

Self Study Programs: Paraphrasing and Plagiarism



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This module covers:

- Identifying the difference between quoting, paraphrasing and summarising
- Integrating information from different external sources into your own writing
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Information Integration

You will need to include information from others in your academic writing. Generally, the more you can show you have accessed a wide range of relevant sources and understood this information, the better your assignment grade.

There are three main ways of using information in your writing: quoting, paraphrasing and summarising. Bringing all this information together in your writing is a process of synthesising your information. This process is important as it shows you have understood and made connections between all the bits of information you have come across in your research.

Using your Information Sources

Quoting

You should use quotes sparingly in your writing. Long quotes, especially, should only be used if absolutely necessary. Short quotes should be placed inside quotation marks. Longer quotes (more than 40 words) should be indented. Make sure you quote accurately – do not misspell words, leave words out or otherwise change anything at all.

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is when you change information from a source into your own words. To do this successfully, you must first understand your information! One recommended approach is to cover your original passage so that you can't see it and then write down the meaning of the passage into your own words. You must change the structure and the words of the original passage so that it is completely put into your own words. You can, however, still use any technical or specialised terms. Make sure that you haven't changed the meaning of the original passage.

Summarising

Summarising is similar to paraphrasing except that you only include the main points from the original passage.

Synthesising Information

It is important that your writing is much more than a list of all the pieces of information you have found. You need to show that you have interpreted, understood and made connections between all these pieces of information. You will need to identify what information is the same, what is different and what is your interpretation of the information.

Quoting:

- Use the exact words from the original information source
- Show clearly that it is a direct quote
- Reference your source

Paraphrasing:

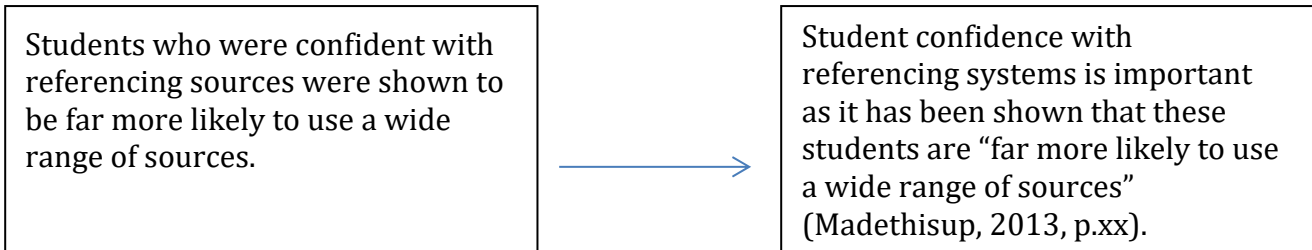
- Change the structure and words of the original information source
- Keep the same meaning
- Reference your source

Summarising:

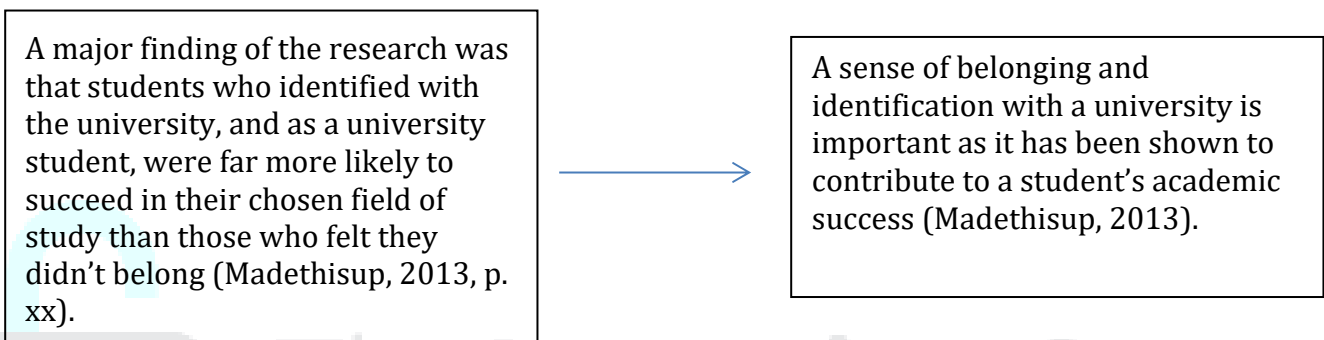
- Change the structure and words of the original information source
- Keep the same meaning
- Only include the main points
- Reference your source

