



## Using paraphrases

Steps to success in referencing

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<http://www.screencast.com/t/44LKqUlyv>

## Transcript

**Introduction:** Welcome to this tutorial on using paraphrases from the University of Reading Study Advice team. The tutorial is designed for you to go through at your own pace and you can pause it at any time.

**Using paraphrases:** When you are writing an assignment, you need to include references to the reading you have done while you're researching your topic. This will provide the evidence to support your discussion and show that you have understood the reading. One way to do this is to use a direct quote. Sometimes it's important to use the exact words that you've read because they express something very specific that you need to discuss. However if you pack your writing with a lot of long direct quotes, you would end up with a lot of other peoples' words and not enough of your own.

A better way to refer to your reading is to use paraphrases. A paraphrase is when you put the ideas you've read into your own words. It should capture your understanding of what you've read. By putting ideas into your own words, you show your tutor that you've understood your reading.

**Build your own understanding:** Students often find it difficult to write paraphrases because the original seems so right, they cannot think of another way to word it. To solve this, try to stop thinking about your reading as bits of knowledge that you need to glue together to write your assignment. Think of it rather as finding information that you can use to help you build your own understanding of the topic. Once you've developed that understanding, you should be able to explain it in your own words.

**Paraphrasing tips:** Here are three steps to make paraphrasing easy.

1. Don't try to paraphrase one sentence at a time. Read the whole paragraph before you think about paraphrasing. That way you are less likely to get the ideas out of context.
2. Before you write anything, think about the title of your assignment. How is this bit of information going to help you respond to it?
3. Now cover the text and try to write what you've just learned in your own words, keeping in mind the overall purpose of the assignment. Don't forget to include your citation and put the full details in your bibliography. This example uses Harvard style referencing. You can pause the video to read the text in more detail.

Here's how your paraphrase might look, integrated into your writing to support your discussion. You can see that in this piece of text unlike the earlier piece of text, most of the words are your own words rather than somebody else's.

**Conclusion:** So to summarize, here are our top tips for paraphrasing.

- Never try to paraphrase a single sentence at a time. Always read the whole paragraph first.
- If there's a keyword or phrase that you can't write any differently or you need to discuss, try to build it into your sentence as a mini-quote.
- And always keep the purpose of your own writing in mind. The original author would have been writing for a different purpose so the words may be perfect for that but not for what you want to say.