

Paraphrasing

If you choose to use an idea from a source that is not a direct quotation (four words or more in a sequence), you will need to paraphrase the text. This might seem like a difficult task, but using a systematic approach can make it simpler. Try following these steps to break down the process:

Strategy 1:

1. Choose a partial or full sentence(s) to represent your idea and ensure that you fully understand it.

We will use the following single sentence to demonstrate the different steps involved in paraphrasing:

Many people agree with this concept, which without a doubt, validates Einstein's brilliant general theory of relativity.

2. Break the sentence up into blocks which represent sub-ideas (highlight or use vertical lines):

Many people agree with this concept, which without a doubt, validates Einstein's brilliant general theory of relativity.

3. Cross out non-essential ideas/words that are not important and/or repeat an idea:

Many people agree with this concept, which without a doubt, validates Einstein's brilliant general theory of relativity.

(We could have also omitted the word "brilliant"; however, for our purposes, we will keep it).

4. Underline or circle essential key words (keep these words! DO NOT replace with synonyms).

- Examples: Numbers (statistics, dates, etc.) and proper nouns (names of people, places and organizations).

Many people agree with this concept, which without a doubt, which validates Einstein's brilliant general theory of relativity.

5. Substitute other key words with synonyms that fit within the context of your writing:

- **Note:** It is not necessary to replace all essential key words with synonyms.

A number of people support this idea, which proves Einstein's ingenious general theory of relativity.

6. Change the grammatical forms of key words (nouns to verbs and vice versa, etc.):

- Note: Words can be added to maintain grammatical integrity as long as the meaning behind the text remains essentially unchanged.

A number of people support this idea, which provides proof for Einstein's ingenious general theory of relativity.

7. Change the verb tense or voice:

A number of people are supporting this idea, which provides proof for Einstein's ingenious general theory of relativity.

8. Rearrange the order of the ideas:

- Note: Connecting words and verb forms can be changed and/or added to preserve correct grammatical structure.

Proof for Einstein's ingenious general theory of relativity is provided by this idea, which has the support of a number of people.

Here is the final transformation using Strategy 1:

(Original sentence)

Many people agree with this concept, which without a doubt, validates Einstein's brilliant general theory of relativity.



(Paraphrased sentence)

Proof for Einstein's ingenious general theory of relativity is provided by this idea, which has the support of a number of people.

Remember:

- ★ For multi-sentence texts, ideas can be rearranged between sentences and not just within a sentence.
- ★ You will want to use a combination of these strategies and not only one or two of them, in order to paraphrase properly and avoid plagiarism.

For example, Do Not Just:

Rearrange blocks of words within the original sentence or text:

- ✖ Without a doubt, this concept, which many people agree with, validates Einstein's brilliant general theory of relativity.

OR

Simply replace words with synonyms in the original sentence:

- ✖ A lot of people concur with this idea, which undoubtedly proves Einstein's general theory of relativity.

(Here, "brilliant" has been omitted; even in using two different strategies, this would be considered to be weak paraphrasing).

Strategy 2:

Ideas can also be presented in alternate or opposite ways, particularly when it comes to paraphrasing statistical data. Use these strategies on the following sentence:

28% of the students forgot to do their homework.

(Remember to first break up the sentence into word blocks and find substitutions for the first block of words.)

1. State numbers in alternate ways:

Approximately 30% of the students forgot to do their homework.

Almost one third of the students forgot to do their homework

2. Express ideas in opposite ways:

72% of the students remembered to do their homework. OR

Almost three quarters of the students remembered to do their homework. OR

Almost three quarters of the students did not forget to do their homework.

Note: The way in which you decide to paraphrase your idea(s) will depend on what you want to emphasize.

References

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