Paraphrasing

What is paraphrasing?

- Paraphrasing is re-writing the ideas from a piece of text into your own words without changing the meaning.
- You still need to acknowledge the original source of the ideas.

Why paraphrase?

- You demonstrate your own understanding of the information.
- You avoid plagiarism. (Plagiarism is when you use someone else’s ideas or words without acknowledging where you got them from.)

How to paraphrase

1. Read the text until you understand it well. (Find out the meaning of any unknown words or terms.)
2. Ask yourself: “What are the main points of this text?” The first sentence of a paragraph (often called a topic sentence) will usually introduce the main idea of that paragraph, and will guide you to other key points.
3. Write down those main points in sentences.
   Tip: Don’t look at the original text when you do this, or you will be tempted to copy the author’s words. Write the information down in the way it makes sense for you, as if you were explaining it to someone else. You don’t need to put it in the same order as it was in the original, but make sure the information is in a logical sequence.
4. Compare your paraphrase with the original to make sure you haven’t missed important points.
5. Check you have used your words and your way of expressing ideas or information (not just changed their words around or just moved their words or sentences into a different order).
6. Check you have expressed the key information accurately (check you haven’t changed the author’s ideas).
7. Acknowledge the original author(s) in your paraphrase (including page number[s]), and record the full details of the information source for your reference list.
Examples of unacceptable and acceptable paraphrasing

Here is the ORIGINAL text from page 350 in:

For example, McDonald's has expanded rapidly overseas in recent years. Its skill in managing fast-food operations has proven to be just as valuable in countries as diverse as France, Russia, China, Germany, and Brazil as they have been in the United States. Prior to McDonald's entry, none of these countries had American-style fast-food chains, so McDonald's brought a unique product as well as unique skills to each country (Hill, 1994).

Here is an UNACCEPTABLE paraphrase that is PLAGIARISM:
In recent years, McDonald's has expanded rapidly overseas. In countries as diverse as France, Russia, China, Germany and Brazil they have proven to be just as valuable at managing fast-food chains as in the United States. Previously, none of these countries had American-style fast-food chains. McDonald's brought unique skills and a unique product to these countries.

What makes this passage unacceptable paraphrasing?
- The writer has only changed a few words and phrases.
- The writer has failed to cite a source for any of the ideas or facts.

If you do either or both of these things, you are plagiarising.

Here is an ACCEPTABLE paraphrase:
Hill (1994) suggested that McDonald's is an example of a company that has achieved fast international growth. McDonald's has created a global impact with its American-style fast-food products, and different countries have benefitted from its particular brand of management practices.

Why is this passage acceptable?
This is acceptable paraphrasing because:
- The original information is accurately conveyed.
- The writer uses their own words.
- The writer gives the source of the information.

Adapted from: