Paraphrasing

LEAP Online

Academic Writing (Level 2)

Contents

Introduction

This tutorial aims to develop your understanding of paraphrasing and help you develop the skills needed to present your work with academic integrity. Ultimately, paraphrasing is a complex process that requires both a good level of reading and writing skills to ensure it is done correctly and issues concerning plagiarism, a consequence of academic misconduct, are avoided.

Before completing this tutorial, you should have a sound understanding of spelling, punctuation, comprehension and grammar. Therefore, it is recommended that you complete the [Academic English - Level 1](#) section on LEAP Online first.

Let's start by defining what paraphrasing is, why you need to paraphrase and how to paraphrase.

What is paraphrasing?

Paraphrasing is a key component through which writers can capture the original words and ideas of other authors.

For students to successfully paraphrase in their academic writing, they should produce a restatement of the original text that conveys the same meaning, albeit using their own voice, and avoid simply changing a few words or sentences around.

Why do I need to paraphrase?

To write academic work successfully, you need to find academic sources of information. You'll use this information to organise your ideas into a coherent (logical) argument.

Each time you refer to an author's point of view or argument, you should cite and reference your sources. This must be done regardless of whether you have summarised the information, used quotes or paraphrased it.

Using your own voice to express ideas will add credibility to your writing and demonstrates you have understood the ideas of others.

Paraphrasing

Poor paraphrasing and referencing may result in lost marks, plagiarism and academic misconduct.

See the Referencing and Plagiarism sections on LEAP Online for further guidance.

How do I paraphrase?

The next section aims to provide some useful techniques that will support University of Bolton students with their academic writing. To do this, we're going to create a paraphrase. We'll use the below sample sentence throughout this tutorial:

'LEAP Online is an online resource that supports University of Bolton students to develop their personal and academic skills.'

Step 1: Brush Up on Your Reading Skills

It might not seem like it, but paraphrasing is just as much a reading skill as it is a writing skill.

A key marker of a student's understanding of the source material, is the ability to capture and produce a restatement of what has been said by the author in the original text. The submission of your work will provide the reader with a significant insight into how well you have read and understood the source material. Therefore, the first step towards paraphrasing success should be to develop your reading skills.

To get started, read the sample sentence until you completely understand it. Once you fully understand the author's idea, you're ready to incorporate it into your own academic writing.

'LEAP Online is an online resource that supports University of Bolton students to develop their personal and academic skills.'

Step 2: Identify Appropriate Information
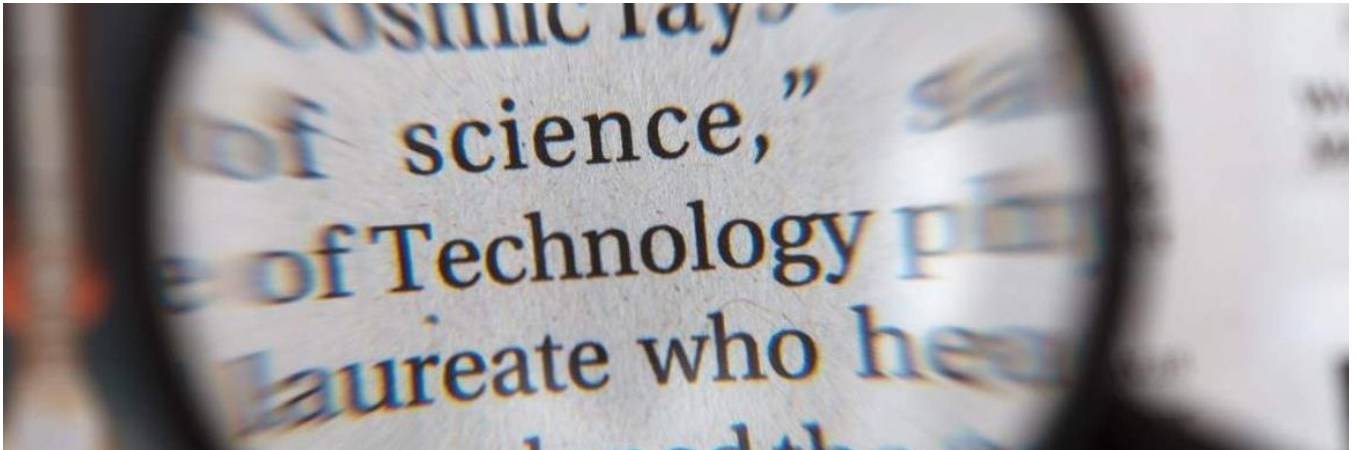
Make notes using bullet points or highlight any specialist words or phrases. This can include any words with subject specific meanings, numbers or formulas that you do not wish to paraphrase. For example, the words highlighted in bold in our sample sentence are specialist words we want to retain.

