

## Summarizing and Paraphrasing

### 1. Match the correct endings to make a definition of the 2 words

- A. To paraphrase means...
- B. To summarize means...
- ...to express someone else's ideas in your own words.
- ...to express only the most important points of someone else's words.

### 2. Why is it important to paraphrase & summarize in Task 3 – Reading into writing?

### 3. Look at the following extracts from reading texts. Match them to paraphrased sentences which have the same meaning.

- 1. Keeping your house cool or warm, driving cars and making things in factories all pollute the atmosphere.
- 2. This affects the world weather and makes it difficult for animals to find food and fresh water.
- 3. Humans take away animal's homes and their food by farming, when they cut down trees for wood, and when they look for oil.
- a. When the weather changes, animals can't find water & food easily.
- b. Pollution comes from cars, factories, heating & air conditioning.
- c. Cutting down trees and looking for oil damages animals' homes & takes away their food.

### 4. Paraphrasing can be done in different ways. Find examples of the following in sentences a – c

- Using a synonym or a word with a similar meaning
- Using different grammar
- Changing around the order of the sentence

### 5. Try to paraphrase the following sentences

- A. There are now more mountain gorillas than there were in the year 2000.
- B. Before that, people still hunted and killed these big, beautiful mammals or destroyed forests where they live.
- C. Wildlife groups worked hard to help the gorillas and now nearly half of them live safely in a National park in Rwanda, Central Africa.
- D. Scientists and tourists can watch them and study them in the National park.

### 6. The 3 sentences in exercise 5 could be summarized as they all discuss the same idea. Look at the following examples and choose the best summary. Why is it the best one?

- a. Wildlife groups stopped people killing & hunting gorillas as much as before. Now lots of them live in a national park where scientists and tourists can visit them.
- b. There are more gorillas than in 2000. Before people hunted and killed them and destroyed their forests. Groups helped the gorillas and half live in a National park where scientists can watch and study them.
- c. Gorillas are not in as much danger as before.

### Decide if the following statements about writing good summaries are true or false.

- a) A summary should be short *True*
- b) You should use your own words to express the ideas in the text. *True*
- c) You need to include all the information in the text. *False*

8. Try to summarize the sentences in exercise 5, using your paraphrased sentences.

9. Test your ability to distinguish between a quotation, a paraphrase and a summary. Begin by reading this.

Alexander Graham Bell is the man credited with inventing the telephone. He was born in Scotland in 1847, but later moved to Canada, where he taught deaf people. His invention was based on his discovery that sound waves could travel through wire; once electricity was added to his listening contraption it was possible to extend the distances that the sound waves could be sent. He registered his invention in 1876, thereby, ensuring his position in history as the man who invented the telephone.

Now compare these three statements to the previous extract.

1. "Alexander Graham Bell ... was born in Scotland in 1847, but later moved to Canada."
2. Alexander Graham Bell, who was born in Scotland in 1847 but later moved to Canada, invented the telephone after combining electricity with his discovery that sound waves can travel through wire. His invention was registered in 1876.
3. Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone by making an appliance that permitted sound waves to travel through wire via an electric current. Which one is a direct quotation? Which one is a paraphrase? Which one is a summary?

10. Paraphrase the following paragraphs.

1. Hemmingway'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. Hemmingway's use of symbolism truly affects the way the reader reads and interprets his work.

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.

3. "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" (Abram

# Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing means changing the wording of a text so that it is significantly different from the original source, without changing the meaning. Effective paraphrasing is a key academic skill needed to avoid the risk of plagiarism: it demonstrates your understanding of a source. This unit focuses on techniques for paraphrasing as part of the note-making and summarising process.

## 1 The elements of effective paraphrasing

Paraphrasing and summarising are normally used together in essay writing, but while summarising aims to **reduce** information to a suitable length, paraphrasing attempts to **restate** the relevant information. For example, the following sentence:

There has been much **debate** about the reasons for the **industrial revolution** happening in **eighteenth-century Britain**, rather than in France or Germany.

could be paraphrased:

**Why the industrial revolution occurred in Britain in the eighteenth century, instead of on the continent, has been the subject of considerable discussion.**



■ (b) Change the word class of the underlined words, and then re-write the sentences.

- (i) In the 1920s Alfred Sloan's management theories helped General Motors to become the world's dominant car company.

*Example:* In the 1920s, with help from the managerial theories of Alfred Sloan, General Motors dominated the world's car companies.

- (ii) After the second world war the car makers focused on the styling of their products, to encourage more frequent model changes.
- (iii) From the 1970s there was criticism of the industry due to the inefficiency of most vehicles, which used petrol wastefully.

■ (c) Change the word order of the following sentences (other changes may be needed).

- (i) At the same time, trades unions became increasingly militant in defence of their members' jobs.