Examples

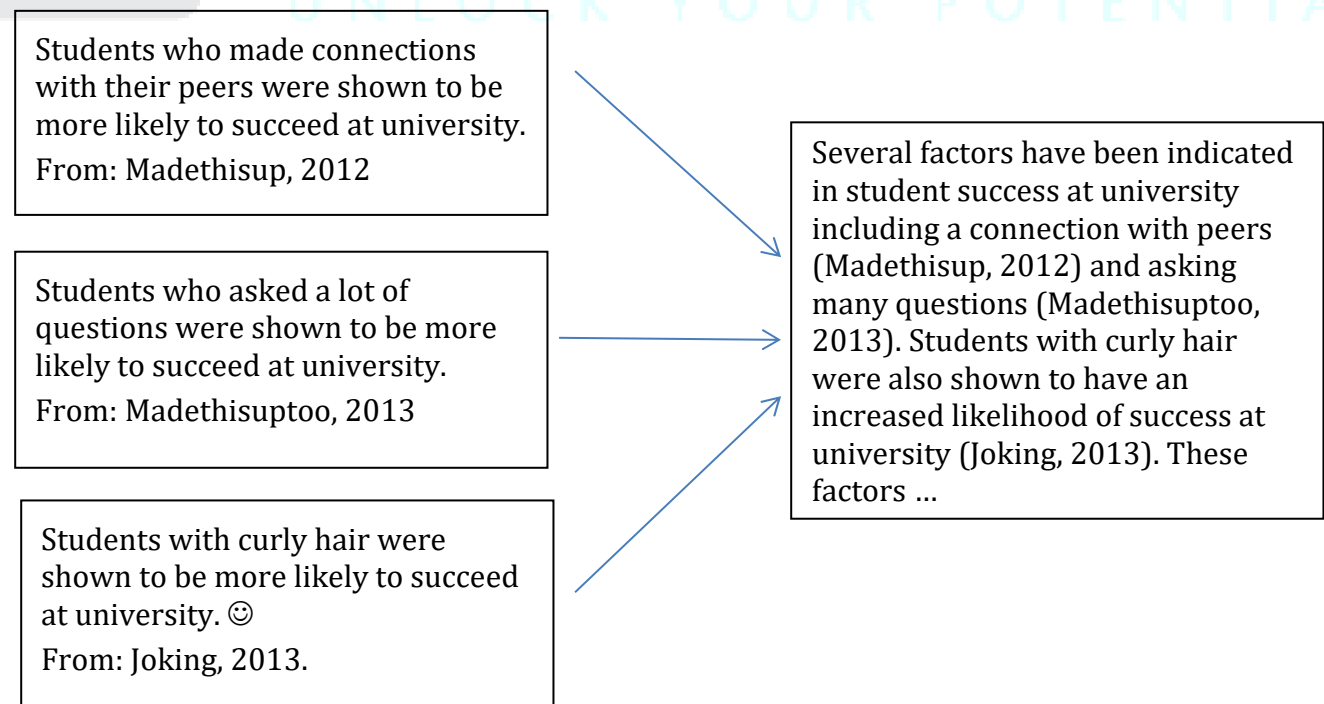
Quoting



Paraphrasing & Summarising



Synthesising Information



Your Turn

1. Paraphrase the following passage

In fact, after 1870 the food and the eating habits of the British people began to be transformed. They began, for instance, to eat fruit, previously a luxury. To begin with working class fruit consumption took the form of jam; later also of the novel and imported banana, which supplemented or replaced apples as the only fresh fruit eaten by the urban poor. Even so characteristic a landmark of the British proletarian scene as the fish-and-chip shop first appears in this period. It spread outwards from its original home, in probably Oldham, after 1870. (Hobsbawn, 1990 p.162-3)

Compare your answer to the five that follow. Which student answer matches yours most closely? Do any answers constitute plagiarism?

Student Answers

STUDENT 1: Even so characteristic a landmark of the British proletarian scene as the fish-and chip shop first appears in the period after 1870. Its original home was probably Oldham.

STUDENT 2: There were many changes in the British diet in the period after 1870. Fruit became more common, especially in the form of fruit jam. Even the fish-and-chip shop dates from the same period (Hobsbawm, 1990, p. 162).

STUDENT 3: There were many changes in the British diet after 1870. Hobsbawm points out that the British people 'began, for instance, to eat fruit, previously a luxury', and goes on to describe other new developments as well. (Hobsbawm, 1990, p. 162).

STUDENT 4: In fact, after 1870 the food and the eating habits of the British people began to be transformed. They began, for instance, to eat fruit, previously a luxury. To begin with, working-class fruit consumption took the form of jam; later also of the novel and imported banana, which supplemented or replaced apples. (Hobsbawm, 1990, p. 162).

STUDENT 5: The period around and after 1870 saw many changes in British life and culture. Hobsbawm (1990, p. 162) describes changes and improvements in diet, including an increase in the consumption of fruit and the arrival on the scene of the fish-and-chip shop. Far from being a timeless traditional part of British life, the fish-and-chip shop was a product of these years of change at the end of the nineteenth century. Many aspects of Britain which are sometimes thought to be very old were similar innovations of this period (Coils & Dodd, 1987, p. 56).

Which of the above constitute plagiarism? Did yours?

2. Help! There are at least 5 mistakes in the following paragraph. Can you find them?

Writing is a skill and, as such, can be learnt and practised over time. Smith (2012) has shown that students "are able to acquire sufficient writing skills for first-year subjects in a short period of time". It has been argued, however, that these students were actively supported by key staff and services at university and that it is this element of support, rather than the individual effort of the student alone, that is more integral to a student's success with writing. Considerable gains have been made with writing success at university by situating the learning within a specific discipline or Faculty. Discipline-specific writing models and support help a student to more quickly acquire the necessary skills for their chosen area of study (Brown, 2011). Some aspects of effective writing are universal, however, and thus a blend of generic as well as discipline-specific support structures are commonly found at universities.

Your Turn: Summarising, paraphrasing and quoting

3. Use the information provided (all of it made-up) to write your own quote, paraphrase or summary.

Quoting

The current research shows that people who exercise in the morning are far more likely to continue with their exercise regime than those who exercise in the afternoon.

From: Mightbetrue, 2013



Paraphrasing & Summarising

People who exercise alone are less likely to continue their exercise regime than those who exercise as part of a group. The only exception to this finding was with people who exercised alone but at an organised exercise facility, such as a gym.

These people were just as likely to continue their individual exercise regime as those who exercised as part of a group.

From: Couldbetrue, 2012



Synthesising Information

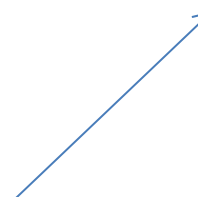
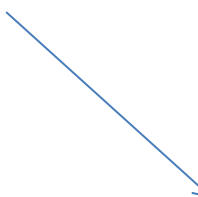
People with light-coloured hair were more likely to exercise regularly.

People with dark-coloured hair were least likely to exercise regularly.

From: Preposterous, 2013

Hair colour has been shown to be an irrelevant factor in determining a person's likelihood of engaging in regular exercise.

From: Soundsright, 2013



Answers for Activity One

STUDENT 1

Even so characteristic a landmark of the British proletarian scene as the fish-and chip shop first appears in the period after 1870. Its original home was probably Oldham.

Is it plagiarism? Yes. This student has mainly just copied Hobsbawm 's words.

Most importantly, there is no reference to the source

STUDENT 2

There were many changes in the British diet in the period after 1870. Fruit became more common, especially in the form of fruit jam. Even the fish-and-chip shop dates from the same period (Hobsbawm, 1990, p. 162).

Is it plagiarism? No. This student has paraphrased part of Hobsbawm's original accurately, and has included a reference to the source.

STUDENT 3

There were many changes in the British diet after 1870. Hobsbawm points out that the British people 'began, for instance, to eat fruit, previously a luxury', and goes on to describe other new developments as well. (Hobsbawm, 1990, p. 162).

Is it plagiarism? No. It's quoting directly, rather than paraphrasing as Example 2 did, but it includes a reference. As long as there's a reference, quoting and paraphrasing are both OK.

STUDENT 4

In fact, after 1870 the food and the eating habits of the British people began to be transformed. They began, for instance, to eat fruit, previously a luxury, To begin with, working-class fruit consumption took the form of jam; later also of the novel and imported banana, which supplemented or replaced apples. (Hobsbawm, 1990, p. 162).

Is it plagiarism? Yes, it is, though it isn't as bad as Example 1. There is a reference, but there is no attempt to do anything with the material apart from copy it, and it isn't clear whether the words are quoted, paraphrased, or, as here, simply stolen,

STUDENT 5

The period around and after 1870 saw many changes in British life and culture. Hobsbawm (1990, pp162-3) describes changes and improvements in diet, including an increase in the consumption of fruit and the arrival on the scene of the fish-and chip shop. Far from being a timeless traditional part of British life, the fish-and-chip shop was a product of these years of change at the end of the nineteenth century. Many aspects of Britain which are sometimes thought to be very old were similar

innovations of this period (Coils & Dodd, 1987, p. 56).

Is it plagiarism? No. It has a reference, and provides an accurate paraphrase. More than that, it uses the Hobsbawm material to start an argument of its own, about supposedly ancient things actually being quite recent, Better still, it has another reference, to show that this essay is the product of wide reading. Example 5 is part of a good essay. .

Source of Activity: Benckendorff, P. (2004). The Endeavour: A quality learning manual for students. Townsville: School of Business, James Cook University

Answers for Activity Two:

1. The Smith quote needs a page number.
2. "It has been argued..." – by whom? Needs referencing.
3. "considerable gains have been made..." – really? where is the evidence for this? Needs referencing.
4. "discipline-specific writing models and support help a student to mor....[a typo]"
5. "...are commonly found at universities" – how do you know this? Needs referencing.

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