



Chapter 4

Paraphrasing, Summarising and Quoting

- a) **Paraphrasing**
- b) **Summarising**
- c) **Quoting**

(Activity Sheets)

What are Paraphrasing, Summarising and Quoting?

Paraphrasing, summarising and quoting are essential skills in academic writing. They are often used to provide evidence or reasons from other sources to support your views or arguments.

4a: Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing means rephrasing the ideas in a source in your own words, keeping or slightly condensing the details in the original source. To paraphrase a text, follow the steps below:

1. Read the original text carefully and take brief notes.
2. Put aside the original text and rewrite the text **using your own words**.
3. Acknowledge the source of the original text where appropriate.

Here are several ways to paraphrase a sentence or a short segment of a text:

(i) Using synonyms or words with similar meanings

Example 1

Original text:

Deforestation involves change of forest land to farms or urban use. According to the data in Chart A, agriculture causes about 80% of deforestation and a large number of trees have been cut down for growing crops.

Paraphrased version:

Deforestation involves conversion of forest land to farms or urban use. According to the data in Chart A, agriculture leads to approximately 80% of deforestation and a huge quantity of trees have been felled for growing crops.

Notes: When applying this technique, refer to a thesaurus or dictionary. However, not all words that are synonyms can be used in the same way or have exactly the same meaning.

Example 2

Original text:

The new policy further worsens the traffic congestion.

Paraphrased version:

The traffic congestion further deteriorates because of the new policy.

Notes: The words “worsens” and “deteriorates” have the same meaning but the former can be used as a transitive verb (i.e. a verb taking a direct object) or an intransitive verb (i.e. a verb not taking any object) and the latter is an intransitive verb. The object of the first sentence (“the traffic congestion”) has become the subject of the second sentence when the intransitive verb (“deteriorates”) is used.

Example 3

Original text:

The price of oil soars because of the instability in the Middle East.

Paraphrased version:

The price of oil escalates because of the instability in the Middle East.

Notes: In this example, “escalates” is a better choice than “increases” or “rises” as the former means “increases rapidly” while the latter two just mean “goes up”.

(ii) Changing parts of speech and/or word order

Example:

Original text:

There was evidence that the refugees were treated unfairly.

Paraphrased version 1:

There was evidence of unfair treatment of the refugees.

Paraphrased version 2:

Unfair treatment of the refugees was evident.

Notes: Nouns/noun phrases are often used in academic writing, so changing a(n) verb/adjective into a noun/noun phrase is a common way of paraphrasing. However, when changing the part of speech of a word, the word order may need to be changed.

Original text:

The factories could continue to operate so long as the resources were available.

Paraphrased version:

The availability of the resources allowed the continued operation of the factories.

(iii) Changing the voice

Examples:

Original text:

The new tax was introduced by the government in 1985.

Paraphrased version:*The government introduced the new tax in 1985.***Original text:**

B&T is implementing a new marketing strategy.

Paraphrased version:*A new marketing strategy is being implemented by B&T.***It should be noted that the sudden change of the voice may result in incoherence.**e.g. The government introduced the new tax in 1985. It aimed to reduce consumption of energy.**Notes:** “It” in the second sentence refers to the “new tax” but not the government. The change of the voice in the first sentence makes the two sentences less coherent.**(iv) Combining sentences****Original text:**

The number of tourists was on the rise in the third quarter. However, the retail sales remained flat.

Paraphrased version 1:*Despite the rise/growth in the number of tourists in the third quarter, the retail sales remained flat.***Paraphrased version 2:***The increase in the number of tourists in the third quarter did not lead to a rise/growth in retail sales.***Notes:** Depending on the relationship between the two sentences (e.g. causal relationship, contrast, sequential relationship, etc.), they can be combined using appropriate cohesive devices.

(v) Rewriting numbers and statistics

Examples:

Original text:

About 75% of the agricultural land has been converted into commercial land.

Paraphrased version:

About three-fourths of the agricultural land has been converted into commercial land.

Original text:

More than 92% of the respondents agreed with the proposal of urban renewal.

Paraphrased version:

The majority of the respondents agreed with the proposal of urban renewal.

Original text:

Two weeks ago, the death toll of the earthquake reached 51, with 798 injured.

Paraphrased version:

A fortnight ago, the death toll of the earthquake was over 50, with almost 800 injured.

Practice**Activity 1**

Choose the best answer for each blank to paraphrase the original sentences provided.

1. South America has great mineral wealth. It has about 20% of the world's iron ore. South America also has large quantities of oil and natural gas.

South America has great mineral (a.). It has about (b.) of the world's iron ore. South America also has large (c.) of oil and natural gas.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| (a.) <input type="checkbox"/> A. fortune | (b.) <input type="checkbox"/> A. one-four | (c.) <input type="checkbox"/> A. number |
| <input type="checkbox"/> B. resources | <input type="checkbox"/> B. one-fourth | <input type="checkbox"/> B. sector |
| <input type="checkbox"/> C. goods | <input type="checkbox"/> C. one-five | <input type="checkbox"/> C. amounts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> D. luxury | <input type="checkbox"/> D. one-fifth | <input type="checkbox"/> D. portions |

2. Egypt reached the pinnacle of its power in the New Kingdom, after which it entered a period of slow decline. A number of foreign powers, including the Nubians, the Assyrians and the Persians, attacked or occupied Egypt. The Greek Kingdom ruled Egypt until 30 BC when it fell to the Roman Empire.

