

Activity 1: Paraphrasing Practice

Below, you will see two paraphrases; one is correct, the other is not. Work together to identify the incorrect one, explain overall what's wrong with the paraphrase, and revise it so it is an example of an acceptable paraphrase.

Source: Roger Sipher, New York Times "So That Nobody Has to Go to School if They Don't Want To", page 31

Original:

Schools should be for education. At present, they are only tangentially so. They have attempted to serve an all-encompassing social function, trying to be all things to all people. In the process they have failed miserably at what they were originally formed to accomplish.

Paraphrase:

Roger Sipher insists that schools have not met their primary duty of education because they try to fill multiple roles in an attempt to please all stakeholders (31).

Source: Kathleen Yancey, English 102 Supplemental Guide, 1989, page 25

Original:

The twenties were the years when drinking was against the law, and the law was a bad joke because everyone knew of a local bar where liquor could be had. They were the years when organized crime ruled the cities, and the police seemed powerless to do anything against it. Classical music was forgotten while jazz spread throughout the land, and men like Bix Beiderbecke, Louis Armstrong, and Count Basie became the heroes of the young. The flapper was born in the twenties, and with her bobbed hair and short skirts, she symbolized, perhaps more than anyone or anything else, America's break with the past.

Paraphrase:

Drinking was illegal, and the law was a joke because many people could find local bars selling liquor. These were the times when gangsters ruled the neighborhoods, and the cops were powerless to do anything about it. People listened to jazz instead of classical music, and Bix Beiderbecke, Louis Armstrong, and Count Basie were the heroes of the young. The flapper, who came to life in the 20s, had short bobbed hair and short skirts. She was the symbol of the 20s. Rebellion and a break with the past characterized the 1920s.

Activity 2: Case study

Read the following case studies. As a group, discuss each of the questions after the scenario. You don't all have to agree, but please write down your team's response, including dissenting opinions, on your group paper.

Case Study #1:

Jennifer really enjoys the art history class she is taking this semester. She spends a lot of time on her final project—a portfolio of works of art that she selects, writes a brief background about the artist, and then describes what she feels about the piece. She is careful to make sure all her information about the artists is correct, and reads several essays on the artists she has chosen. She agrees with most of what the essayists have to say regarding the pieces. She represents some of their thoughts in her project as her own, reasoning that since it is not fact, and instead intangible opinion, and because she agrees with them, then she is not plagiarizing.

Is she right or wrong? Why?

Case Study #2:

David is a senior and only has three more classes this semester before he graduates. He feels the pressure to uphold his 3.65 GPA, as well as just wanting to finish and get the classes out of the way.

In one of his classes, an extra credit assignment is to read through a set of given texts from certain articles and books that have been given by the instructor throughout the semester, and then to compile personal thoughts based on the principles covered. To David, it seemed like basically doing something he already had done in the class—read the same information again. He figured the instructor just wanted to make sure the students really did read the articles, so David wrote his paper using direct quotes and verbatim phrases from the reading without correct citation. It was just extra credit, after all, so if it was not as good as his other work, it couldn't really hurt his grade.

Is what David did wrong? Why or why not? Do you think David is right in thinking that this assignment really doesn't matter and can't really hurt his grade because it is only for extra credit?

Case Study #3

Last semester Ben took an ecology class and one of the papers he wrote was about the effects of DDT on bald eagles. This semester he is taking a wildlife biology class and realizes that his paper from last semester would work for one of the assignments for this semester too.

Is it academic dishonesty for Ben to turn the same paper in twice? What is the best thing for Ben to do in this situation?

Case Study #4: Sources

Lee has to write a paper on some of the causes and symptoms of drug abuse for a public health class. He accesses the Web and finds several chat rooms that feature posted questions which are answered by doctors. He uses their answers in his paper, citing just "Internet" as the source. He also finds a site that is put together by the mother of a recovering addict which contains information that she has compiled as a resource for other families in similar circumstances. Steve also uses this information, and since the author of the site does not indicate which books she got the information from, he cites "Internet" again as the source.

Is this sufficient? Is this a form of plagiarism/academic dishonesty? Why or why not?

Activity 3: Plagiarism Matching

Anyone who has written or graded a paper knows that plagiarism is not always a black-and-white issue. The boundary between plagiarism and research is often unclear. Learning to recognize the various forms of plagiarism, especially the more ambiguous ones, is an important step in the fight to prevent it. Match each form of plagiarism to its definition. Explain also whether the example includes citing sources or not citing sources.

Type of Plagiarism:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. "The Ghost Writer" | g. "The Forgotten Footnote" |
| b. "The Photocopy" | h. "The Misinformer" |
| c. "The Potluck Paper" | i. "The Too-Perfect Paraphrase" |
| d. "The Poor Disguise" | j. "The Resourceful Citer" |
| e. "The Labor of Laziness" | k. "The Perfect Crime" |
| f. "The Self-Stealer" | |

_____The writer properly cites a source, but neglects to put in quotation marks text that has been copied word-for-word, or close to it. Although attributing the basic ideas to the source, the writer is falsely claiming original presentation and interpretation of the information.

_____Although the writer has retained the essential content of the source, he or she has altered the paper's appearance slightly by changing key words and phrases.

_____In this case, the writer properly quotes and cites sources in some places, but goes on to paraphrase other arguments from those sources without citation. This way, the writer tries to pass off the paraphrased material as his or her own analysis of the cited material.

_____The writer turns in another's work, word-for-word, as his or her own.

_____The writer mentions an author's name for a source, but neglects to include specific information on the location of the material referenced. This often masks other forms of plagiarism by obscuring source locations.

_____The writer provides inaccurate information regarding the sources, making it impossible to find them.

_____The writer copies significant portions of text straight from a single source, without alteration.

_____The writer tries to disguise plagiarism by copying from several different sources, tweaking the sentences to make them fit together while retaining most of the original phrasing.

_____The writer properly cites all sources, paraphrasing and using quotations appropriately. The catch? The paper contains almost no original work! It is sometimes difficult to spot this form of plagiarism because it looks like any other well-researched document.

_____The writer "borrows" generously from his or her previous work, violating policies concerning the expectation of originality adopted by most academic institutions.

_____The writer takes the time to paraphrase most of the paper from other sources and make it all fit together, instead of spending the same effort on original work.

Exercise provided by Turnitin.com and Research Resources. Turnitin allows free distribution and non-profit use of this document in educational settings.