

Paraphrase X 3

Source: [Rosenwasser, David and Jill Stephen. *Writing Analytically*. 6th ed., Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2012.](#)

Why paraphrase?	<p>“Paraphrasing helps disclose that what is being paraphrased is more complicated than it first appeared. [...] It will get you to start questioning what important passages and key details mean rather than assuming you understand them. When you paraphrase, you are not just defining terms but opening out the wide range of implications those words inevitably possess. When we read, it is easy to skip quickly over the words, assuming we know what they mean. Yet when people start talking about what particular words mean--the difference, for example, between <i>assertive</i> and <i>aggressive</i> or the meaning of ordinary words such as <i>polite</i> or <i>realistic</i> or <i>gentlemanly</i>--they usually find less agreement than expected” (37). When used analytically, paraphrasing shines as spotlight on purposeful word choice. This can help both with analytical thinking and with our own writing.</p>
Tips for paraphrasing:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Don't assume you know the meanings of words you encounter. Experiment with the theory that “what we see as reality is shaped by the words we use” (37).• Assume instead that words may have more than one meaning, depending on context.
Paraphrase X 3 technique:	<p>Step 1: Select a short passage (as little as a single sentence or even a phrase) from whatever you are studying that you think is interesting, perhaps puzzling, and especially useful for understanding the material. Assume you <i>don't</i> understand it completely, even if you think you do.</p> <p>Step 2: Find synonyms for all the key terms. Don't just go for the gist, a loose approximation of what is said. Substitute language virtually word-for-word to produce a parallel version of the original statement.</p> <p>Step 3: Repeat this entire rephrasing several times (we suggest three). This will produce a range of possible implications that the original passage may possess.</p> <p>Step 4: Contemplate the various versions you have produced. Which seem most plausible as restatements of what the original piece intends to communicate? Where can you not determine which of two restatements might win out as most accurate?</p> <p>Step 5: Return to the original passage and reflect: what do you now recognize about the passage on the basis of your repeated restatements? What does it appear to mean? What else might it mean?</p>