

Effective Note-taking

Paraphrasing and Summarizing



When should I paraphrase, and when should I summarize?

- ❑ Paraphrase: to express someone else's ideas in your own language.
- ❑ Summarize: to express only the most essential points of someone else's work.
- ❑ Paraphrasing and summarizing are necessary tools for research because they allow you to include other people's ideas without cluttering up your essay with quotations.
- ❑ Rely on either tool when an idea from one of your sources is important to your essay but the wording is not.
- ❑ **Above all**, think about how much of the detail from your source is relevant to *your* argument. If all your reader needs to know is the bare bones, then summarize.
- ❑ Ultimately, be sure not to rely too heavily on *either* paraphrasing or summarizing. Your ideas are what matter most. Allow yourself the space to develop those ideas.

How do I paraphrase?

- You must provide a reference.
- The paraphrase must be entirely in your own words.
- You must do more than merely substitute phrases here and there.
- You must also completely alter the sentence structure.

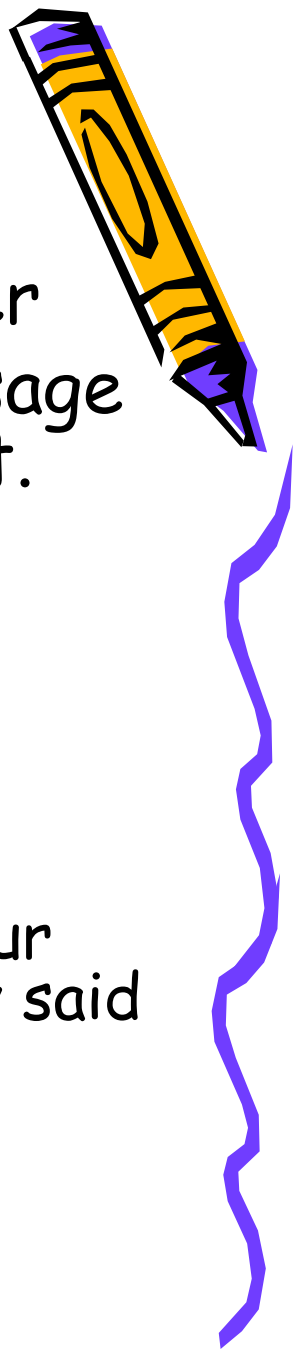




- When you are at the note-taking stage, do not copy a passage verbatim unless you want to quote it.
- If you think you will want to paraphrase the passage, make a note only of the author's basic point. Do not use complete sentences.
- In your notes, you should change the language of the original into your own words. What matters is that you capture the original idea.
- Include the page number of the passage so that you can cite it later on.

When it comes time to write the paper, rely on your notes rather than on the author's work. You will find it much easier to avoid borrowing from the original passage because you will not have recently seen it. Follow this simple sequence:

- Convert the ideas from your notes into full sentences.
- Provide a reference.
- Go back to the original to ensure that (a) your paraphrase is accurate and (b) you have truly said things in your own words.



Oliver Sacks' essay

“An Anthropologist on Mars”

The cause of autism has also been a matter of dispute. Its incidence is about one in a thousand, and it occurs throughout the world, its features remarkably consistent even in extremely different cultures. It is often not recognized in the first year of life, but tends to become obvious in the second or third year. Though Asperger regarded it as a biological defect of affective contact — innate, inborn, analogous to a physical or intellectual defect — Kanner tended to view it as a psychogenic disorder, a reflection of bad parenting, and most especially of a chillingly remote, often professional, “refrigerator mother.” At this time, autism was often regarded as “defensive” in nature, or confused with childhood schizophrenia. A whole generation of parents — mothers, particularly — were made to feel guilty for the autism of their children.



Illegitimate paraphrase

The cause of the condition autism has been disputed. It occurs in approximately one in a thousand children, and it exists in all parts of the world, its characteristics strikingly similar in vastly differing cultures. The condition is often not noticeable in the child's first year, yet it becomes more apparent as the child reaches the ages of two or three. Although Asperger saw the condition as a biological defect of the emotions that was inborn and therefore similar to a physical defect, Kanner saw it as psychological in origin, as reflecting poor parenting and particularly a frigidly distant mother. During this period, autism was often seen as a defense mechanism, or it was misdiagnosed as childhood schizophrenia. An entire generation of mothers and fathers (but especially mothers) were made to feel responsible for their offspring's autism (Sacks 247-48).

