

Teacher's notes

Rephrase and explain texts

Warm up

If students have done the worksheet on paraphrasing, point out that rephrasing and paraphrasing are very similar. You might want to begin with an example. Write the following on the board and ask students who might say it:

You're a troublemaker. Get out!

Elicit that it is something a teacher might say, but point out that it is not very polite or very 'professional'. Ask students to suggest ways of making it more acceptable. Elicit something like:

You are disrupting my lesson. I would like you to leave please.

or *Your behaviour is not acceptable. Please go out of the classroom.*

Explain that there are several reasons why we might want to rephrase something, such as to make something more polite or formal (more reasons are given on the *Factsheet*). Your students need to be aware of the different ways in which we can phrase things and the different effects the changes of style can have on the reader.

Point out that explaining things is another skill that we sometimes need, and that this also uses rephrasing – putting things in different words. Refer students to the information about this on the *Factsheet*.

Using the Factsheet

There are three possible ways to use the factsheet:

- 1 Give students the factsheet before the lesson, so they can read it at home and come to the lesson prepared to do the worksheet. If you use this approach, start the lesson by checking that all students have read and understood the factsheet and answer any questions.
- 2 Give students the factsheet at the beginning of the lesson and start by working through it with the students.
- 3 Focus on the worksheet in the lesson, then give students the factsheet at the end of the lesson, so they can take it home and keep it as a reference or revision tool.

Theory to practice (Factsheet)

Students' answers will vary. Make sure they produce something similar to the suggested answers.

Suggested answers

- 1 Common sense should be used in assessing the accuracy and usefulness of statistics. / The accuracy and usefulness of statistics should be assessed using common sense.
- 2 The rephrasing makes it more formal. Some things make the original sentence seem very informal. For example, the use of *you/yourself*, and the fact that it is another question and has quotes. The rephrased sentence uses the passive; it imports the phrase *treat with caution* (to cover the suspicion hinted at in the original question). It also imports the specific word *relative* to replace the very colloquial "less fat than what?"
- 3 look up
- 4 If none can be found, / The absence/lack of these suggests that ... / If there are none, ...
- 5 falsified / fabricated / fictitious
- 6 only some students at some/certain universities

Using the worksheet

Practice

1 The text on the left below is taken from a lecture in *C21 English for the 21st Century, Level 5*. Someone has started to edit it in order to make it suitable for a written article. Look at the changes that have been made and suggest how to continue the rest of the article. You will need to delete the 'spoken' language and rephrase some sections. Make notes of your reasons.

- Explain that rephrasing from spoken English to more formal style will often involve cutting out some of the things we say. Go through the part of the text that has been edited and make sure students understand the comments on the right.
- Allow up to five minutes for students to note down some of the changes they would make to the rest of the text. Encourage them to make notes as to why they think the changes are necessary.

- When students have had a chance to edit the text on their own, encourage them to work in pairs in order to compare notes.
- Elicit suggestions and ask students to say why they think the changes are needed.

Answers

So it won't surprise you that this cost a lot of money — a staggering 19.6 billion dollars, which makes it one of the most expensive structures on earth.	delete 'spoken' English; delete 'staggering' (too emotional); change 'which makes' to 'making'
So, what did they get for their money? Well, as you would hope for nearly 20-billion dollars, it has some very significant benefits, the most important being the amount of power actually produced. The dam produces an incredible 14,000 megawatts, which, to give you an idea, is enough to power 26% of all the electricity in Brazil and 78% of all electricity in Paraguay. And, of course, this energy is renewable, thereby reducing the global dependence on fossil fuels.	delete question; delete references to 'you'; change to present perfect delete 'an incredible' (too subjective); delete references to 'you'; change 'power' to 'supply'
Another less obvious benefit, and I mentioned this earlier, is that the whole project has required a great deal of cooperation between the two countries. True, it hasn't all been plain sailing — there have been some quite high-profile disagreements over the years — but as a binational project, it has helped to build a relationship between Brazil and Paraguay or, at the very least, it has required a lot of communication between the two countries.	delete references to 'I' begin with 'Despite the fact that' delete this to keep it simple

2 Look at each sentence and use the suggestions in brackets to rephrase it.

- You may wish to do the first item as an example with the class. Point out that the sentence is a little 'blunt' as it is. Explain that the instructions are to make the sentence less confrontational, more tactful and more motivating. Ask how we might do this. Finally, remind students that the use of the word *Perhaps* will almost certainly soften the effect.
- Elicit a sentence something similar to the answer given below and ask students to talk about the difference in effect between the original sentence and the rephrased version.
- Allow up to five minutes for students to do the remainder of the items. Make sure they understand that there is no single correct answer to any of the sentences.
- As you elicit the answers, spend time explaining the way the rephrasing might affect the reader differently in each case.

