Crow does not ask for the bundle, Boss Ribs rubs his eyes and dejectedly sighs

3. Author: James Welch page 14

The interaction begins when Cold Maker visits Fast Horse in his sleep to ask if he would like to know how to make his horse raid successful; in return, Fast Horse must move a rock that blocks a spring

4. Author: Marcel Mauss page 31

In this case, the giver’s intention and/or actions lack the power of delineating the status of the gift, negating the significance of whether he mentions a return gift or not. Therefore, Cold Maker extends a “request” to Fast Horse to enter into the gift cycle when he approaches him with the offer in his dream, but Fast Horse fully commits himself after accepting the gift of knowledge

5. Author: Pierre Bourdieu page 122

Although Bourdieu cites exceptions to conforming and remaining within identity’s restraints, such as the “nobleman who demeans himself” and the “priest who abandons his calling” (_____), the boundary of the identity remains clear, intact, and still functions to permanently discourage people from crossing the boundary through punishment.

Paraphrasing Step by Step

Consider the following passage from *Love and Toil* (a book on motherhood in London from 1870 to 1918), in which the author, Ellen Ross, puts forth one of her major arguments:

Love and Toil maintains that family survival was the mother's main charge among the large majority of London's population who were poor or working class; the emotional and intellectual nurture of her child or children and even their actual comfort were forced into the background. To mother was to work for and organize household subsistence (9).

1. Change the _____

Begin by starting at a _____ place in the passage and/or sentence(s), basing your choice on the focus of your paper. This will lead naturally to some changes in wording. Some places you might start in the passage above are "The mother's main charge," "Among the . . . poor or working class," "Working for and organizing household subsistence," or "The emotional and intellectual nurture." Or you could begin with one of the _____ the passage is about: "Mothers," "A mother," "Children," "A child." Focusing on specific people rather than abstractions will make your paraphrase more readable.

At this stage, you might also _____ up long sentences, _____ short ones, _____ phrases for clarity, or _____ them for conciseness, or you might do this in an additional step. In this process, you'll naturally eliminate some words and change others.

Here's one of the many ways you might get started with a paraphrase of the passage above by changing its structure. In this case, the focus of the paper is the effect of economic status on children at the turn of the century, so the writer begins with children:

Children of the poor at the turn of the century received little if any emotional or intellectual nurturing from their mothers, whose main charge was family survival. Working for and organizing household subsistence were what defined mothering. Next to this, even the children's basic comfort was forced into the background (Ross 9).

Now you've succeeded in changing the structure, but the passage still contains many direct quotations, so you need to go on to the second step.

2. Change the _____

Use _____ or a phrase that expresses the same meaning. Leave shared language unchanged.

It's important to start by changing the structure, not the words, but you might find that as you change the words, you see ways to change the structure further. The final paraphrase might look like this:

According to Ross, poor children at the turn of the century received little mothering in our sense of the term. Mothering was defined by economic status, and among the poor, a mother's foremost responsibility was not to stimulate her children's minds or foster their emotional growth but to provide food and shelter to meet the basic requirements for physical survival. Given the magnitude of this task, children were deprived of even the "actual comfort" (9) we expect mothers to provide today.

You may need to go through this process several times to create a satisfactory paraphrase.