

🐾 Paraphrasing and Summarizing 🐾

A Short Introduction

Paraphrasing and Summarizing are often used interchangeably. However, it is important to realize the function of each to become a better writer. A major consequence of incorrect paraphrasing and summarizing is plagiarism. Plagiarism is using another person's work without giving them credit. It can be as extreme as copying and pasting information, or as subtle as substituting words into the original work. Oftentimes plagiarism is unintentional. However, it can be avoided if you learn how to paraphrase and summarize correctly.

Summarizing is rewriting the main points of the original source in your words. It is the broad overview of the material. For example, summaries are often provided on the back of movies and books to give you some insight about the content. Always provide a citation after summarizing.

Paraphrasing should provide the same content from the source, but it should be presented in your own words and understanding of the material. Unlike summarizing, it does not have to condense the material. Rather it should give your own perspective of the information. Always provide a citation after paraphrasing.



It's as easy as one, two, three...

- 1) Read through the entire piece and take notes for your own self-comprehension
- 2) Put the source away and paraphrase or summarize from your notes
- 3) Finally, check back with the original source to make sure you paraphrased and summarized the material accurately



Some Do's and Don'ts to Paraphrasing and Summarizing

- Don't worry about over citing: It's important to avoid plagiarism of any kind
- Don't replace words with synonyms or antonyms: Write it in your **own** words
- Do use citations: whenever you paraphrase or summarize literature always give credit to the author
- Do embrace the freedom to think on your own and write in a way that makes sense to you!

Practice Makes Perfect

Summarizing example

“The dog went running over to the manager, wagging his tail and smiling. He stood up on his hind legs. You could tell that all he wanted to do was get face to face with the manager and thank him for the good time he was having in the produce department, but somehow he ended up knocking the manager over. And the manager must have been having a bad day, because lying there on the floor, right in front of everybody, he started to cry. The dog leaned over him, real concerned, and licked his face.”
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A possible summary: The dog ran into the produce department and accidentally knocked over the manager (DiCamillo 2000).

Tip: Check your citation style to make sure you cite it properly. In this case, CSE name-year format was used.

An inadequate, plagiarized summary: The dog ran into the store.

Tip: This information does not highlight the main points of the paragraph above. Also, there is no citation to give credit to the author.

Paraphrasing example

“The most dramatic thing about horses’ sight is the one it’s easiest to see-their panoramic view of the world. A prey animal, it was important that they develop a comprehensive field of vision in case anything planned to sneak up on them.”- *The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Horses* by Sarah Montague and PJ Dempsey, 2003

A possible paraphrase: Horses have panoramic vision. Since they are prey, this feature is significant because they need to keep an eye on their surroundings at all times (Montague and Dempsey 2003).

Tip: Check your citation style to make sure you cite it properly. In this case, CSE name-year format was used.

A plagiarized version of paraphrasing: The panoramic view is the most dramatic thing about a horses’ sight. Since predators sneak up on them, they need to have this important field of vision.

Tip: This information was not paraphrased correctly since just the sentence structure was switched around. Also, there is no citation to give credit to the author.



If you need further help or have any questions, please contact the Penn State Berks Writing Center in Franco 141 at 610-396-6407 or bk-writingcenter@psu.edu. You can also schedule an appointment at <https://berks.mywconline.com/>.



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