Suggested answers

- 1 Perhaps you could try/work a little harder / increase your workload slightly / make a little more effort.
- 2 The company made (an impressive) €100,000 in its first five years (, which was impressive). / It is/was impressive that the company made €100,000 in its first five years.
- 3 Please take/have a seat. We'll call you when / (just) as soon as we're ready. / We won't keep you long.
- 4 The development of the telephone indirectly led to the creation of the internet some time later.
- 5 Scientists were (quite) satisfied with / encouraged by the results.
- 6 In order to succeed / achieve success / be successful (in life), hard work is needed/necessary / it is important to work hard.

3 Discuss whether the second sentence in each extract is a rephrased version of the first sentence or an explanation of the first sentence.

- Explain the task. Encourage students to focus on the content of the sentences (ignoring the underlined sections). Check answers and deal with any problems.

Answers

- 1 Rephrased (the second sentence repeats the first, using different words)
- 2 Explanation (the second sentence doesn't repeat, it explains *how* our approach has changed)

4  **In pairs, discuss alternatives for the underlined words and phrases in Exercise 3. What differences (if any) do the changes make?**

- Allow up to five minutes for students to discuss possible alternatives in pairs. Encourage them to note down suitable phrases they could use in order to rephrase the texts.
- Elicit suggestions. You may wish to build up paraphrased versions on the board using suggestions from different students. Encourage students to say how the changes make the text more/less formal, easy to understand, academic, spoken, etc.

Suggested answers

Note: Discuss with your students how the suggested changes might make the text more/less formal, easy to understand, personal, dramatic, etc.

- 1 Studies/Findings indicate / have indicated; economical/affordable but efficient/effective; keep the roads/streets empty of cars; By this I mean / To put it another way; want / be motivated; is effective; being prohibitively expensive
- 2 The way we deal with / Our attitude towards; problems/matters; altered / been transformed; Rather than removing / Whereas we would have previously removed; placing them in institutions; to be given care / to receive treatment / to get treatment / to be treated

5 **Continue the second sentence to rephrase or explain the first.**

- Encourage students to identify whether they are expected to *rephrase* or to *explain* in each case, or both.
- Allow up to five minutes for students to do the task. They should be able to produce something on their own.
- Elicit suggestions, bearing in mind that students' answers will differ. Accept all logical answers and point out any inappropriate words or phrases.

Suggested answers

- 1 I quit / left / dropped out before completing the course.
- 2 this decision is up to you.
- 3 you/students/I will have to find a place to rent nearby.
- 4 half of them were unemployed.
- 5 it was not very good / I could have done better.
- 6 I didn't find them very useful/interesting/stimulating, etc.

Reflect

6 **Think about the rephrasing and explaining you have seen in this worksheet. Look at the table below and suggest alternatives to fill the gaps.**

- Use this final task as an opportunity to get students to focus on the ways they have rephrased things on this worksheet. Point out that all of the gaps can be filled in using words and phrases from the worksheet, although there are other words and phrases that can be used.
- Finally, remind students to pay attention to rephrasing and explaining when they come across it in texts. Encourage them to always try to learn alternative ways of expressing an idea.

Suggested answers

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 plain sailing/simple | 10 indicate |
| 2 due to its location | 11 cheap |
| 3 no easy feat | 12 be (very/prohibitively) expensive |
| 4 high-level disagreements | 13 the way we deal with |
| 5 not bad, I suppose | 14 place someone in an institution |
| 6 take/have a seat | 15 problems |
| 7 lead to / result in | 16 unable to complete (my studies) |
| 8 in order to | 17 a place to rent/live |
| 9 get on (in life) | 18 far from exemplary |