Paraphrasing

When paraphrasing, a writer should restate the author’s words or ideas in his/her own words without changing the meaning or providing interpretation. A writer paraphrases when what he/she wants from the source is only the idea expressed rather than the whole quote verbatim. Paraphrasing also allows a writer to express another author’s key points using fewer words.

Acceptable Paraphrasing

Original Text
New York is referred to as the city that never sleeps. At nights, people can be assured that something is going on no matter what the time.
Paraphrase
In New York, there is something to do at all hours of the night.

Original Text
Students frequently overuse direct quotation in taking notes, and as a result they overuse quotations in the final [research] paper. Probably only about 10% 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.
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).

Unacceptable Paraphrasing

Original Text
Brooklyn is the most populated of New York City’s five boroughs, with approximately 2.5 million residents, and the second-largest in area.
Paraphrase
Brooklyn is the most crowded borough in New York City, with about 2.5 million residents, and is the second biggest area.
▶ This is a bad example of paraphrasing because it substitutes a few words with synonyms but the structure and word order remains the same as the original. If a writer is not planning to make many changes, he or she should quote the text instead.

Directions: Paraphrase the following paragraphs.

1. Hemingway’s work contains a lot of symbolism. In The Old Man and The Sea, the protagonist is struggling to capture a large marlin. His struggle against the marlin symbolizes the protagonist’s struggle against defeat. Hemingway’s use of symbolism truly affects the way the reader reads and interprets his work.
Paraphrase:________________________________________________________________________
2. Organic foods are said to be healthier because they are grown without pesticides, radiation, or genetic mutations that most non-organic food contains. Non-organic foods are often injected with hormones and dyes, which jeopardize the quality of the food.
Paraphrase:__________________________________________________________________________
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3. “No historian should begin research with someone else’s notes. Taking notes is the first (and perhaps most important step) in developing our own interpretation of a subject. It forces us to decide (again and again) what is interesting and important” (Reuben, 2005, p. 413).
Paraphrase:__________________________________________________________________________
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4. “According to our survey, 30 percent of students agreed that the university should offer a money-back guarantee if students fail to get the job they really want in their field because many students are finding themselves unemployed when they graduate” (Abrams 45).
Paraphrase:__________________________________________________________________________
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