

Warm up

Start by giving a general description of paraphrasing. Point out to the class that writers may need to paraphrase for greater clarity or to summarize something (there is a fuller list of reasons at the end of these Teacher's Notes). If you wish, you could write the following sentence on the board:

The major developments in technology in the last few years, while improving things greatly at work and at home, have left us feeling more and more lonely.

Ask students which words/phrases in the sentence they could replace with others. Elicit suggestions, and prompt with some of the following if necessary:

major developments in technology → *technological innovations/leaps*

in the last few years → *of recent decades / in the 21st century*

improving things greatly → *making great/significant improvements*

at work → *in the workplace / in employment*

at home → *in home entertainment / with labour-saving devices*

more and more → *increasing(ly)*

lonely → *(experiencing/suffering) loneliness / social isolation*

Point out that we can also paraphrase by radically changing the structure of the sentence. Ask them, for example, what it would be like expressed in the passive voice, how they could begin it with *Despite*, etc. Write a number of suggestions on the board so that students can see the range of possibilities open to them. These could include:

We have been left feeling more and more lonely by major developments in technology in recent years, even though there have been great improvements in the workplace and in home entertainment.

Despite the fact that the technological innovations of the 21st century have led to a significant improvement in terms of life in the workplace and at home, they have increased our sense of social isolation.

Point out that it is very important not to stray from the meaning of the original text – there are many ways of paraphrasing, but some of them lose the essence of the original.

Practice

1  Read the two final paragraphs of a text, and, with a partner, discuss how the second paragraph paraphrases the first.

- Explain that students are going to look at the end of a text, where the final paragraph contains a summary of some of the points that have come before. Remind them that they have probably done something similar when writing a conclusion to an essay or a report.
- Allow three to four minutes for students to read the text. Make sure they understand that the last paragraph contains a paraphrase of some of the first paragraph.
- When students have had a chance to read the text on their own, encourage them to work in pairs in order to compare the paraphrase (second paragraph) with the original (first paragraph). Ask them to think about the key features of paraphrasing while they do this.
- When students have discussed the paraphrasing with a partner, elicit information about how this has been done. You should be able to elicit or prompt the answers by giving one phrase from each pair of phrases (see the suggested answers).
- Make sure students are aware that not all of the first paragraph is paraphrased because it is not essential to the writer's purpose. (The following is ignored: *Since Gutenberg first sold 150 copies of his printed bible at the Hamburg Book Fair in 1455, over 130 million different books have been published ...*)

Suggested answers

First paragraph	Second paragraph
Before	prior to
a small minority of the population – people rich enough to afford handwritten books	the wealthy few
affordable to a much wider range of people	considerably more freely available, and therefore accessible to the many, thanks to their low cost
This, in turn, helped literacy to increase ... and literacy has spread to all corners of the globe.	A direct consequence of this was the worldwide rise in the number of people able to read.

2 Read each sentence and choose the best paraphrase (1 or 2).

- Explain that students are going to look at different techniques used in paraphrasing.
- Allow three to four minutes for students to do the task.
- Elicit the answers, but do not spend too long explaining them, as this is the focus of Exercise 3.

Answers

- a 2
- b 1
- c 1
- d 2
- e 1
- f 2

3 With a partner, discuss what helped you find the right and wrong answers in Exercise 2.

- Explain the task. Encourage students to talk about individual phrases that have been swapped.
- Elicit suggestions, focusing on the exact changes that have been made in order to successfully paraphrase.

Possible discussion points

- a In answer **1**, *reduced* is not strong enough to be an effective paraphrase of *nobody*. Point out or elicit the successful paraphrasing in answer **2**.
- b Point out or elicit the various paraphrases here, and elicit/explain that answer **2** misses the point.
- c Look at how answer **1** paraphrases the original sentence (e.g. *at the expense of* = *miss out on*), and elicit/explain that **2** says almost the exact opposite.
- d Point out the various paraphrases here, and elicit/explain that answer **1** misses the point.
- e Elicit/explain that the use of *determine* in answer **2** is too strong to retain the original meaning.
- f Point out the use of the gerund to change the structure, the switching of a phrasal verb (*come by*) to a regular verb (*find*), and the fact that answer **1** is not what was said in the original sentence.

4 Read the text and, with a partner, discuss the different ways you could paraphrase it.

- Allow up to five minutes for students to discuss the paraphrasing in pairs. Encourage them to note down suitable phrases they could use in order to rewrite the text.
- Elicit suggestions. You may wish to build up a paraphrased version on the board using suggestions from different students. Make sure none of your students' suggestions stray too far from the meaning of the original.
- **Note:** The answer below is merely a suggestion. You and your students should be able to produce a variety of ways to paraphrase the original text.

Suggested answer

Global issues

We often underestimate the problem of how to get rid of waste. However, it can have dramatic consequences for both health and the environment. Many claim that it is time we reassessed the amount of waste we produce, and how we ultimately get rid of it.

Over a billion people do not have clean drinking water, and the supplying of water is a worldwide problem, whether it is a result of water shortages or poor management of the water we do have.

Our destruction of nature is very rapid, with one example being deforestation. Our forests are being destroyed at the rate of 1.5 acres per second. Our actions have also meant that species are less diverse, with the result that many species are becoming extinct.

Reflect

5 Consider the paraphrasing you discussed in Exercise 4. Tick the techniques you suggested.

- Use this task as an opportunity to get students to focus on the tools that they have at their disposal for paraphrasing. Encourage them to think about the list of techniques. With Exercise 4 in mind, ask them to tick the boxes next to the techniques they used. You might want to help them with this by reminding them of phrases they used. (If you did Exercise 4 on the board, you could point to individual phrases and analyze/categorize them according to the list.)
- Ask if students used anything in Exercise 4 that is not on the list. Give help with this, bearing in mind that it is sometimes possible, for instance, to change an adjective into a phrase (e.g. *irresponsible* = *in a careless way*).
- If students have not ticked an item, ask for suggestions as to where it might work in the text in Exercise 4.
- Finally, remind students to pay attention to paraphrasing when they come across it, as it is an extremely useful skill. You might want to point out that it should also influence the way they learn new vocabulary. For example, they should note down new words with synonymous phrases as they meet them in texts. For example:

Come in! I am	available to speak to you	now.
	in a position to speak to you	
	free	
	at your disposal	

Extra

If you think your students would find it helpful, give them a copy of the **Key features of paraphrasing**, below, as a reminder.

Key features of paraphrasing

Paraphrasing can include elements of summarizing, and sometimes (though not always) the paraphrase is shorter than the original. To paraphrase effectively, a rich vocabulary is important so that you can:

- use synonyms/antonyms to replace adjectives, adverbs, verbs, nouns, etc.
- substitute regular verbs for phrasal verbs and vice versa
- reorder a sentence, such as when you change from active to passive and vice versa
- break a long sentence down into shorter ones, or turn shorter sentences into one long one
- use a different sentence structure, for example, beginning with a gerund
- use a set phrase in place of a longer phrase make people understand what you want to say → convey a message
- change the form of a word, e.g. change a noun to a verb give information → inform
- change a verb -adverb phrase to an adjective -noun phrase communicate effectively → effective communication

It is not usually enough just to use one of the strategies above (e.g. just replace an adjective with a synonym), as the paraphrase will look too much like the original text. A good paraphrase will combine two or more of the above elements. You will sometimes need to 'import' words. Look at the example:

Original

They preferred meeting face-to-face as it helped them communicate effectively.

Paraphrase

They expressed a preference for meeting face-to-face in order to facilitate effective communication.