

Course: Written Comprehension and Expression

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Week Nine: Paraphrasing

Practice: 1

Consider the following four paragraphs.

A. Language is the main means of communication between people. But so many different languages have developed that language has often been a barrier rather than an aid to understanding among people. For many ears, people have dreamed of setting up an international universal language which all people could speak and understand. The arguments in favour of a universal language are simple and obvious. If all people spoke the same tongue, cultural and economic ties might be much closer, and good will increase between countries (Author X, 2000).

B. For 10 years, the environmental media association (EMA) has been working to weave the environment into prime-time television programming. Created by and for professionals in the entertainment industry, EMA works with the stars in front of the camera as well as the creative stuff behind them to include environmental themes in scripts, show environmental products on sets and make environmentally sound decisions in the studios (E magazine).

C. Humans communicate through language. Because there are so many different languages, however, people around the world have a difficult time understanding one another. Some people have wishes for a universal international language that speakers all over the world could understand. Their reasons are straightforward and clear. A universal language would build cultural and economic bonds it would also create better feelings among countries (Author X, 2000).

D. According to an article in E magazine, environmental messages have been deliberately put into prime-time television shows for the past decade. Environmental Media Association, an organization of professionals in the entertainment business, encourages television actors, writers, directors and producers to promote environmentalism in three ways: by using environmental issues in scripts, by using environmental products as props, and making environmentally conscious choices in studios.

How to Write a Good Paraphrase

There are three keys to writing a good paraphrase:

1. Use your own words and your own sentence structure.
2. Make your paraphrase approximately the same length as the original.
3. Do not change the meaning of the original.

You can write a good paraphrase if you follow these steps.

Step 1: Read the original passage several times until you understand it fully.

Step 2: It helps to take notes. Write down only a few words for each idea not complete sentences.

Step 3: Write your paraphrase from your notes. Do not look at the original while you are writing.

Step 4: Check your paraphrase against the original to make sure you have not copied vocabulary or the sentence structure too closely. Above all, make sure that you have not changed the meaning of the original or given any wrong information.

Step 5: Add an in-text citation at the end.

Practice 2

Read the original paragraph below and then decide which is the best paraphrase of it (a) or (b).

Original 1: Ancient Egypt collapsed in about 2180 BC. Studies conducted of the mud from the River Nile showed that at this time the mountainous regions which feed the Nile suffered from a prolonged drought. This would have had a devastating effect on the ability of Egyptian society to feed itself.

a) The sudden ending of Egyptian civilisation over 4,000 years ago was probably caused by changes in the weather in the region to the south. Without the regular river flooding there would not have been enough food.

b) Research into deposits of the Egyptian Nile indicate that a long dry period in the mountains at the river's source may have led to a lack of water for irrigation around 2180BC, which was when the collapse of Egyptian society began.

Practice 3:

Step 1 Read the original passages.

Step 2 Choose the best paraphrase from the choices given and mark it "Best."

Step 3 Mark the others "Too sim." for too similar, "No cit." if there is no in-text citation, or "Inc./Inacc." for incomplete and/or inaccurate information.

Original Passage 1

Source: Page 16 of a three-page article in the October 15, 2003, issue of Space Science magazine. The title of the article is "Manned Mars Flight: Impossible Dream?" The author is Patrick Clinton, a NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) physician.

Living aboard a space station in orbit around Earth for months at a time poses problems for astronauts' bodies as well as for their minds.

.....A. An article in Space Science magazine reported that lengthy space station duty may lead to physical and mental problems for astronauts (Clinton, 2003).

.....B. An article in Space Science magazine reports that astronauts who live aboard space

stations for long periods of time may experience physical as well as mental problems.

.....C. An article in Space Science reports that living in a space station orbiting Earth for a long time can cause difficulties for astronauts' bodies and minds (Clinton, 2003).

.....D. An article in Space Science reports that astronauts will become physically sick and have mental problems if they visit a space station (Clinton, 2003).

Original Passage 2

Source: the same article in passage 1.

One major problem is maintaining astronauts' physical health. Medical treatment may be days or even weeks away, as there may not be a doctor on board. Illnesses such as appendicitis or ulcers, routinely treated on Earth, could be fatal in space because of the delay in getting to a doctor.

.....A. NASA physician Patrick Clinton states that one problem is astronauts' physical health. With no doctor on board, common illnesses like appendicitis and ulcers could be fatal to astronauts because it would take too long to get them back to Earth.

