

Lesson Plan: Paraphrasing skills

LEVEL	TIME	SKILLS	FOCUS
Intermediate / Advanced (B1-C1)	60-90 minutes	Writing, vocabulary	Why we paraphrase; synonyms; structure change; word form change; voice change; plagiarism

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Understand the purpose of paraphrasing in academic and professional writing
- Apply four core strategies: synonyms, structure change, word form, voice change
- Paraphrase a text without changing the original meaning
- Avoid plagiarism by changing both vocabulary AND structure simultaneously

TARGET LANGUAGE & EXAMPLES

Why paraphrase?

- In academic writing: to use a source without copying it
- In exams: IELTS, TOEFL, B2/C1 exams test the ability to rephrase
- In communication: to check understanding / explain something more clearly

Strategy 1: Synonyms

- important → significant / vital / crucial / key
- show → indicate / demonstrate / reveal / suggest
- increase → rise / grow / climb / improve

Strategy 2: Change sentence structure

- Original: Many students fail because they don't sleep enough.
- Paraphrase: Sleep deprivation is a major cause of academic failure among students.

Strategy 3: Change word form (noun ↔ verb ↔ adjective)

- Original: The government decided to reduce taxes.
- Paraphrase: The government's decision involved a reduction in taxation.

Strategy 4: Change voice (active ↔ passive)

- Original: Scientists discovered the compound in 2015.
- Paraphrase: The compound was discovered by scientists in 2015.

Meaning & Nuance

Strategy	What changes	What stays the same
Synonyms	key words replaced	sentence structure and meaning
Structure change	sentence structure and word order	core meaning
Word form change	noun/verb/adjective form	root meaning
Voice change	active → passive or vice versa	all key information
Full paraphrase	vocabulary + structure combined	all key information and meaning

LESSON PROCEDURE

1. Warm-up: Same or plagiarism? (10 min)

Task: Show pairs of sentences. Students judge: genuine paraphrase, plagiarism, or different meaning?

- Pair A: Only one word changed — is this a real paraphrase? → Establishes that a real paraphrase changes both vocabulary AND structure.

2. Presentation (15 min)

Task: Four strategies with before/after examples.

- Key insight: the best paraphrases use more than one strategy at the same time.
- Meaning must be preserved — this is non-negotiable.

3. Practice with all four strategies (20 min)

Task: Students paraphrase 4 sentences, each using a different strategy.

- Check: has the meaning changed? Has the structure changed enough?
- Share with a partner — do they understand the paraphrase correctly?

4. Extended task: paraphrase a paragraph (25 min)

Task: Paraphrase a short paragraph (3–4 sentences) using at least 3 strategies.

- Peer review: side-by-side comparison of original and paraphrase.
- Is it a genuine paraphrase or is too much original language retained?

TEACHER NOTES

- The key insight: changing only synonyms is NOT enough. Structure must change too.
- Paraphrasing is tested explicitly in IELTS (Academic and GT), TOEFL, and Cambridge B2/C1.

EXTENSION / HOMEWORK

Choose one or more:

1. Paraphrase 5 sentences from a textbook or article using all four strategies.
2. Paraphrase a short paragraph and compare your version to a classmate's.
3. Write a summary of an article in your own words using only paraphrasing — no direct quotation.