Problem:

- Most of these sentences just substitute one phrase for another.
- The only citation occurs at the very end of the last paragraph.
 - The reader might be misled into thinking that the earlier sentences were not part of Sacks' essay .





Legitimate Paraphrase

In “*An Anthropologist on Mars*,” **Sacks** lists some of the known facts about autism. We know, for example, that the condition occurs in roughly one out of every thousand children. We also know that the characteristics of autism do not vary from one culture to the next, and we know that the condition is difficult to diagnose until the child has entered his second or third year of life. As **Sacks** points out, often a child who goes on to develop autism will still appear perfectly normal at the age of one (247).

Sacks states that researchers have had a hard time agreeing on the causes of autism. He talks about the different opinions of Asperger and Kanner. Asperger saw the condition as a defect in the child’s ability to make emotional contact with people and the world. Kanner blamed autism on bad parenting practices. This confusion continued for many years. According to **Sacks**, one unfortunate consequence of this confusion, was the guilt so many parents felt for their child’s condition (247-48).



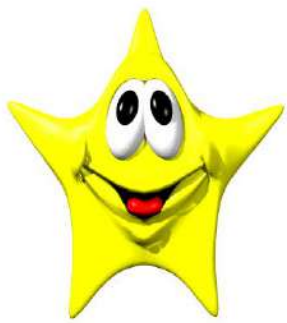
What this writer did correctly:

- This passage makes it clear from the beginning that the ideas belong to Sacks.
- The single parenthetical note at the end of each paragraph is all the citation that is needed.
- Using Sacks' name in the paraphrase makes the job of providing citations easier.
- It also strengthens the passage by clarifying the source of its facts and ideas.
- The paraphrase splits the original passage into two separate paragraphs to show the two parts of Sacks' argument.
- All the details from the original passage are included in the paraphrase.



How do I summarize?

- A summary **does not** give a point-by-point translation.
- First absorb the meaning of the passage.
- Then, capture **(in your own words)** the most important points from the original passage.
 - *A summary is much shorter than a paraphrase.*



Summary of

An Anthropologist on Mars

In “*An Anthropologist on Mars*,” Sacks notes that although there is little disagreement on the chief characteristics of autism, researchers have differed considerably on its causes. As he points out, Asperger saw the condition as a defect in the child’s ability to connect with the external world, and Kanner regarded it as a consequence of harmful childrearing practices (247-48).



Let's Practice

Always put the source information at the top of your paper. It will be the first thing you do.

Remember, one source and topic per page.

Author: Cynthia L. Jenson-Elliott

Title: *Southern Africa*

City of Publication: San Diego

Publisher: Lucent Books

Year of Publication: 2003

Southern Africa Problems and Promises

- Political and social instability
- Poor health
- Poverty (have natural resources)
 - Causes:
 - Export of resources due to colonial rule and apartheid
 - African wealth benefited colonial nation- not Africa
 - Today- exports go to repay foreign loans
 - Political analyst **Colin Legum** says more capital continues to flow out of Africa than in.

- Mining industry
 - Provides migrant labor p. 81
 - Low wages- profits go abroad p. 81
 - According to **Morag Bell** in *Contemporary Africa: Development, Culture and the State* 70% of rural household incomes depend on migrant labor. P. 82

On your own 92, 93, 94

- 1999 Dr. Manto Tshabalala-Msimang, SA minister of health estimated by 2005 one million children orphaned as result of aids.p. 92
- Charlotte Observer 1995 predicted $\frac{1}{3}$ of children to be orphaned in Zimbabwe by 2010. p. 93

- AIDS leads to other epidemics due to suppress immune system
 - TB-caused by airborne bacteria
 - Highly curable with antibiotics
 - Little or no access to health care causes disease to spread far and quick
 - Lack clean water and good nutrition p. 93

- Millions die here- while survival rate high in developed countries
- UNICEF (United Nations Fund for Children) is helping:
 - Immunizations
 - Medicines
 - Preventative measures for malaria and other diseases
 - Radio and TV campaigns promoting safeguards against AIDS
 - Time-consuming
 - Africa's greatest challenge: Protecting human resources