

# Paraphrasing: An Introduction

Paraphrasing the work of others is one of the most important skills. The transformation of the words, phrases and ideas of different authors into your own words avoids plagiarism. However, please note that you still need a citation or citations as appropriate.

Paraphrasing is the skill of synthesising the opinions and evidence provided by one author or by different authors, to reach useful conclusions and insights. It is an advanced skill, which can improve the flow, development and overall cohesion of your ideas.

This handout takes you through the process of paraphrasing. It starts with a brief text, then demonstrates changes made to it using several techniques and ends with a re-worked version of the original text. The original is repeated straight after it.

This handout has four main sections: first, a brief overview of key points to be aware of; secondly, the short original text; thirdly, the paraphrasing techniques, namely using synonyms, nominalisation, and changing the active voice to the passive voice and, fourthly, a brief example of using cautious language.

## Overview:

- Always include an in-text citation for research and statistics.
- Do not use the synonym technique by itself.
- Check how much direct quotation there is in your work. Plagiarism software will discover this.
- Have a good balance of different viewpoints and remember to use a paraphrased idea or quote in synthesis with other paraphrased text not in isolation.
- Even if you make some language errors, it is better to turn the author's words into your own.

## Original text:

The aim of Team-based Learning is for students to use the concepts they learnt in class to solve practical problems that are comparable to those they will face in their working world (Sparrow & McCabe, 2012).

## Paraphrasing techniques:

The three techniques explained then demonstrated below are: using synonyms, nominalisation, and changing the active voice to the passive voice.

## Using Synonyms:

Key words are replaced with different words to keep the same meaning. However, the danger is that using this technique alone will result in what is known as patch writing, where only patches of the text change. This means a lot of the text remains similar. Unless you change the whole sentence, plagiarism software will detect it and report it.

### **Example of using synonyms:**

The **goal** of Team-based Learning is for students to use the **ideas** they learned in class to solve **real difficulties** that are **similar** to those they will face in the **workplace** (Sparrow & McCabe, 2012). [Click here for original text \(highlighted\)](#)

### **Nominalisation (changing the word family):**

You can change a verb to a noun or a noun to a verb. This means keeping the same word, but changing the word family. In the example below, we have changed the verb “to solve” to the noun “solution”.

### **Example of using nominalisation:**

The goal of Team-based Learning is for students to use the ideas they learnt in class to find **solutions for** real difficulties that are similar to those they will face in the workplace (Sparrow & McCabe, 2012). [Click here for original text \(highlighted\)](#)

### **Changing from the Active Voice to the Passive Voice.**

This means changing the tense of the verb. Changing the active to the passive can transform the words in a sentence. In the example below, the original “they learnt” is changed to “that were learnt” and the original “will face” is changed to “are to be faced”. You could also replace “that were learnt” to “that they were taught”. This keeps the original meaning, but changes the words. Also, sometimes just changing the tense to the past, present or present perfect can be as effective and can help to avoid over-using the passive voice.

### **Example of changing the active voice to the passive voice:**

The goal of Team-based Learning is student use of the ideas **that were learnt** in class to find solutions for real difficulties that are similar to those that **are to be faced** in the workplace (Sparrow & McCabe, 2012). [Click here for original text \(highlighted\)](#)

### **Cautious Language:**

The use of cautious language is always recommended.

### **Example of using cautious language:**

The goal of Team-based Learning is student use of ideas that were learnt in class to find solutions for real difficulties that **may be** similar to those that are to be faced in the workplace.

### **Final version:**

The goal of Team-based Learning is student use of ideas that were learnt in class for the solution of real difficulties that may be similar to those that are to be faced in the workplace (Sparrow & McCabe, 2012).

### **Original text:**

**The aim of Team-based Learning is for students to use the concepts they learnt in class to solve practical problems that are comparable to those they will face in their working world (Sparrow & McCabe, 2012).**

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Resource revised 2019



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