

## Paraphrasing

The extensive use of direct quotations throughout a piece of work is not recommended for two reasons:

1. direct quotations do not allow you to demonstrate your understanding and analysis of the materials you have read
2. direct quotations are included in your word count; using too many limits your personal written contribution which would reflect in your final mark.

In contrast, paraphrasing is writing a quote from an author entirely in your own words. By using your own words, this shows your marker that you have understood what you have read. As a result, paraphrasing is seen by tutors as a higher skill than quoting directly as it demonstrates your ability to analyse texts.

Please remember that, although you have used your own words, you have obtained the idea/argument from the author you have read. Therefore, you *must* still provide a reference for your paraphrase. The surname of the author and the year of publication must be given; however, the page number is not essential.

### **Example:**

The following is a direct quotation from Cottrell (2003, p.143). Note that the quotation does not have quotation marks because it is longer than 3 lines of text. Instead, the quotation is indented at the left margin:

Writing cannot be separated from other processes such as reflection, goal-setting, organisation and research... As your writing skills develop and you become more aware of what is required, you can be more flexible and creative in your approach to writing.

### **A possible paraphrase of the above text might be:**

Cottrell (2003) indicates that the process of writing is linked to the development of other skills such as organisation and reflection. With practice and an understanding of academic conventions comes the ability to write more creatively.

The paraphrase is a complete rewrite of the original text but still reflects the author's ideas. Note that the author's surname and year of publication is given.

Reference: Cottrell, S. (2003). *The Study Skills Handbook*. 2nd edn. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

**A note on plagiarism:**

There are instances where poor paraphrasing will be construed as plagiarism, even when the author and year of publication are acknowledged. A good paraphrase is a rewrite of the original text; changing a few words is not sufficient.

The examples below are **all** examples of plagiarism:

**Word for word = plagiarism:**

Cottrell (2003) indicates that writing cannot be separated from other processes such as reflection, goal-setting, organisation and research. As your writing skills develop and you become more aware of what is required, you can be more flexible and creative in your approach to writing.

**Changing a few words = plagiarism:**

Cottrell (2003) indicates that writing cannot be detached from other processes such as reflection, target-setting, time management and research. As your writing skills improve and you become more aware of what is needed, you can be more flexible and innovative in your approach to writing.

**Patchwork paraphrasing = plagiarism:**

Cottrell (2003) indicates that writing cannot be separated from other processes such as reflection, goal-setting, organisation and research. At first you will have to develop many skills to develop your writing. As your writing skills develop and you become more aware of what is required, you gain confidence and the process of writing becomes easier to manage. You can be more flexible and creative in your approach to writing.

**Important:** If you are concerned that your paraphrase is too similar to the original quotation, it is better to include a direct quote of the original text, complete with author's surname, year of publication and page number. You can then try to paraphrase the next quotation instead.