'**LEAP Online** is **an online** resource that supports **University of Bolton** students to develop their **personal** and **academic skills**.'

Step 3: Find Your Voice

You're now ready to produce a restatement of the original text, and this is where you'll find your own voice.

This step is very much a case of listening to what other academics have said on the topic. Then, in your own words, write down your understanding of its meaning. Do not copy the original author.

We can use the key words and phrases from our sample sentence as prompts to create a paraphrase.

Remember, when you transform your notes into academic English, this is not a challenge to see if you can sound better than the original author.

To create a paraphrase, consider using the following techniques:

- Synonyms
- Sentence Structure
- Time
- Adjectives and Comparatives
- Conjunctions, Adverbials and Prepositions
- Linking Words

Let's take a look at each in more detail.

Synonyms

Are a good way to change words that have the same or nearly the same meaning.

You can find synonyms by using a thesaurus or an electronic device by right clicking on the word you wish to change and selecting 'synonyms.'

Be careful though – some synonyms may not be appropriate and may change specific terminology. For example, if synonyms are used to change most of our sample sentence:

> 'LEAP Online is an online resource that supports University of Bolton students to develop their personal and academic skills.'

It would read:

> 'Hop On is an operational supply that ropes academia of Bolton schoolchildren to mature their special and moot services.'

As you can see, synonyms have changed the meaning and it no longer offers a clear representation of the author's idea. However, the author of this paraphrase should have selected non-specialist words to change. For instance, the word 'develop' can be replaced with the synonym 'improve' without changing the meaning of the sentence.

Move on to look at sentence structure.

Sentence structure

Active and passive voice

Consider changing text to the passive voice by changing the tense of a verb. By changing from an active voice to a passive voice, you will transform the sentence, without affecting the meaning. Let's take a look.

Active voice

Is an action verb, where the subject performs the action denoted by the verb. For example:

> 'LEAP Online is an online resource that **supports** University of Bolton students to improve their personal and academic skills.'

Passive voice

The normal word order is changed so that the subject is no longer active but, instead, is being acted upon (passive). For example:

> 'University of Bolton students are **supported** by LEAP Online, an online resource, to improve their personal and academic skills.'

As you can see by using synonyms and changing the structure of sentence using a passive voice, we have successfully created a paraphrase.

Move on to look at words relating to time.

Paraphrasing

Time

When you are paraphrasing consider changing words that relate to time. This is useful if you need to write about legislation or events in your assignment. For example:

> The Equality Act was introduced over ten years ago.

Can be changed to:

> The Equality Act has been part of UK law since 2010.

Move on to look at adjectives and comparatives.

Adjectives and comparatives

Can help to change the structure of the sentence. For example:

> The student's work was submitted <u>sooner than</u> expected.

Can be changed to:

> The student's work was submitted <u>earlier than</u> expected.

Move on to look at conjunctions, adverbials and prepositions.

Conjunctions, adverbials and prepositions

Are used to:

- Add ideas
- Sequence ideas
- Contrast ideas
- Describe reason / result

Let's look at each one in more detail:

Conjunctions

Coordinating conjunctions help to join independent clauses in a compound sentence. For example:

> Marc likes to write, and he wrote 2000 words for his latest assignment.

Subordinating conjunctions

Subordinating conjunctions help to join dependent and independent clauses in a complex sentence. For example:

> Although Marc likes to write, he is not very fast at typing.

Adverbials

Adverbials are used to connect ideas in separate sentences. For example:

> Marc likes to write. **However**, he is not very fast at typing.

Prepositions and prepositional phrases

Prepositions are used in the same way as a subordinating conjunction, but they go before a noun or 'ing' phrase. For example:

> Marc likes to write. However, he is not very fast at typing **because** of the broken keyboard.

Finally, move on to look at linking words.

Linking words

Linking words or phrases help to connect two clauses together or start a new sentence expanding on the previous statement. Take a look at the below table for examples:

	Adding Ideas	Sequencing Ideas	Contrasting Ideas	Reason & Result
Coordinating conjunctions	And, or		But, yet, nor	So
Subordinating conjunctions		After, while, before, when, until, as soon as	Although, while, whereas	Because
Adverbials	In addition, similarly, furthermore, likewise	Firstly, secondly, finally	However, alternatively, in contrast, nevertheless	Therefore, consequently, as a result
Preposition (Phrases)			In spite of, despite	Because of

Step 4: Proofread Your Changes

Compare your paraphrase with the original text.

