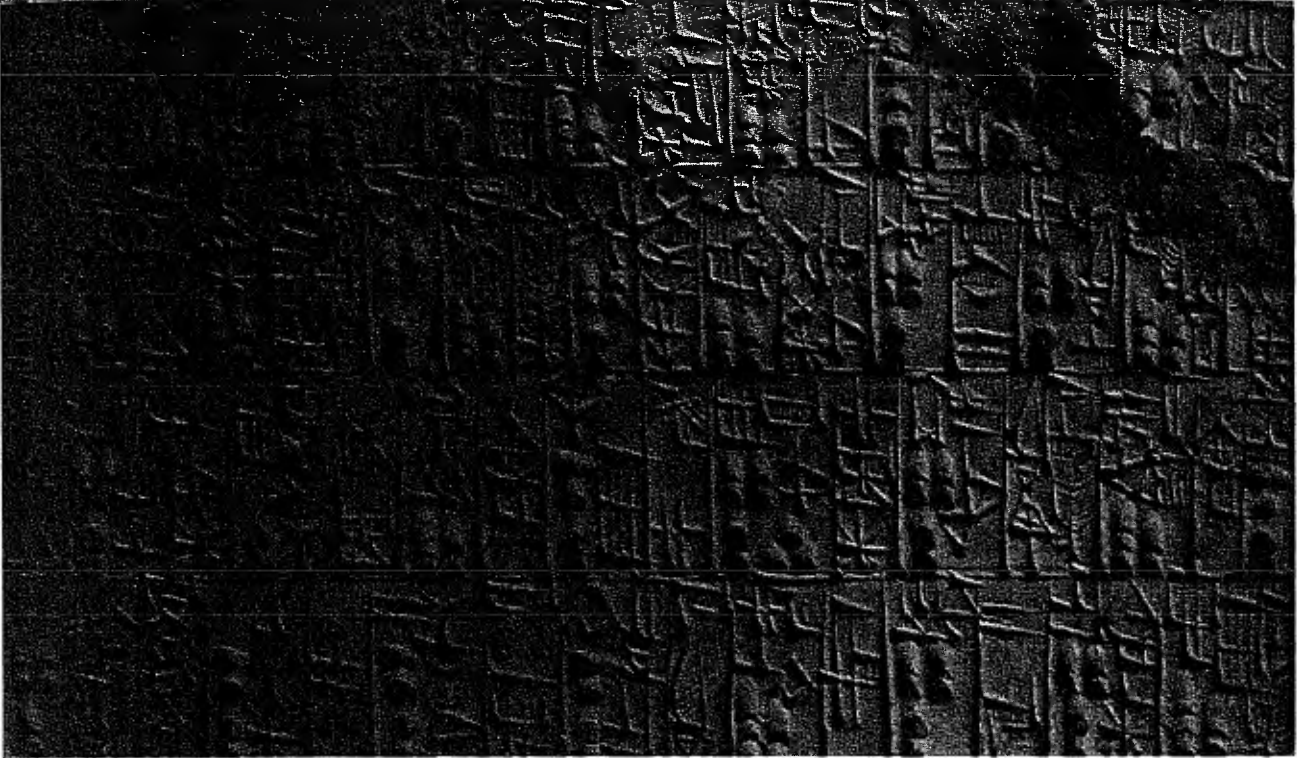


# Paraphrase and Summary



Sumerian cuneiform

Academic writing normally requires that you support your ideas and opinions with facts, statistics, quotations, and similar kinds of information. There are four ways to use information from outside sources. You can quote it directly or indirectly, skills that you practiced in Chapter 3. You can also **paraphrase** or **summarize** it, skills that you will practice in this chapter. Writing paraphrases and summaries are important tools in academic writing.

## Paraphrasing

When you paraphrase, you rewrite information from an outside source in your own words without changing the meaning. Because you include in your rewriting all or nearly all of the content of the original passage, a paraphrase is almost as long as the original. (A summary, by contrast, is much shorter than the original.)

