

READING SKILLS

Worksheet

Recognize and understand paraphrasing



READING TIP

STUDY SKILLS: Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing means to state something in your own words. It is important because it shows you understand the source well enough to write it in your own words. Paraphrasing is NOT about copying material directly from another source.

In this Worksheet, you will look at recognizing and understanding paraphrasing. The activities will help you to understand the different techniques writers apply when they paraphrase something.

Practice

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


Before the printing press, the written word had only reached a small minority of the population – people rich enough to afford handwritten books. Gutenberg's invention allowed books to be produced much more cheaply, so they became affordable to a much wider range of people. This, in turn, helped literacy to increase. 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, and literacy has spread to all corners of the globe.

So, to sum up, whereas books were only for the wealthy few prior to the printing press, they now became considerably more freely available, and therefore accessible to the many, thanks to their low cost. 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).**

- a** Aged 55, and with a variety of health issues, Robin thought nobody was likely to offer him a job.
- 1 Robin felt that his job prospects were reduced due to his failing health and advanced age.
 - 2 Because of his age and poor health, Robin considered himself unemployable.
- b** Far from being something to be ashamed of, making mistakes is a springboard to learning.
- 1 We shouldn't feel at all bad about making mistakes but, rather, they should motivate us to learn.
 - 2 Some people feel a sense of shame about their mistakes, but we all make them.
- c** University students should study hard, but not at the expense of enjoying the experience of being a student.
- 1 It would be a pity to miss out on the student experience as a result of being slavishly dedicated to your studies – a little moderation is needed.
 - 2 The experiences you have at university must not distract you from the task at hand – which is to study.
- d** A good number of businesses fail in the first year of operation because owners fail to seek expert advice.
- 1 Your business won't last a year unless you know what you're doing.
 - 2 A lack of advice from professionals leads to many businesses closing down within a year of starting up.

- e When talking about historical events, we need to take into account the ages of our students.
 - 1 It is important to consider students' ages when discussing things that have happened in the past.
 - 2 The age of your students should determine the kinds of historical events you teach them about.
- f A significant number of experts predict that basic resources for survival will become increasingly hard to come by in the future.
 - 1 Most experts foresee a point in the future when we won't be able to find even the bare necessities for life.
 - 2 Finding the things we need in order to live is going to get harder and harder, according to many experts.

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

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

Global issues

The issue of waste disposal is often underestimated, but it can cause serious health and environmental problems. Experts believe we need to rethink our relationship with waste – how we generate it and how we dispose of it.

More than 1.2 billion people in the world lack access to clean drinking water, and water shortage is a problem that affects every continent. Sometimes it is caused by a lack of water, but it can also be due to irresponsible use of water and mismanagement of water resources.

Humans are destroying the natural environment at an incredible rate. Deforestation is just one example of this, with 1.5 acres of forest being cut down every second. Human activity also contributes to a loss of biodiversity, meaning the extinction of many animal species.

Reflect

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

- Did you suggest anything that is not on the list?
- For any you did not tick, try them now to see if you could use them anywhere.
 - use synonyms/antonyms
 - 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
 - change the form of a word, e.g. change a noun to a verb
 - change a verb–adverb phrase to an adjective–noun phrase