

Paraphrasing

When you are paraphrasing a passage from a source, you should completely rewrite the passage using your own carefully composed sentences. A paraphrase sticks closely to the original, following point by point, but you must use your own words and sentence structure. Therefore, while your paraphrase will mirror the meaning and tone of the original passage and have roughly the same number of words, the actual sentence structures and words used will be different. Quotation marks should be used around any words or phrases that are taken directly from the source.

DIRECT QUOTATION

Gregory Cerio describes how the Black Legend came to be:

"The Black Legend was born in the 16th century, when Spain controlled the greatest empire the West had ever known, stretching from Holland to Austria to Italy, and westward across the Atlantic to the Americas. The Spanish were prosperous, powerful, and smug. And almost everyone else in Europe hated them" (193).

PARAPHRASE

According to Gregory Cerio, the Black Legend sprang from the time period in which Spain held reign over the largest federation in Western history, the 16th century. Their power extended "from Holland to Austria to Italy, and westward across the Atlantic to the Americas." Not only were they strong and forceful, but they were also wealthy and self-satisfied. They were disliked by most of Europe (193).

ANOTHER EXAMPLE

Paraphrasing is the most challenging way to use a source if you want to avoid plagiarism. When you paraphrase, put the thought entirely into your own words. **A close paraphrase, any paraphrase that mimics the original sentence structure, is plagiarism.** To avoid plagiarism when paraphrasing, read the passage, think about it, and write it in your own words. Then compare your version to the original. Your version should contain the same information as what you found in the source, and it should not twist the author's meaning. If you've correctly represented the information, the next step is to make sure you're speaking with your own voice. Do not use a thesaurus, whether it's a computer program, a book, or your mind, to rewrite the passage. Your note must not echo the original sentence structure. Even though you are not using the original author's words, you must cite the ideas and facts in the passage.

Here's a passage from the source:

"Hate-based Web sites have grown dramatically in recent years. In 1995 at the time of the Oklahoma City bombing, there was only one hate site¹ but today, the Simon Wiesenthal Center² and the Anti-Defamation League³ have documented about 2,800 hate sites. The Internet has put the problem of incendiary hate into sharp relief, raising many difficult political, legal and social questions" (Leets 287-288).

Here's an example of an acceptable paraphrase in MLA style:

When the Murrah federal office building in Oklahoma City was bombed in 1995, only one website was devoted to hate speech. However, groups that keep track of such things - the Simon Wiesenthal Center and the Anti-Defamation League - reported in 2001 that about 2,800 hate-motivated sites appeared on the Web (Leets 287-288).

Here's an example of a plagiarized paraphrase:

Hate-based Internet sites have grown by leaps and bounds in recent years. In 1995 at the time of the Oklahoma City bombing, there was only one website devoted to hate, but today, the Simon Wiesenthal Center and the Anti-Defamation League have listed about 2,800 hate sites. The Electronic Highway has put the problem of fiery hate into sharp focus, raising many difficult political, legal and social questions (Leets, 287-288).

Compare it to the original above.