

Paraphrasing Hints 05.25.05

What is paraphrasing?

- Paraphrasing is writing the ideas of another using your own words and sentence structure.
- Paraphrasing is using the ideas of another while clearly acknowledging the source of that information via text citations and the Works Cited page.

This is a 7-step process to proper paraphrasing:

1. Find a passage of information that you are able to absorb in a 5-15 minute period of time. You might very well have a nine-page article about your topic. This does not mean that you paraphrase it all at once.
2. Turn off all distractions. All people are different. Some of us can concentrate with the radio and TV on and others need a very quiet area. Figure out the environment you need and go there.
3. Take a page or two at a time and read it all very carefully. Use a highlighter or a pen/pencil to mark or circle important material. You might want to use a special color marker to note those passages that you want to quote. **Since no more than 20% of your paper should be quoted, be very selective in the quotes you choose.**
4. When you have finished the article (or the passage within) do something else (other homework, drink a Coke, etc.). Whatever you do, leave the reading alone for 5-10 minutes. What is the rationale for this? Theory has it that while you will remember the basic information from the passage, you will forget the sentence structure and thus use your own. This is a very important ingredient to proper paraphrasing. Note: If you attempt to paraphrase as you read line by line, you are only asking for trouble. This step is very important.
5. After 5-10 minutes, outline on a sheet of paper the main idea of the passage. DO NOT LOOK AT THE PASSAGE FOR HELP! The outline can be of the bubble type, Roman numeral type, or a list....whatever works for you.
6. Upon finishing the outline, write in your own words the information you received from your outline. DO NOT LOOK AT THE PASSAGE FOR HELP while you are working in this stage.
7. Only after you have finished with your writing should you look at the original passage. You will definitely want to do this to make certain you have paraphrased correctly. (See definition above.) You will also want to make sure that you haven't overlooked any important information.

***A word about quoting** - Whenever you are quoting, make certain you have used the exact wording and punctuation provided by the author and remained true to the author's intent.

For additional help see the following websites and do a keyword search:

<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/home.html> (See "Writing Resources")

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/> (See "Search for" box)

<http://www.missouri.edu/index.cfm> (See "Find It Fast" search box)