



The Writing Center

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO
DENVER | ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

Integrating Paraphrase

Paraphrasing and Summarizing are two methods of incorporating source material into one's own text. Unlike directly quoting from a source, writers condense information and/or synthesize source material into new ideas, all while maintaining their authorial voice. Rather than only changing a few words or copying the sentence structure of the original (a process called "patch writing," which the University considers a form of plagiarism), paraphrasing and summarizing use completely new words and sentence structures to convey the same information found in the source text.

Paraphrase

Paraphrasing allows writers to maintain their authorial voice and build their credibility. They do this by synthesizing concepts from other sources into new ideas without the interruption of direct quotes. Paraphrasing helps a writer in the following situations:

- Information, meaning, and authorial voice matter more than the exact, original wording
- Source material is too technical or complex for the given audience and would be more easily understood as paraphrase
- Expert comprehension of the source material needs to be demonstrated

It is also important to remember that even when paraphrasing, writers must provide proper citation according to their chosen style guide because the ideas originated in other texts.

Paraphrase to Restate Ideas

When writers need to incorporate source material but original phrasing is not important, they can re-state the source's original ideas with new phrasing. To do this, writers must understand the information thoroughly and have a strategy for accurately restating it:

1. Closely read the source, focusing on main points and main supporting evidence to fully comprehend its meaning
2. Put the source away
3. Rewrite the information from memory
4. Add a signal phrase and an in-text citation to let readers know that the material is from a source text
5. Double-check to ensure accurate representation of source material

Practice paraphrasing the following excerpt from Turner's Thesis:

"Thus American development has exhibited not merely advance along a single line, but a return to primitive conditions on a continually advancing frontier line, and a new development for that area. American social development has been continually beginning over again on the frontier. This perennial rebirth, this fluidity of American life, this expansion westward with its new opportunities, its continuous touch with the simplicity of primitive society, furnish the forces dominating American character."

In the following example, the signal phrase and citation are clearly presented:

In his influential 1893 Thesis, Frederick Jackson Turner argues that the frontier was a meeting place between savagery and civilization that indelibly shaped America (3).

Paraphrase to Synthesize Ideas

While also preserving the source's original ideas but restating them in a writer's own words, paraphrasing to synthesize goes one step further by using that information to generate or establish new ideas. Writers can follow the previous steps for Restating Ideas, and then add the following strategies:

1. Consider how the source material relates to other sources or your own argument
2. Rewrite the information to connect the source to other sources or your own ideas

In the following example, the source is put in direct conversation with other sources:

In his influential 1893 Thesis, Frederick Jackson Turner argues that the frontier was a meeting place between savagery and civilization that shaped America (3), but theorists have since troubled this theory by accepting the real and lasting effects of violence on the frontier and redefining the frontier in more culturally responsible ways (Slotkin 56; Limerick, 73).