After reaching its (a.) in power in the New Kingdom, Egypt began to decline. During the course of its history, Egypt (b.) by a number of foreign powers, including the Nubians, the Assyrians, as well as the Persians, and it was (c.) the Greek Kingdom until 30 BC, when it was conquered by the Roman Empire.

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| (a.) <input type="checkbox"/> A. peak | (b.) <input type="checkbox"/> A. was invaded or taken | (c.) <input type="checkbox"/> A. ruling by |
| <input type="checkbox"/> B. climax | <input type="checkbox"/> B. invaded and possessed | <input type="checkbox"/> B. under the rule of |
| <input type="checkbox"/> C. best | <input type="checkbox"/> C. ruined or took | <input type="checkbox"/> C. in the reign of |
| <input type="checkbox"/> D. ceiling | <input type="checkbox"/> D. was attacked and possessed | <input type="checkbox"/> D. reigned in |

Activity 2

Paraphrasing usually involves the combined use of the techniques above. When paraphrasing, the same vocabulary and sentence structures as the original should be avoided. Study the original text and the two paraphrased versions below, and decide which version is better.

Original text:

One of the educational fields where visuals are often used is language education. The difficulties of working with abstract concepts in language can be reduced or eliminated by the use of visuals. Visuals can help provide a meaningful context, present the network of concepts, summarise the relationships between concepts, motivate students and facilitate teaching. Images are also effective means to illustrate concepts with examples.

Paraphrased version 1:

One field in education where visuals are often used is language education. Visuals help reduce or eliminate the obstacles of working with abstract concepts in language. They can help provide a purposeful context, present the network of concepts, summarise the relationships between concepts, motivate students and facilitate teaching. Images are also effective means to illustrate concepts with examples.



Paraphrased version 2:

Visuals are widely used in education, in particular in language learning. The advantages of visuals are manifold as they help overcome the barriers of working with abstract concepts in language, provide a context for meaningful communication, enhance students' incentive to learn and facilitate teaching. Images also help learners understand abstract concepts through concrete examples and see the connection and relationships between them.



4b: Summarising

A **summary** is a **condensed version** of the original text. It is similar to a paraphrase but the former is shorter. **Summarising** involves the compression of a large amount of information into a shortest possible text. All the **paraphrasing strategies can also be applied to summarising** although the latter involves a reduction in the number of words.

The following steps are useful when summarising:

1. Read and understand the text.
2. Select the information relevant to your topic.
3. Identify the main ideas by finding the topic sentence and distinguish between main and supporting information.
4. Delete unnecessary details, examples, and unimportant information and data.
5. Paraphrase the text using different techniques (e.g. using synonyms, changing the structure of sentences and the text).
6. Check your work to ensure accuracy and further reduce the number of words when necessary.

In addition to the paraphrasing techniques introduced in Chapter 4a, there are several ways to summarise:

(i) Removing unimportant details

| Original Text | Summary |
|--|---|
| The social distancing measures, <u>including the closure of cafes, restaurants, gyms and entertainment venues and compulsory use of masks in public areas</u> , are effective in combating COVID-19, <u>which has become widespread in the world</u> . | The social distancing measures are effective in combating COVID-19. |

Notes: The “closure of cafes, restaurants, gyms and entertainment venues and compulsory use of masks in public areas” are examples of social distancing measures whereas the non-defining clause “which has become widespread in the world” provides supplementary information for the current situation of the pandemic. It should be noted that non-defining clauses are usually used for providing elaboration or supplementary information and can often be deleted in a summary.

(ii) Providing a general term to cover specific terms

| Original Text | Summary |
|---|--|
| <u>Beef, pork and lamb</u> are rich in protein. | <u>Meat</u> is rich in protein./ <u>Meats</u> are rich in protein. |

Notes: “Beef, pork and lamb” are examples of “meat”. The difference between “meat” and “meats” is that the former is an uncountable noun whereas the latter is a countable noun referring to the different types of meat. This also applies in “fish” and “fishes” and “fruit” and “fruits”. “Meat” can be further divided into “red meat” and “white meat”. The former refers to “beef”, “pork”, “lamb”, etc. whereas the latter refers to “chicken”, “turkey”, etc.

(iii) Identifying the main idea

The **focus and main idea of a paragraph** is often embedded in the **topic sentence**, the most important sentence in a paragraph. A topic sentence usually comes at the beginning or end of a paragraph, but it may also appear in any part of the paragraph.

| Original Text | Summary |
|--|---|
| Mammals and reptiles are two of the five classes of vertebrates. Mammals, which include dolphins, dogs and squirrels, encompass more than 5,400 species. However, there are over 8,200 species of reptiles, including geckos, snakes, and crocodiles, which make it a more diverse group than mammals. Mammals are believed to have evolved from reptiles more than 200 million years ago. | Mammals and reptiles are vertebrates and the former is believed to have evolved from the latter. However, the species in reptiles are more diverse than those in mammals. |

Notes: The original text explains the relationship between mammals and reptiles and makes a comparison between the two. The first sentence is the topic sentence, which highlights the fact that they are both vertebrates, and it can be used as the beginning sentence in the summary. Specific details (e.g. 8,200 species) and examples (e.g. geckos) in the original text can be omitted.

