PARAPHRASING

When you paraphrase, you rewrite information from an outside source in your own words without changing the meaning. Unlike when you use indirect quotation or reported speech, you do not simply change verb tense. In addition, when you paraphrase, you convey the author's idea but change the author's words and sentence structure. You think about the message the author is trying to send in the text, and then try to express that idea in your own way. A paraphrase may be shorter and more concise than the original, but only slightly. Because you include in your rewrite all or nearly all of the content of the original passage—including many of the details—a paraphrase is almost as long as the original.
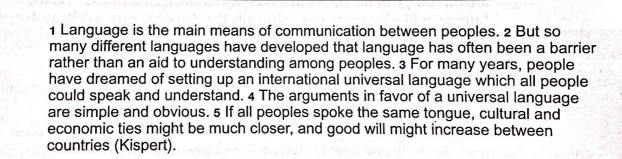
ANALYZING THE MODEL

The writing model consists of two passages about language. One is an excerpt from an encyclopedia entry about language by an author named Robert Kispert. The other is a paraphrase of the excerpt.

Read the models. Then answer the questions.

✎ **Writing Model**

ORIGINAL PASSAGE

1 Language is the main means of communication between peoples. 2 But so many different languages have developed that language has often been a barrier rather than an aid to understanding among peoples. 3 For many years, people have dreamed of setting up an international universal language which all people could speak and understand. 4 The arguments in favor of a universal language are simple and obvious. 5 If all peoples spoke the same tongue, cultural and economic ties might be much closer, and good will might increase between countries (Kispert).

Source: Kispert, Robert J. "Universal Language."

There are almost 7,000 living languages in the world today.

PARAPHRASE

1 Humans communicate through language. 2 Because there are so many different languages, however, people around the world have a difficult time understanding one another. 3 Some people have wished for a universal international language that speakers all over the world could understand. 4 Their reasons are straightforward and clear. 5 A universal language would build cultural and economic bonds. 6 It would also create better feelings among countries (Kispert).

Questions about the Model

1. How many sentences are there in the original passage? In the paraphrase?

2. How do the original passage and the paraphrase differ sentence by sentence? What are the differences between them in sentence structure and words?

   a. What is the first word of the first sentence in the original passage? Where does this word appear in the first sentence of the paraphrase?

   b. What is the first word of the second sentence in the original passage? What word replaces it in the second sentence of the paraphrase?

   c. What words replace *have dreamed of* in the third sentence? What word replaces *arguments in favor of* in the fourth sentence?

   d. Which sentence in the original becomes two sentences in the paraphrase?

PLAGIARISM AND PARAPHRASING

Learning to paraphrase properly can help you use information from outside sources accurately and ethically. It is essential to avoid committing plagiarism.

There are two kinds of plagiarism that you need to consider when paraphrasing.

1. When you use information from an outside source without citing the source (telling where you got the information), you are guilty of plagiarism.

2. Even when you cite your source, if your paraphrase is too similar to the original, you are guilty of plagiarism.

Reread the model on pages 58–59. Pay attention to the paraphrase. Then read these two paraphrases and decide which kind of plagiarism each example is guilty of.

UNACCEPTABLE PARAPHRASE 1

> Humans communicate through language. However, because there are so many languages in the world, language acts as an obstacle instead of as an aid to understanding. People have long wished for a universal international language that speakers all over the world could understand. A universal language would certainly build cultural and economic bonds. It would also create better feelings among countries.

UNACCEPTABLE PARAPHRASE 2

> Language is the principle means of communication between peoples. However, because there are numerous languages, language itself has frequently been a barrier rather than an aid to understanding among the world population. For many years, people have envisioned a common universal language that everyone in the world could communicate in. The reasons for having a universal language are clearly understandable. If the same tongue were spoken by all countries, they would undoubtedly become closer culturally and economically. It would probably also create good will among nations (Kispert).

Paraphrase 1 is plagiarism because the source is not cited. Paraphrase 2 is plagiarism because it is too similar to the original passage. For example, in the first sentence, only one word has been changed: *principle* replaces *main*. In the second sentence, only a few words have been changed. You can avoid the first kind of plagiarism by always citing your sources. You can avoid the second kind of plagiarism by learning to paraphrase correctly.

WRITING A SUCCESSFUL PARAPHRASE

To paraphrase correctly, you first need to make sure that you fully understand the original passage. Use this method to write a good paraphrase.