*Example:* At the same time increasingly militant trades unions defended their members' jobs.

- (ii) Today the industry owns some of the most famous brands in the world.
- (iii) However, many car makers are currently threatened by increased competition and saturated markets.

■ (d) Combine all these techniques to paraphrase the paragraph as fully as possible.

## 5 Practice C

- Use the same techniques to paraphrase the following text.

### 5.1 THE PAST BELOW THE WAVES

More than three million shipwrecks are believed to lie on the seabed, the result of storms and accidents during thousands of years of sea-borne trading. These wrecks offer marine archaeologists valuable information about the culture, technology and trade patterns of ancient civilisations, but the vast majority have been too deep to research. Scuba divers can only operate down to 50 metres, which limits operations to wrecks near the coast, which have often been damaged by storms or plant growth. A few deep sea sites (such as the *Titanic*) have been explored by manned submarines, but this kind of equipment has been too expensive for less famous subjects. However, this situation has been changed by the introduction of a new kind of mini submarine: the automatic underwater vehicle (AUV). This cheap, small craft is free moving and does not need an expensive mother-ship to control it. Now a team of American archaeologists are planning to use an AUV to explore an area of sea north of Egypt which was the approach to a major trading port 4,000 years ago.

## 4 Practice B

- Read the following text and then practise the techniques illustrated above.

### 4.1 FOUR WHEELS GOOD

The growth of the car industry parallels the development of modern capitalism. It began in France and Germany, but took off in the United States. There Henry Ford adapted the moving production line from the Chicago meat industry to motor manufacturing, thus inventing mass production. In the 1920s Alfred Sloan's management theories helped General Motors to become the world's dominant car company. After the second world war the car makers focused on the styling of their products to encourage more frequent model changes. From the 1970s there was criticism of the industry due to the inefficiency of most vehicles, which used petrol wastefully. At the same time, trades unions became increasingly militant in defence of their members' jobs. Today the industry owns some of the most famous brands in the world. However, many car makers are currently threatened by increased competition and saturated markets.

- (a) Find synonyms for the words underlined.

(i) The growth of the car industry parallels the development of modern capitalism.

*Example:* The rise of the automobile industry matches the progress of contemporary capitalism.

(ii) It began in France and Germany, but took off in the United States.

(iii) There Henry Ford adapted the moving production line from the Chicago meat industry to motor manufacturing, thus inventing mass production.

Note that an effective paraphrase usually:

- has a different structure to the original
- has mainly different vocabulary
- retains the same meaning
- keeps some phrases from the original that are in common use  
e.g. 'industrial revolution' or 'eighteenth century'

## 2 Practice A

- Read the text below and then evaluate the three paraphrases (1=best), giving reasons.

### 2.1

#### THE CAUSES OF THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Allen (2009) argues that the best explanation for the British location of the industrial revolution is found by studying demand factors. By the early eighteenth century high wages and cheap energy were both features of the British economy. Consequently, the mechanisation of industry through such inventions as the steam engine and mechanical spinning was profitable because employers were able to economise on labour by spending on coal. At that time, no other country had this particular combination of expensive labour and abundant fuel.

- (a) A focus on demand may help to explain the UK origin of the industrial revolution. At that time workers' pay was high, but energy from coal was inexpensive. This encouraged the development of mechanical inventions based on steam power, which enabled bosses to save money by mechanising production (Allen, 2009).
- (b) The reason why Britain was the birthplace of the industrial revolution can be understood by analysing demand in the early 1700s, according to Allen (2009). He maintains that,

conspicuously. Britain had the critical combination of cheap energy from coal and high labour costs. This encouraged the adoption of steam power to mechanise production, thus saving on wages and increasing profitability.

- (c) Allen (2000) claims that the clearest explanation for the UK location of the industrial revolution is seen by examining demand factors. By the eighteenth century cheap energy and high wages were both aspects of the British economy. As a result, the mechanisation of industry through inventions such as the steam engine and mechanical spinning was profitable because employers were able to save money on employees by spending on coal. At that time, Britain was the only country with significant deposits of coal.

a	
b	
c	

### 3 Techniques for paraphrasing

- (a) Changing vocabulary by using synonyms:

argues > claims/ eighteenth century > 1700s/ wages > labour costs/ economise > saving

NR. Do not attempt to paraphrase every word, since some have no true synonym, e.g. demand, economy, energy



- (b) Changing word class:

explanation (n.) > explain (v.) / mechanical (adj.) > mechanise (v.) / profitable (adj.) > profitability (n.)

- (c) Changing word order:

... the best explanation for the British location of the industrial revolution is found by studying demand factors.

> A focus on demand may help explain the UK origin of the industrial revolution.

- See Units 3.2 Academic vocabulary and 3.11 Synonyms