

General Rules for Paraphrasing

Do:

- *Make sure you understand the meaning and intent of the original.*
- *Use your own words and sentence structures.*
- *Use roughly the same number of words as the original.*
- *Identify the source (i.e., author and page number in MLA style) within the text.*
- *Borrow exceptional words or phrasing from the original by quoting exactly.*
- *Enclose quoted words and phrases in quotation marks.*
- *Retain the original tone (i.e., humorous, somber, angry).*

Do not:

- ◆ *Interject your own views.*
- ◆ *Change or distort the meaning or intent of the original.*
- ◆ *Leave out significant information.*
- ◆ *Quote large sections that could be rephrased.*
- ◆ *Guess at the meaning of the original.*
- ◆ *Present paraphrased material as your own.*

Tips for Paraphrasing

Write a literal paraphrase first:

- ✎ *Read the original text carefully for meaning.*
- ✎ *Look up any vocabulary with which you are not familiar.*
- ✎ *Look up synonyms for difficult words.*
- ✎ *Write a word-for-word substitution, making use of the same sentence structures, checking your version against the original text.*
- ✎ *Imagine that you are writing a translation of the original text.*

Write a “free” paraphrase of your own literal paraphrase:

- ✎ *Put the original text away.*
- ✎ *Working from your literal paraphrase, revise sentences in your own style and your own words.*
- ✎ *Check to see that you have used roughly the same number of words in both versions.*
- ✎ *Read your “free” paraphrase aloud to see if it makes sense.*
- ✎ *Compare your “free” paraphrase to the original; check to see if you have changed or omitted information.*
- ✎ *Make sure that any wording taken directly from the original is enclosed in quotation marks and credited to its author.*