- Read the original passage several times until you understand it fully. Underline the key words. Look up unfamiliar words and find synonyms for them. It is not always possible to find synonyms for every word, especially technical vocabulary. In this case, use the original word.

- Take notes while you read. Write down only a few words for each idea—not complete sentences. Here are one writer's notes on the original passage about universal language:

> language—people use to communicate—but so many—
> difficult to understand one another—people wish—
> universal international language—reasons: cultural,
> economic bonds, better feelings between countries

- Make a brief outline:

> A. Language—people use to communicate
>   1. So many languages make it difficult to understand one another.
>   2. People wish for one universal international language.
> B. Reasons
>   1. Cultural, economic bonds
>   2. Better feelings between countries

- Write your paraphrase from your notes. Don't look at the original while you are writing.

- Check your paraphrase against the original to make sure you have not copied vocabulary or sentence structure too closely. Above all, make sure that you have not changed the meaning of the original or given any wrong information.

- Add in-text citations. Also add a works-cited list if appropriate.

Choosing the Best Paraphrase

Read each original passage. Then read the paraphrases in each group and decide which is the best. Label it *Best*. Label the others *Too sim.* (too similar), *No cit.* (no in-text citation), or *Inc. / Inacc.* (incomplete and / or inaccurate information).

ORIGINAL PASSAGE 1

Source: A passage titled "Late-blooming or Language Problem," published in 2012 on the website of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. There are no authors listed.

> The stages that children pass through in the development of language are very consistent. However the exact age when they hit these milestones varies a lot.

Best a. As children develop language skills, they usually go through the same stages, but they may reach the stages at different ages ("Late-blooming").

No cit. b. Developing children may pass through linguistic stages at different ages although they will generally pass through each stage at some point.

Too sim. c. The stages that are passed through by children in language development are very consistent. However the exact time when they hit these milestones can be different ("Late-blooming").

Inc. / Inacc. d. Language development is very different for different children, and there can be variation in the stages they go through ("Late-blooming").
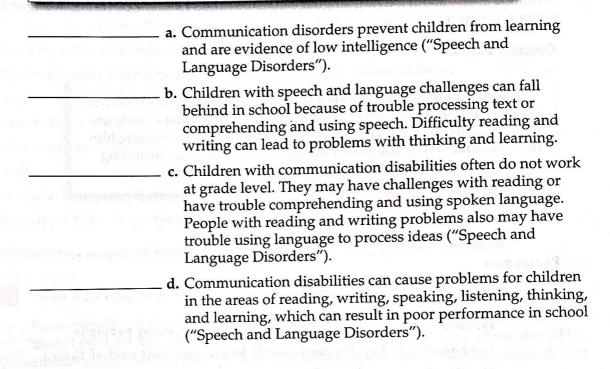
ORIGINAL PASSAGE 2

Source: The same as Passage 1.

> The kind of language the child hears and how people respond to the child can affect the speed of language development.

_____ a. People's response to the child and the kind of language the child hears can affect his rate of language development ("Late-bloomer").

_____ b. Language can develop at different rates depending on the child's exposure to language and the response he or she gets when using it ("Late-bloomer").

_____ c. Rate of language development can be influenced by children's exposure to language and response to their language use.

_____ d. Language develops more quickly if children are exposed to different languages and if they receive a response ("Late-bloomer").

ORIGINAL PASSAGE 3

Source: A passage titled, "Speech and Language Disorders in the School Setting" from the same website as Passages 1 and 2.

> Children with communication disorders frequently do not perform at grade level. They may struggle with reading. Similarly, they may have difficulty understanding and expressing spoken language. Individuals with reading and writing problems also may have trouble using language to think and learn.

_____ a. Communication disorders prevent children from learning and are evidence of low intelligence ("Speech and Language Disorders").

_____ b. Children with speech and language challenges can fall behind in school because of trouble processing text or comprehending and using speech. Difficulty reading and writing can lead to problems with thinking and learning.

_____ c. Children with communication disabilities often do not work at grade level. They may have challenges with reading or have trouble comprehending and using spoken language. People with reading and writing problems also may have trouble using language to process ideas ("Speech and Language Disorders").

