
PARAPHRASING AND REFERENCING

Other Handouts:

- Principles of Referencing
- Avoiding Plagiarism
- Quoting & Referencing
- Why is Plagiarism so wrong?
- Writing from Sources

What is a paraphrase?

To paraphrase is to put someone else's ideas and words into your own words. This usually includes summarising key points from a text and drawing out the essential meaning of the information. The important aspect of paraphrasing is that you are expressing your understanding of someone else's work. Thus you need to reference where the information or idea came from by referring to the author and you also need to make sure that you have used your own words to restate the information and ideas.

Tip!

Remember that your essay is expected to be more than 90% written in your own words, and therefore you cannot rely too heavily on using quotations, so paraphrasing sources is a necessary and important essay writing skill.

How do I paraphrase?

- Make sure that you fully understand the passage, quotation or ideas expressed.
- Think about how you can reorganise these ideas, keeping the meaning the same.
- Change the wording (vocabulary) using synonyms (words of similar meaning) or alternative expressions, or change the structure (grammar) of the original passage, but again keep the meaning the same.
- Use an in-text reference and integrate the paraphrase into your essay.

Tip!

Quotation marks are not used in when the work of an author has been paraphrased, but an in-text citation is always necessary to indicate that the ideas expressed are derived from another source and not purely from your own thoughts.

How can I avoid inappropriate or inadequate acknowledgement?

To avoid inadvertently plagiarising you must always reference all your sources correctly, and either paraphrase the ideas in your own words or use a direct quote.

Adapted from Academic Skills Office.(n.d).

Tip!

(n.d.) means that no date of publication is available, this is an example of one of the abbreviations conventionally used in referencing. A list of abbreviations can be found in Marshall & Rowland (1998 p.239).

Test your understanding

As a way to check that you have understood how much the original words of an author need to be changed to be considered to be a paraphrase work through the following quiz (adapted from Academic Skills Office. (n.d.).

The quiz

Read the following quotation by Michael Deakin (cited in Marshall & Rowland, 1998, p. 37) which is in connection with reasons for studying:

“Most people let themselves be pushed by chance or other people’s expectations into environments of which they make the best, rather than into those which meet their inner needs”.

Consider the following 7 passages based on this source in terms of the academic conventions for direct quotations, paraphrases and in-text referencing (APA style). Decide if each is acceptable or unacceptable and could be considered plagiarism if used like this in an academic essay.

Example 1

Most people let themselves be pushed by chance or other people’s expectations into environments of which they make the best, rather than into those that meet their inner needs.

Example 2

“Most people let themselves be pushed by chance or other people’s expectations into environments of which they make the best, rather than into those which meet their inner needs”.

Example 3

“Most people let themselves be pushed by chance or other people’s expectations into environments of which they make the best, rather than into those which meet their inner needs” (Deakin, 1998, p. 37).

Example 4

According to Michael Deakin, “Most people let themselves be pushed by chance or other people’s expectations into environments of which they make the best, rather than into those which meet their inner needs” (cited in Marshall & Rowland, 1998, p. 37).

Example 5

According to Michael Deakin, most people allow themselves either to be pushed by chance or by other people’s expectations into situations that they make the best of, rather than into situations which meet their inner needs (cited in Marshall & Rowland, 1998, p. 37).

Example 6

Most people are quite content to make the most of situations determined by chance or by the agendas of others, instead of ensuring their own needs are fulfilled (Michael Deakin, cited in Marshall & Rowland, 1998, p. 37).

Example 7

Michael Deakin (cited in Marshall & Rowland, 1998, p. 37) argues that rather than ensuring that “their inner needs” are met, most people are quite content to make the most of situations determined by chance or by the agendas of others.

Answers

Example 1: Unacceptable and regarded as plagiarism because it is an unacknowledged direct quotation from the original source, with one word changed (“that” instead of “which”). It needs to be exactly the same as the original, including punctuation, have quotation marks and an in-text citation.

Example 2: Unacceptable and also regarded as plagiarism because although it is correctly written as a direct quotation, there is no acknowledgement of the original source. It needs an in-text citation.

Example 3: Unacceptable because although it is correctly written as a direct quotation with an in-text citation, the in-text citation is incorrect as it is a secondary source. It needs an in-text citation such as (Deakin cited in Marshall & Rowland, 1998, p. 37).

Example 4: Acceptable because it is correctly written as a direct quotation with an in-text citation of a secondary source.

Example 5: Unacceptable because it contains unacknowledged direct quotation from the original source. It therefore is considered to be plagiarism. It does correctly give an appropriate in-text reference (or citation), but purports to be a paraphrase (no quotation marks). However, it has not been substantially changed from the original wording and so it is an unacceptable paraphrase. Paraphrases need to keep the meaning the same but be your rewording into your own style and this involves the use of synonyms, alternative phrases and word choices usually together with altering the sentence structure.

Example 6: Acceptable. It correctly gives an appropriate in-text reference (or citation) and is arguably an acceptable paraphrase (meaning kept the same but reworded with synonyms or alternative expressions).

Example 7: Acceptable. It correctly gives an appropriate in-text reference (or citation) and is an acceptable paraphrase (the meaning kept the same but reworded with synonyms or alternative expressions) which includes a direct quotation to give more precision with regards to the original quote.

Use the checklist

Go through your essay and check off in the boxes below to make sure that you have paraphrased correctly.

- Does the paraphrase have the same meaning as the original passage?
- Have you changed both the wording and the sentence structure and avoided copying the original phrasing?
- Is there a complete in-text citation (author’s surname, date of publication and page number)?

References:

Marshall, L. & Rowland, F. (1998). *A guide to learning independently* (3rd ed). Melbourne: Addison Wesley Longman.

Academic Skills Office. (n.d.). *Avoiding plagiarism* [Handout]. Armidale: Teaching & Learning Centre, University of New England.

Note: The referencing style used in this handout (in-text and end-of-text) is the APA (American Psychological Association) style. For full details of APA and other referencing styles, see *How to Cite References* on the Murdoch Library web-pages at <http://www.lib.murdoch.edu.au/find/citation/>.