

## Paraphrase & Scientific Writing

### What is paraphrase?

- Summary of source material in your own words. In scientific writing, this can take many forms:
  - a single piece of information (e.g., a result) condensed into a single (or portion of a single) sentence of paraphrase
  - an entire study methodology condensed into one or two sentences of paraphrase
  - the purpose, approach, results, and interpretation of a single study condensed into one or more sentences of paraphrase
- Introduced with signal phrases (when appropriate; see below) and responsibly cited.

Author **indicated** that...  
Author's work **asserted** that...  
Author **acknowledged** the...  
Author **declares**...  
Author **argues** for...  
Author **implies** that...

Signal phrases can also express disagreement.

Author **rejected**...  
Author **denied** the claim that...  
Author **refutes**...  
Author **disputes** the...

*Ensure that the signal phrase grammatically matches the content of the paraphrase (i.e., verb tense).  
However, there are some signal phrases that do not contain a verb (i.e., "According to...").*

### Why is it valued over direct quotation?

- Paraphrase demonstrates comprehension of source material
- Paraphrase can be more concisely and cohesively integrated with surrounding explanation and analysis than direct quotation, which calls attention to itself and thus slows readers down
- Direct quotation should be rare and special: reserve use for cases in which the original wording is distinct (e.g., in the case of an organizational mission statement), notable (e.g., when the *exact* wording is analyzed or discussed) or exceptional (e.g., in the case of a speech, which you are unlikely to use in scientific writing)

### How is it used in Scientific Writing?

- Paraphrase of source texts never exists in isolation—it is synthesized with other paraphrase to make a cohesive point.
  - To describe a problem or gap in knowledge/research
  - To provide other context and/or synopses of previous research
  - To define key terms and concepts
  - To justify a study aim, methodology or interpretation of findings
  - To demonstrate consensus or distinction of conclusions

- Paraphrase is always followed by original analysis -- commentary that explains, interprets, and/or discusses the source material in the context of other ideas for specific purposes.

#### **How do you write It?**

- Read the source text thoroughly and carefully: you need to understand it well enough to accurately discuss it with a colleague without consulting the source text
- Set the source text aside and summarize the portions relevant to your purpose in your own words
- Return to the source text and compare your summary/paraphrase to it for accuracy.
  - You CAN ethically use the shared jargon -- specialized terminology and language unique to a discipline -- in your paraphrase
  - You CANNOT use the same phrasing or sentence structure: if the wording of your paraphrase too closely matches that of the source text, set the original aside, give yourself some time/distance from it, and try again.
- When necessary for clarity and cohesion, use signal phrases to introduce your paraphrase. For example
  - According to Beets et al.<sup>1</sup>...
  - Beets et al.<sup>1</sup> used the Strategies to Enhance Practice framework to...