_____ d. Communication disabilities can cause problems for children in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, listening, thinking, and learning, which can result in poor performance in school ("Speech and Language Disorders").

| PRACTICE 7 | **Writing a Paraphrase** |

Read the passage from an article that supports bilingual education. Write a paraphrase on a separate sheet of paper. Follow the method for writing a paraphrase described on page 61.

ORIGINAL PASSAGE

Source: An editorial in the *Houston Chronicle*, published Thursday, February 16, 2012, and accessed online August 5, 2012. The title of the article is "Editorial: Children can, and should, learn more than one language." There is no author listed.

> A powerful body of data shows that speaking more than one language arms kids with crucial real-world abilities. People who master two or more languages in childhood enjoy better cognitive development, leading to better academic performance across the board. Learning languages at a young age is also associated with better problem-solving, heightened verbal skills, and mental agility.

SUMMARIZING

Another way to use borrowed information from an outside source is to summarize the material. What is the difference between a paraphrase and a summary? When you retell a story that someone has told you, you repeat the story in your own words. If your retelling is about the same length as the original and includes many of the details, it is a paraphrase. If you shorten the story—retelling only the most important points and leaving out the details—it is a summary.

Summaries have many uses in academic writing. Like paraphrases, they can be used to support a point. They can also be part of a longer piece of writing, such as a book report. You might summarize a book before going on to write a response to it. Writing a summary can also be a good strategy for remembering things that you've read. For example, your teacher may ask you to summarize a textbook chapter.

ANALYZING THE MODEL

You previously read these writing models on pages 58–59. Here you will also read a summary of the same material.

Read the model. Then answer the questions.

✎ **Writing Model**

ORIGINAL PASSAGE (85 WORDS)

> Language is the main means of communication between peoples. But so many different languages have developed that language has often been a barrier rather than an aid to understanding among peoples. For many years, people have dreamed of setting up an international universal language which all people could speak and understand. The arguments in favor of a universal language are simple and obvious. If all peoples spoke the same tongue, cultural and economic ties might be much closer, and good will might increase between countries (Kispert).
>
> **Source:** Kispert, Robert J. "Universal Language."

PARAPHRASE (63 WORDS, ABOUT THE SAME LENGTH AS THE ORIGINAL)

> Humans communicate through language. Because there are so many different languages, however, people around the world have a difficult time understanding one another. Some people have wished for a universal international language that speakers all over the world could understand. Their reasons are straightforward and clear. A universal language would build cultural and economic bonds. It would also create better feelings among countries (Kispert).

> People communicate through language; however, having different languages creates communication barriers. A universal language could bring countries together culturally and economically as well as increase good feelings among them (Kispert).

Questions about the Model

1. How many sentences are there in the original passage? In the paraphrase? In the summary?

2. What are some other differences between the paraphrase and the summary? What two details were left out of the summary?

WRITING A SUCCESSFUL SUMMARY

To write a successful summary, you must focus on the most important points of the original passage. These are strategies for writing a good summary.

- Use your own words and your own sentence structure.
- Remember that a summary is much shorter than a paraphrase. Include only the main points and main supporting points, leaving out most details.
- Do not change the meaning of the original.

The method for writing a summary is similar to the one for writing a paraphrase.

- Read the original passage several times until you understand it fully. Look up any words that you don't understand.
- Decide what the most important points are. It helps to underline them. It also helps to take notes on the passage. Write down only a few words for each idea—not complete sentences.
- Write your summary from your notes. Don't look at the original while you are writing.
- Include a sentence that sums up the main idea of the article.
- Use transition signals between sentences as needed.
- Check your summary against the original to make sure you have used different words but have not changed the meaning.
- Add an in-text citation at the end of the summary.

Choosing the Best Summary

Read the original passage and the two summaries. Then answer the questions.

ORIGINAL PASSAGE

Bilingualism and Its Advantages

It was once believed that learning to speak two languages at an early age could create confusion between them. However, research today indicates that bilingualism, or speaking two or more languages, has many advantages. One very obvious benefit is that individuals who speak several languages can communicate with more people.

Being bilingual also can have a deep impact on how the brain functions. Research shows that bilingual children are often better able to learn words, form rhymes, and solve problems than monolingual children. Children who are bilingual are adept as well at categorizing words ("The Advantages of Being Bilingual"). This is because the brains of bilingual children, according to experts, are able to process information with great efficiency. Having to switch between two languages on a constant basis seems to help these children develop a capacity to focus and ignore distractions. At the same time, they are able to retain information (Cuda-Kroen).