Original Text	Sample Paraphrase
'LEAP Online is an online resource that supports University of Bolton students to develop their personal and academic skills.'	'University of Bolton students are supported by LEAP Online, an online resource, to improve their personal and academic skills.'

To do this, ask yourself:

- Did I change the sentence structure?
- Did I use different vocabulary?
- Did I retain specialist words or phrases from the original text?
- Does the paraphrase have the same meaning as the original text?

Finally, make sure you have not accidentally copied all of the original text verbatim (the same words). Remember, if you think your paraphrase can be improved, go back to Step 3 and try again.

Where to go to next

For more information on proofreading, see the 'Proofreading' section on LEAP Online.

Step 5: Cite and Reference Correctly

lexander, O., Argent, S. and
and Practice. Reading: Garnet Publishing.

Cottrell, S. (2019) *The Study Skills handbook.* 5th ed. London: Red Globe.

English Academic Purpose. (2021) What is academic Writing? 7 features of Academic Writing
[Online video] Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cq4J8bPBcck&t=137s.
21 June 2022].

to Teaching and Learning Methods. Oxford:

Once you're happy with your paraphrase, cite and reference according to your school's referencing policy.

> University of Bolton students are supported by LEAP Online, an online resource, to improve their personal and academic skills (Howard, 2022).

Where to go to next

See the 'Referencing' section on LEAP Online for more information.

Step 6: Read Your Assignment Feedback

Assignment feedback will highlight where you have done well in your work and any areas for improvement. Take the time to reflect on your feedback and address these areas.
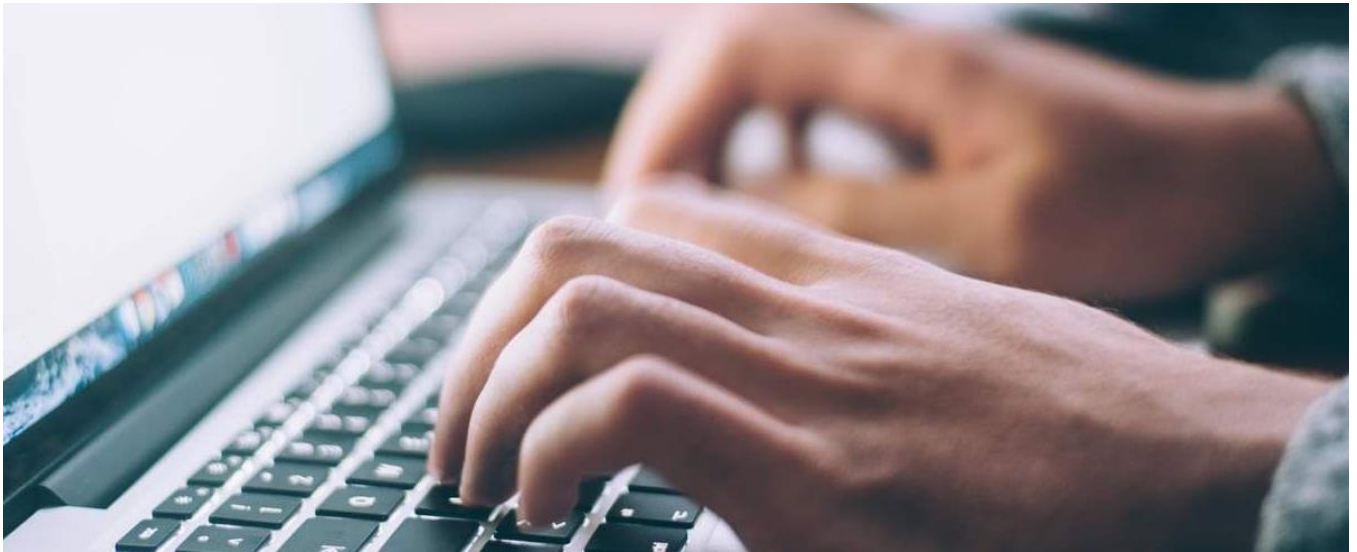
See the 'Using Feedback Effectively' section on LEAP Online for more information.

Summary

This tutorial provided an insight into some of the different techniques you can employ in your academic writing to help paraphrase.

Paraphrasing effectively will hopefully help you to improve your academic writing and avoid issues with plagiarism and academic misconduct.

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Where to go to next

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Before you leave, select the button below to complete a short assessment and earn your LEAP Online digital badge.

Once you have completed the assessment, close the tab, return to the 'Academic Writing - Level 2' LEAP Online section and begin the next tutorial.

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