Practice

Activity 3

Summarise the following sentences using any appropriate strategies.

1. Tropical cyclones in the Philippines can occur any time of the year, with the months of June to September being the most active. Approximately 20 tropical cyclones enter the Philippine Area of Responsibility yearly, an area which incorporates parts of the Pacific Ocean and the Philippine Archipelago (with the exception of Tawi-Tawi province).

2. The import of chicken, goose and duck meat has to be suspended after Thailand reported an outbreak of highly pathogenic H5 bird flu earlier this week.

3. Vincent van Gogh was a Dutch Post-Impressionist painter who posthumously became one of the most famous and influential figures in Western art history. In a decade, he created about 2,100 artworks, including around 860 oil paintings, most of which date from the last two years of his life. They include landscapes, portraits and self-portraits, and are characterised by bold colours and dramatic, impulsive and expressive brushwork that contributed to the foundations of modern art. Not commercially successful, he struggled with severe depression and poverty, eventually leading to his suicide at the age of thirty-seven.

In short, summarising can be a useful tool for condensing large amounts of information. A good summary demonstrates understanding of the original text and captures the salient point(s) and argument(s).

4c: Quoting

Quoting is one way to borrow others' words and ideas to provide evidence and support your argument. A quote is a direct copy of words from the original source and it should be used sparingly to avoid plagiarism. There are two ways to quote someone's words: **direct and indirect quoting**.

(i) Direct quoting

e.g. Yang and Cheung (2003) argue, "... teaching grammar to ESL/EFL students may sometimes involve mechanical drills, but even drills should require students to think."

In a direct quote, the words are exactly the same as they appear in the original source and the quoted part is put in quotation marks.

(ii) Indirect quoting

e.g. Yang and Cheung (2003) argue that teaching grammar to ESL/EFL students may sometimes involve mechanical drills and that even drills should require students to think.

In an indirect quote, the writer's words are presented in another way without quotation marks. A change in the tense or sentence structure may be needed.

(iii) Reporting verbs

The reporting verb “argue” is used in the two examples above. **Reporting verbs** are used to **introduce words of others** and they **indicate your stance** on them. The following table provides a list of common reporting verbs:

| Functions | Examples |
|-----------------------------|--|
| agreeing | admit, agree, accept, acknowledge, recognise, support |
| advising | advise, propose, recommend, suggest, urge |
| arguing and persuading | advocate, argue, caution, convince, prove |
| believing | assert, assume, believe, claim, insist, maintain |
| concluding | conclude, infer |
| disagreeing and questioning | challenge, debate, deny, disagree, doubt, oppose, question, refute, reject |
| discussing | comment, discuss, explore |
| emphasising | accentuate, emphasise, highlight, stress, warn |
| evaluating and examining | analyse, assess, compare, contrast, evaluate, examine, investigate |
| explaining and presenting | clarify, define, describe, explain, illustrate, mention, point out, present, remark, reveal, state |

Notes:

1. Different reporting verbs are followed by different language forms/structures (e.g. bare infinitives, to-infinitives, gerunds, that-clauses).

Examples

gerund

- (A) UNESCO recommends **using** distant learning programmes and digital platforms to reach learners during school closures.

that-clause

- (B) UNESCO recommends **(that)** distant learning programmes and digital platforms **(should)** be used to reach learners during school closures.

2. Attention should be given to whether the reporting verbs are transitive (i.e. taking a direct object) or intransitive (i.e. not taking a direct object) when using them to quote or summarise others' views.

Examples:

(A) Chen (2010) opposes the introduction of capital punishment.

(B) Chen (2010) disagrees with the introduction of capital punishment.

Notes: The reporting verbs “opposes” and “disagrees” serve the same function, but the former is a transitive verb (i.e. a verb taking a direct object) and the latter is an intransitive verb (i.e. a verb not taking any object). The preposition “with” is, therefore, needed between the reporting verb “disagrees” and the object (i.e. the introduction of capital punishment).

Consult a dictionary if in doubt about the usage of the reporting verbs.

Practice**Activity 4**

Look at the sentences below carefully and choose the most appropriate answer.

1. Chan (2013) **urges** the authority _____ immediate action to stop the spread of the virus.
 taking took
 will take to take

2. Brown (2000) **suggests** that schools _____ the new assessment system.
 adopting should adopt
 adopted to adopt

3. Johnson (2003) _____ the use of green materials in the construction of buildings.
 discusses about argues for
 emphasises on advocates on

4. Li (2021) **questions** _____ the test is valid.
 if about
 for what

5. Wong (2009) **explains** _____ there is a need for reclamation.
 about the reason
 why for