Bilingualism has been shown to have advantages for adults as well as children. At St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto, researchers found that being bilingual can delay the onset of Alzheimer's symptoms. Alzheimer's disease, an illness that affects the brain and memory, seems to progress more slowly in bilingual adults. This may be because their brains are better prepared to compensate for changes in brain function (Bhattacharjee). Based on these and other findings, it seems clear that being bilingual is not only beneficial for children. It may also be vital to a person's health and wellness later in life.

Sources:
1. "The Advantages of Being Bilingual." *American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.*
2. Bhattacharjee, Yudhijit. "The Benefits of Bilingualism"—NYTimes.com.
3. Cuda-Kroen, Gretchen. "Being Bilingual May Boost Your Brain Power": NPR.

SUMMARY A

Research suggests that speaking more than one language has many benefits. First, a person who speaks another language can communicate with more people. Also, learning another language can help brain development. Bilingual children are better at learning vocabulary, rhyming, problem solving, and analyzing words. Experts think bilingual children's brains are better at these tasks because changing from one language to another helps the brain become better at focusing. Being bilingual also has an advantage when a person is older. Researchers in Toronto found that Alzheimer's disease progressed more slowly in bilingual adults. In conclusion, bilingualism is great for both children and adults.

Being bilingual is advantageous in many ways. Bilingual people can speak to more people around the world. Children that are bilingual are smarter, too. They can learn words, rhyme, and problem solve better than monolingual children. Their brains process information better because they have to go back and forth between languages. Being bilingual is also good for adults and helps stop diseases such as Alzheimer's.

Questions about the Summaries

1. Which summary is better? Why?
2. Which summary contains an idea that was not in the original passage?

Applying Vocabulary: Using Synonyms 2

You have learned that knowing and using a variety of synonyms can help you to avoid repetition in your writing and to add interest and nuance to it. You have also learned that synonyms can have slight variations in meaning or connotation, and that you therefore need to be careful about which synonyms you choose to include in a particular passage. Reference works such as a dictionary and thesaurus can be helpful guides when you need to find a synonym or to confirm a synonym's precise meaning.

PRACTICE 9 **Using Synonyms**

A Write synonyms for the words. You will see these words again in your Chapter 3 Writing Assignment. Use a dictionary or thesaurus as needed.

1. technology _____

2. software _____

3. languages _____

4. communicate _____

5. revive _____

B On a separate sheet of paper, write four pairs of sentences with the words from Part A. Include one of the given words in the first sentence of each pair and its synonym in the second sentence.

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How Technology Aids Language

1   In the past, learning a language could be difficult, if not impossible, unless you were able to travel to a foreign country or study with a skilled teacher. But now, with web-based training and software available, learning a new language is possible for almost anyone with Internet access. Indeed, the boom in technology has helped millions to speak, read, and write foreign languages. For example, one popular software program offers training in more than 30 languages for tourists and businesses alike.

2   Along with teaching language, technology is also being used to translate languages. These include ones that can be difficult for native English language speakers to learn, such as Arabic and Urdu. Many tools are available on the Internet for quick and easy translations. In addition, experts are working on advanced software to translate the subtle meanings and nuances of different languages. One such program is currently being used to analyze and translate Twitter feeds from Urdu into English (Joyce). With so few Americans fluent in Asian and Arabic languages, this type of technology can help close that language gap.

3   One very significant use of technology has been to preserve dying or endangered languages. Through technology, dictionaries of diverse languages can be recorded and preserved online for generations to come. In the United States and Canada, experts are working with several Native American tribes, including the Inuit and Siletz peoples, to help record and preserve their languages (Banse). Microsoft has also begun translating its operating system and software programs into several languages. Language activists helped inspire this initiative. They believe that using an endangered language every day on computers can help revive a language.

4   Despite these remarkable accomplishments, technology alone can't spread or revitalize a language. Keeping a language alive and viable requires a group of people who communicate in the language on an everyday basis.

Sources:
   1. Article adapted from Spitbaum, Anna. "How Technology Aids Language."
   2. Banse, Tom. "Digital Technologies Give Dying Languages New Life: All Tech Considered: NPR."
   3. Joyce, Christopher. "Computer Translator Reads between the Tweets: NPR."