

GRAMMAR TOOLBOX PARAPHRASING METHOD

(p. 10)

Another way to paraphrase is to use changes in grammar, word order and vocabulary to create a new statement with the same meaning as the original. We call this the “grammar toolbox” method. This method follows four steps.

Grammar Toolbox Steps

1. Read the original carefully for a general idea of its meaning.
2. Circle the key words or phrases—ideas that you cannot leave out.
3. Using a combination of the six paraphrasing tools described below, change the grammar, vocabulary and sentence structure of the original.
4. Compare your paraphrase with the original to see if it fits the criteria of a good paraphrase.

Paraphrasing Tools

1. Find synonyms for some of the words.

Original: The tiger quickly disappeared into the trees.

Revised: The big cat vanished into the forest.

Now You Try

Original: Adolescent employees sometimes argue with their employers.

Revised: _____

2. Change the verb to negative.

Original: The nervous student was awake all night.

Revised: The nervous student didn't sleep all night.

Now You Try

Original: In times of crisis, politicians may ignore public opinion.

Revised: _____

3. Change voice: Make active sentences passive and passive ones, active.

Original: The voucher was sent by the testing service on August 3rd.

Revised: The testing service sent the voucher on August 3rd.

Now You Try

Original: Dieting can cause poor nutrition.

Revised: _____

4. Change parts of speech: Change nouns into verbs, verbs into nouns, etc.

Original: The teacher helped the student finish her class registration form.

Revised: The teacher helped the student register for classes.

Now You Try

Original: Everyone danced at the graduation party for hours.

Revised: _____

5. Combine sentences: Use new connecting words to combine shorter phrases and sentences.

Original: Paraphrasing is a skill students need to learn. It is an important part of academic writing.

Revised: Paraphrasing, which is a skill students need to learn, is an important part of academic writing.

Now You Try

Original: The movie was shot in New York City. Many actors choose to live in New York.

Revised: _____

6. Move phrases: Move parts of a sentence to change the sentence structure.

Original: Yesterday, I stayed in the library until midnight and finished my homework.

Revised: I finished my homework at midnight in the library yesterday.

Now You Try

Original: In order to fight a damaging disease, the farmers began to grow genetically modified crops.

Revised: _____

ACTIVITIES TO PRACTICE PARAPHRASING

Activity One

Practice using the various tools from the Grammar Toolbox method to rewrite the sentences below.

1. The president spoke to the angry crowd, hoping to pacify them.
2. An architect has to be able to envision the buildings she or he designs.
3. He always tries to dominate the conversation so it's difficult for anyone else to talk.
4. In spite of the strong wind that blew in the window, everything on my desk is still intact.
5. It is not easy to find a homogeneous group of students because all students have different backgrounds and different ideas.

Activity Two

Use this activity to practice the Grammar Toolbox method with your classmates.

1. As a class, select three or four sentences from your source(s) and write them at separate places along the top of the chalkboard.
2. Discuss the meaning of each quote.
3. Divide the class into groups so that there are enough groups for each to work on one of the quotes.
4. With your group, select one "tool" from the grammar toolbox method. Rewrite the quote, using the technique. Next to the rewritten sentence, write the tool your group has used.
5. Once the groups have finished, each should move to a quote they have not worked on.
6. Read the rewritten sentence and select a different "tool" to change the sentence yet again. Write the newest version of the sentence below and write the "tool" your group has used.
7. Repeat this process until three or four tools have been used to change the original sentence.
8. As a class, evaluate each of the final paraphrases.

Example

Original: Although the instructor was considered difficult by many students, she was very popular.

1. *Change voice (passive to active)*

Although many students considered the instructor difficult, she was very popular.

2. *Word substitution*

Although many students thought the teacher was challenging, she was liked by everyone.

3. *Change connecting words*

Many students thought the teacher was challenging, yet she was liked by everyone.

4. *Change voice (passive to active)*

Many students thought the teacher was challenging, yet everyone liked her.

Activity Three

This is a homework variation of Activity Two

1. Select a sentence from your source to paraphrase. Write this sentence at the top of your paper.
2. Use one paraphrasing tool to change the original sentence. Write the modified sentence and the name of the tool directly below the original sentence.
3. Choose a second paraphrasing tool to change this modified sentence. Write your newest version of the sentence directly below with the name of the tool you have used. (See example above).
4. Repeat this process one or two more times.
5. Evaluate your new paraphrase. Is it grammatically correct? Have you added or deleted ideas?
6. Bring your paraphrase to class to share.

Activity Four

This activity is useful when the class is reading the same article.

1. With your group, select two or three sentences from the article to paraphrase.
2. Using the “Tell a Friend” technique or the “Grammar Toolbox” method or a combination of the two, rewrite the passages you have selected.
3. Evaluate your paraphrases.
4. Trade your paraphrases with another group.
5. Read the other group’s paraphrases and see if you can identify the original passages in the article.