**MODEL****Paraphrase****Original Passage**

Language is the main means of communication between peoples. But so many different languages have developed that language has often been a barrier rather than an aid to understanding among peoples. For many years, people have dreamed of setting up an international universal language which all people could speak and understand. The arguments in favor of a universal language are simple and obvious. If all peoples spoke the same tongue, cultural and economic ties might be much closer, and good will might increase between countries (Kispert).<sup>1</sup>

**Paraphrase**

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 wished 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 (Kispert).

**Writing Technique Questions**

1. How many sentences are there in the original passage? In the paraphrase?
2. Compare the original passage and the paraphrase sentence by sentence. Analyze how the sentence structure and words differ by answering the following questions.
  - a. What is the first word of the first sentence in the original passage? Where does this word appear in first sentence of the paraphrase?
  - b. What is the first word of the second sentence in the original passage? What word replaces it in the second sentence of the paraphrase?
  - c. What words replace *have dreamed of* in the third sentence? What word replaces *arguments in favor of* in the fourth sentence?
  - d. Which sentence in the original becomes two sentences in the paraphrase?

**Plagiarism**

It is important to learn how to use information from outside sources without committing plagiarism. *Plagiarism* is wrongly using someone else's words or ideas, and it is a serious offense. Students who plagiarize may fail a class or even be expelled from school.

There are two kinds of plagiarism.

1. When you use information from an outside source *without citing the source* (telling where you got the information), you are guilty of plagiarism.
2. Even when you cite your source, *if your paraphrase is too similar to the original*, you are guilty of plagiarism.

<sup>1</sup>Kispert, Robert J. "Universal language." World Book Online Reference Center. 2004. World Book, Inc. 13 Nov. 2004 <<http://www.worldbookonline.com/wb/Article?id=ar576960>>.

Read the following paraphrases and decide which kind of plagiarism each example is guilty of.

**MODEL****Plagiarism****Unacceptable Paraphrase 1**

Humans communicate through language. However, because there are so many languages in the world, language acts as an obstacle instead of as an aid to understanding. People have long wished for a universal international language that speakers all over the world could understand. A universal language would certainly build cultural and economic bonds. It would also create better feelings among countries.

**Unacceptable Paraphrase 2**

Language is the principal means of communication between peoples. However, because there are numerous languages, language itself has frequently been a barrier rather than an aid to understanding among the world population. For many years, people have envisioned a common universal language that everyone in the world could communicate in. The reasons for having a universal language are clearly understandable. If the same tongue were spoken by all countries, they would undoubtedly become closer culturally and economically. It would probably also create good will among nations (Kispert).

Paraphrase 1 is plagiarism because the source is not cited. Paraphrase 2 is plagiarism because it is too similar to the original passage. For example, in the first sentence, only one word has been changed: *main* replaces *principal*. In the second sentence, only a few words have been changed. You can avoid the first kind of plagiarism by always citing your sources. You can avoid the second kind of plagiarism by learning to paraphrase correctly.

See Appendix E: Research and Documentation of Sources, pages 303–311, for information on how to cite sources.

***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. Look up unfamiliar words, and find synonyms for them. It may not be possible to find synonyms for every word, especially technical vocabulary. In this case, use the original word.
- Step 2** It helps to take notes. Write down only a few words for each idea—not complete sentences. Here are one writer’s notes on the original passage about universal language:

language—people use to communicate—but so many—difficult to understand one another—people wish—universal international language—reasons: cultural, economic bonds, better feelings between countries

It may be helpful to make a brief outline such as the following:

- A.** Language—people use to communicate
1. So many languages make it difficult to understand one another.
  2. People wish for one universal international language.
- B.** Reasons
1. Cultural, economic bonds
  2. Better feelings between countries
- Step 3** Write your paraphrase from your notes. Don’t 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 1**

#### *Choosing the Best Paraphrase*

- 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.

The first one has been done for you as an example.

#### **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.

- Best \_\_\_\_\_ A. An article in *Space Science* magazine reports that lengthy space station duty may lead to physical and mental problems for astronauts (Clinton 16).
- No cit. \_\_\_\_\_ 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.
- Too sim. \_\_\_\_\_ 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 16).
- Inc./Inacc. \_\_\_\_\_ D. An article in *Space Science* reports that astronauts will become physically sick and have mental problems if they visit a space station (Clinton 16).

