PARAPHRASE AND SUMMARY

Paraphrase and summary are tools in essay writing that allow you to include other peoples’ ideas without using quotations when the ideas, not words, are important to your essay. Don’t rely too heavily on either paraphrase or summary. Your own ideas are what matter the most!

What is paraphrasing? What is summarizing?

To paraphrase means to express someone else’s ideas in your own words. To summarize means to extract only essential points or the bare bones of someone else’s work.

How do I paraphrase?

Two points to remember in paraphrasing:

1. Always provide a reference.
2. It must be entirely your own, with an altered sentence structure and using new words to express the author’s idea.

Making paraphrasing easier

- Determine during note-taking whether you want to quote a passage or not.
- Make note of author’s basic points and use bullet points to capture the original idea in your own words.
- Always include the page number of the passage for later reference.

To write the paper

- Working from your notes, ensure your paraphrase is accurate, truly in your own words and referenced properly.
- Convert the ideas from your notes into full sentences.
- Beware of legitimate and illegitimate paraphrasing in your paper
  - Legitimate paraphrasing is using the author’s idea, but putting it in your own words and sentence structure.
  - Illegitimate paraphrasing is using pieces of the author’s work with no quotation marks, rearranged in a new sentence structure with some of your own words added.

How do I summarize?

- Absorb the meaning of the passage.
- Capture, in your own words, the most important elements of the original passage.

Further writing strategies can be found at: writing.utoronto.ca.

Visit asc.utoronto.ca for more information on our programs, workshops/events, peer support and how to make an appointment.