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Paraphrase practice 1 (History)

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# Paraphrase practice 1 (History)

When you write an academic paper, you need to refer to other sources in order to persuade your readers. Blinding other sources into your study requires quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing. The following paragraph is an excerpt from Black and MacRaild (2017) which you are expected to summarize. To do this, use quotations and paraphrases. When you finish reading the paragraph, you will see some useful steps which may help you do this exercise.

*An excerpt from Black, J., & MacRaild, D. M. (2017). Studying history (4th ed.). London: Palgrave, p. 112.*

A major development in recent decades has been the development of world history as a direct subject and approach. This development reflects the change in world power since the Second World War and, more specifically, from the 1960s. The collapse of the European colonial empires made a history constructed around the rise of the West appear less viable and relevant. So also did an increase in cultural relativism from the 1960s, an increase that reflected a crisis of confidence in traditional views on Western purpose and achievement.

*Discriminate the main idea from supporting arguments.*

The main idea:

Supporting arguments:

*Consider the necessity of quoting directly. You do not have to quote but blending a short quotation into your paraphrased expression may help you better transfer ideas:*

*Paraphrase the main idea(s) by restructuring and rewording it:*

*Summarize supporting arguments which seem important to you:*

TOEFL uses shorter texts in order to cover a variety of topics from different fields.

Although longer texts allow exaggerating authenticity, using shorter ones allocate diminishing content bias.

Please, do not forget to use linking devices in order to connect ideas in your summary.

*Suggested summary:*

## Notes to educators

The original exercise is taken form Salim Razi’s book “Advanced Reading and Writing Skills in ELT”[[1]](#footnote-1) and it was designed for students in an English Language Teaching programme. The exercise is provided as an example and the given original text can and should easily be replaced with a text which fits into the context of your subject matter. In this case we chose an example from history.

The exercise is intended to be used to support students in developing good paraphrasing skills. It addresses also typical errors which are in the grey area between bad paraphrasing and plagiarism such as unsuccessful paraphrases, bogus phrases, find & replace or remix errors, and patchwriting plagiarism.

An unsuccessful paraphrase designates text reproduction that is referenced as a paraphrase yet does not satisfy the convention requirements for a paraphrase. For example, the intertextual material reproduced is too close to the original text or material is paraphrased that is not worth being paraphrased. Characteristics of an unsuccessful paraphrase are marginal changes to the intertextual material reproduced, e.g. through the use of synonyms, insignificant changes to sentence structure or adjustments to grammar. By contrast to an unsuccessful paraphrase, a successful paraphrase reproduces in the author’s own words the content of a text passage taken from the source (The 20 most frequent intertextual errors in student papers at Freiburg University of Education).

The main idea of the exercise is to guide the student step by step from reading a paragraph to writing a paraphrase in own words. Directing questions assist this process.

The exercise can be used in any context of teaching students to work with secondary literature and work with it properly. Poor academic writing skills may cause plagiarism and this exercise helps to foster the prevention of plagiarism in a positive way by practising in-text citations skills although the term plagiarism isn’t even mentioned.

The paraphrase practice is offered as a blank sheet to use in class and as a sample solution for educators or discussions in class. You are free to customise it to your requirements or to replace the text sample with examples of your specific discipline.

In any case, we recommend to start with a discussion of the selected excerpts with the group of students. Text comprehension is a precondition to every successful paraphrase.

# Paraphrase practice 1: Sample solution

When you write an academic paper, you need to refer to other sources in order to persuade your readers. Blinding other sources into your study requires quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing. The following paragraph is an excerpt from Black and MacRaild (2017) which you are expected to summarize. To do this, use quotations and paraphrases. When you finish reading the paragraph, you will see some useful steps which may help you do this exercise.

*An excerpt from Black, J., & MacRaild, D. M. (2017). Studying history (4th ed.). London: Palgrave, p. 112.*

A major development in recent decades has been the development of world history as a direct subject and approach. This development reflects the change in world power since the Second World War and, more specifically, from the 1960s. The collapse of the European colonial empires made a history constructed around the rise of the West appear less viable and relevant. So also did an increase in cultural relativism from the 1960s, an increase that reflected a crisis of confidence in traditional views on Western purpose and achievement.

*Discriminate the main idea from supporting arguments.*

The main idea:

* A major development in recent decades has been the development of world history as a direct subject and approach.

Supporting arguments:

* The change in world power since the Second World War and from the 1960s
* The collapse of the European colonial empires
* An increase in cultural relativism from the 1960s
* A crisis of confidence in traditional views on Western purpose and achievement

*Consider the necessity of quoting directly. You do not have to quote but blending a short quotation into your paraphrased expression may help you better transfer ideas:*

* It might be good idea to quote the following sentence directly from the original material. This will help you persuade your readers.
* “This development reflects the change in world power since the Second World War […].”

*Paraphrase the main idea(s) by restructuring and rewording it.*

Black and MacRaild (2017) illustrate the origin of world history as a distinct discipline within history.

*Summarize supporting arguments which seem important to you.*

* After World War II the system of international relations changed and power shifted to powers outside of Europe.
* The process of decolonisation reduced the global significance of European powers.
* The European view as the only relevant measure of value was criticised since the 1960s. History could not be written as a mere rise of the West anymore.
* A loss of faith in conventional opinions about the role of Europe for the rest of the world.

Please, do not forget to use linking devices in order to connect ideas in your summary.

*Suggested summary*

Black and MacRaild (2017) illustrate the origin of world history as a distinct discipline within history. In this respect, they maintain that after World War II the system of international relations changed and power shifted to powers outside of Europe. Black and MacRaild argue that the process of decolonisation reduced the global significance of European powers. According to the authors the European view as the only relevant measure of value was criticised since the 1960s. History could not be written as a mere rise of the West anymore. Furthermore, a loss of faith in conventional opinions about the role of Europe for the rest of the world facilitated the emergence of world history as a new field. (Black & MacRaild 2017, p. 112)

1. Razi, S. (2011). *Advanced Reading and Writing Skills in ELT. APA Style Handbook*, Ankara: Nobel, p. 181-183. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)