.....B. NASA physician Patrick Clinton states that keeping the astronauts physically healthy is one problem. If the crew does not include a doctor, the delay in getting treatment for an ordinary illness, such as appendicitis or ulcers, could mean death (2003).

.....C. NASA physician Patrick Clinton states that the physical health of astronauts is a huge problem. Spaceships do not usually have medical doctors among the crew, so astronauts who get appendicitis on a long space journey will die (2003).

.....D. NASA physician Patrick Clinton states that one big problem is keeping astronauts in good physical health. Medical treatment might take days or weeks to get because there may not be a doctor on the spaceship. Ordinary illnesses such as appendicitis and ulcers could be deadly because it would take too long to get to a doctor (2003).

Original Passage 3

Source: The same article as in passages 1 and 2.

Another health problem is the potential for bone deterioration. In a weightless environment, the body produces less calcium. Astronauts must exercise at least three hours a day to prevent bone loss.

.....A. Another problem is the possibility of bone loss, according to NASA physician Patrick Clinton. In weightless space, the body makes less calcium. Astronauts have to exercise a minimum of three hours a day to avoid losing bone (2003).

.....B. According to NASA physician Patrick Clinton, weight can be a problem. Astronauts must take extra calcium and exercise at least three hours a day to keep from gaining weight and to prevent bone damage (2003).

.....C. According to NASA physician Patrick Clinton, astronauts could suffer bone loss. Being

weightless causes the body to lose calcium, which is important for strength, so exercising at least three hours daily is necessary to keep their bones strong.

..... D. According to NASA physician Patrick Clinton, astronauts also face possible bone loss. Because weightlessness causes the body to lose calcium, exercising at least three hours daily is necessary to keep their bones strong (2003).

Practice 4

Find synonyms for the words in *italic*.

a) Sleep *scientists* have found that *traditional remedies* for insomnia, *such as* counting sheep, *are ineffective*.
Example: Sleep *researchers* have found that *established cures* for insomnia, *for instance* counting sheep, are inadequate.

b) Instead, they have *found* that *imagining a pleasant scene* is likely to *send you to sleep quickly*.
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c) The *research team* *divided* 50 insomnia sufferers into three groups.
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d) One group *was told to imagine* a waterfall, while another group *tried* sheep counting.
.....

Change the word class of the words in *italic*, and then re-write the sentences.

a) A third group was given no *special instructions* about going to sleep.
Example: A third group was not specially instructed about going to sleep.

b) It was *found* that the group thinking of waterfalls fell asleep 20 minutes quicker.
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c) Mechanical tasks like counting sheep are *apparently* too boring to make people sleepy.
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Change the word order of the following sentences.

a) There are many practical applications to research into insomnia.
Example: Research into insomnia has many practical applications.

b) About one in ten people are thought to suffer from severe insomnia.
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c) It is calculated that the cost of insomnia for the American economy may be \$35 billion a year.
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Combine all these techniques to paraphrase the following paragraphs as fully as possible.

A. Sleep scientists have found that traditional remedies for insomnia, such as counting sheep, are ineffective. Instead, they have found that imagining a pleasant scene is likely to send you to sleep quickly. The research team divided 50 insomnia sufferers into three groups. One group imagined watching a waterfall, while another group tried sheep counting. A third group was given no special instructions about

a. Find synonyms for the words underlined. Rewrite the paragraph using these.

It is widely agreed that men and women think and act in different ways. Women appear to have better memories, better social skills and are more competent at multi-tasking. Men, in contrast, seem to focus better on issues and have superior motor and spatial skills, although clearly many people are exceptions to these patterns.

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b. Change the word class of the underlined words. Rewrite the paragraph using the changes.

These differences have been explained as behaviour adopted thousands of years ago, when the men went hunting while the women stayed at home and cared for their children. But another approach is to see the behaviour as a result of the way our brains function.

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c. Change the word order of these sentences, rewriting the paragraph so that the meaning stays the same.

Recent research into brain functioning by Ragini Verma’s team at the University of Pennsylvania has used brain scans to compare 428 men and 521 women. They tracked the pathways of water molecules around the brain area and found fascinating differences.

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d. Combine all three techniques to paraphrase the final paragraph.

The top half of the brain is called the cerebrum, and it is divided into a left and a right half. The left hemisphere is thought to be the home of logic and the right is the centre of intuition. Dr Verma found that with women most of the pathways went between the two halves, while with men they stayed inside the hemispheres. She believes that these results explain the gender differences in abilities, such as women’s social competence compared to men’s more intense focus on a limited area.

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