**Original Passage 2**

Source: Page 16 of 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 (16).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 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 (16).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 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 (16).

**Original Passage 3**

Source: Page 17 of 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 (17).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 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 (17).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 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 (17).

**PRACTICE 2****Writing  
Paraphrases**

Write a paraphrase of each of the passages that follow.

- Step 1** Read the original passage several times until you understand it well. You may find it helpful to underline the main points.
- Step 2** Make notes in the space provided, changing vocabulary words wherever possible.
- Step 3** Write your paraphrase in your own words. Remember to change both vocabulary and sentence structure.
- Step 4** Check your paraphrase to make sure you have not changed the meaning of the original passage.
- Step 5** Add an in-text citation in the proper form at the end of each paraphrase.
- Step 6** If your instructor requests, prepare an entry for a works-cited list for each source.

**Original Passage 1**

Source: Page 18 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 physician.

A second major problem is maintaining astronauts' mental health. Being confined for long periods of time in dark and hostile space undoubtedly produces anxiety. Loneliness and boredom are other psychological concerns.

Notes

Your Paraphrase

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**Original Passage 2**

Source: Page 18 of the same article as in passage 1.

Finally, how can astronauts “let off steam” when interpersonal conflicts develop? Even best friends can irritate each other when forced to spend weeks together in isolation. Space stations are small, cramped, busy workplaces, and there is little privacy. Also, space exploration is dangerous, which adds to the stress aboard a spaceship.

Notes

Your Paraphrase

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**Original Passage 3**

Source: A Letter to the Editor written by Cory Brunish, which appeared on page 9 of the February 16, 2004, issue of *Time* magazine.

Why should we spend vast amounts to reach Mars when there is a very high chance of its not providing anything that would improve our lot here on Earth? Why not allocate those billions for “home improvement”? Think of the progress that could be made in curing cancer, AIDS, and other diseases; in cleaning our water, air, and soil; and in feeding hungry nations. Why confront the hazards of outer space when we should be fighting homelessness, poverty, and unemployment on Earth?

Notes

Your Paraphrase

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**Original Passage 4**

Source: Page 48 of a nine-page magazine article written by Jeffrey Kluger. The article appeared on pages 42–50 in the January 26, 2004, issue of *Time* magazine. The title of the article is “Mission to Mars: First the Rover Lands, and Now Bush Wants to Send People. We Can Do It Even Faster Than Planned, but Here Is What It Will Take.”

Speed is everything on the way to Mars and not only because a seven-month trip in a confined space can be torturous. The bigger problem is that it can be lethal because of radiation exposure in deep space, where the absence of Earth’s magnetic field leaves astronauts far more exposed to deadly cosmic energy than they are in orbit or on the way to the moon.

Notes

Your Paraphrase

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## Using Paraphrases as Support

The purpose of learning to paraphrase is to be able to use paraphrases as supporting material in your writing. As you read the following model, notice how a student in a media studies class used a paraphrase of a passage from an online news article to support her idea.

### MODEL

#### Using Paraphrases as Support

#### Original Passage

Source: Paragraph 2 of an article written by Kivi Leroux in the online magazine *E Magazine* titled “Subliminal Messages: Primetime TV Programs Educate Viewers on the Environment.” It appeared in the “Currents” section of the July–August 1999 edition.

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 cameras as well as the creative staff behind them to include environmental themes in scripts, show environmental products on sets, and make environmentally sound decisions in the studios.

#### Paraphrase

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 by making environmentally conscious choices in studios (Leroux, par. 2).

#### Writing Topic

Television programming in the United States is often criticized for promoting the wrong values. Do you agree or disagree with this criticism?

#### Completed Paragraph

Although it is sometimes true that television programming in the United States promotes the wrong values, I do not entirely agree. Many educational television channels promote good values. For example, the Discovery Channel, the History Channel, National Geographic, and other similar channels educate the public about science, history, nature, and the environment. Also, even prime-time television programming often provides a public service by spreading public service messages. In fact, 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 by making environmentally conscious choices in studios (Leroux, par. 2). Seeing the star of a prime-time television show recycling plastic bottles or using an environmentally friendly product is more persuasive than almost any other type of public service message. In short, television programs promote positive values in both direct and indirect ways.