Paraphrasing and Summarizing in English

Course goal:
reword and condense texts accurately at B1–C1 level

Three source tools:
quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing

Why it matters:
understanding, smooth evidence, avoiding plagiarism

Success criteria:
accurate meaning, new wording and structure, preserved stance

Learning path:
gist reading, paraphrase moves, summary, citation, practice



Paraphrase, Summary, or Quote?

Making the Right Choice

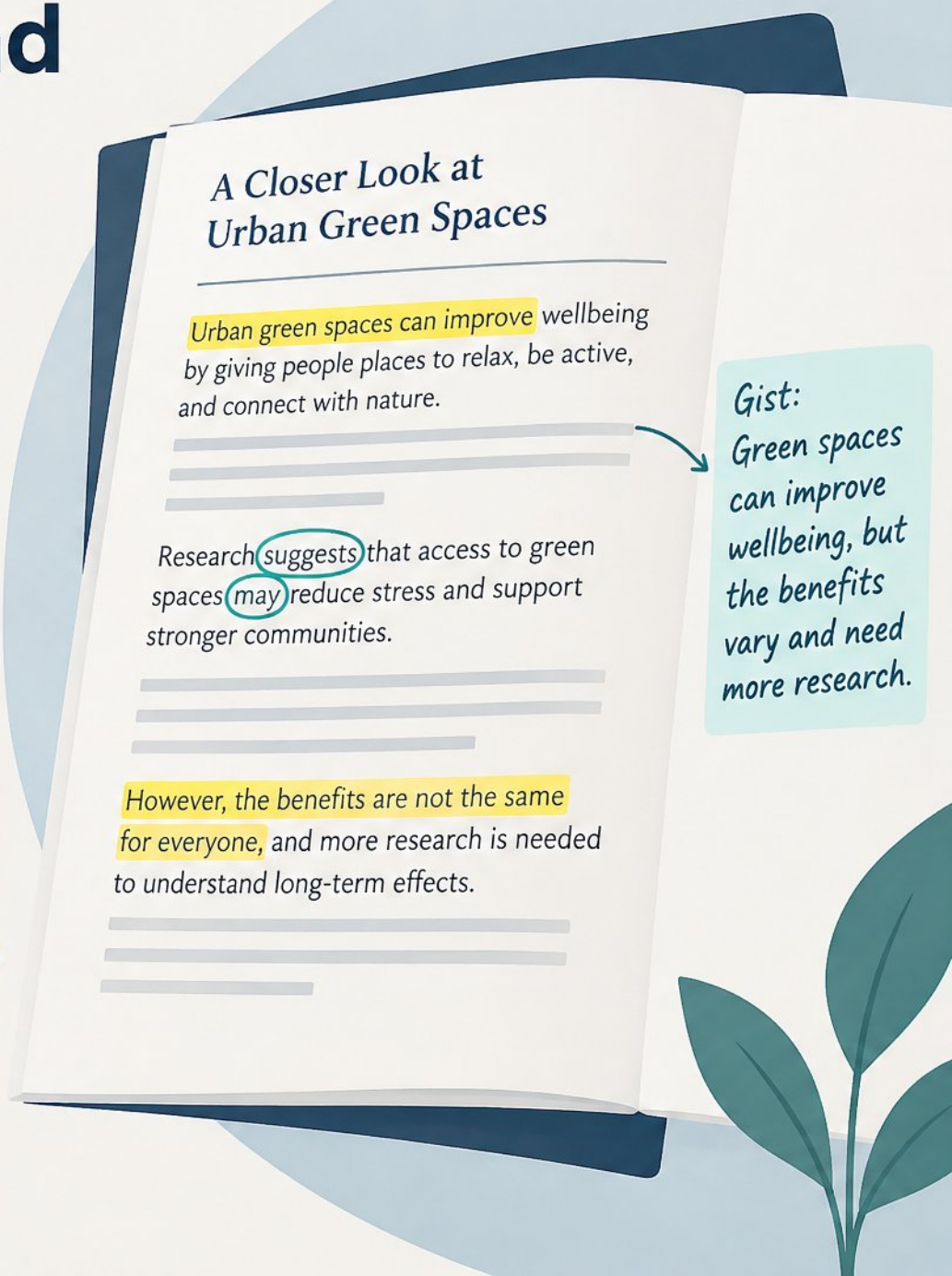


Quote	Paraphrase	Summary
“The role of education is not to fill minds with facts, but to open them to new ways of thinking.”	Education should encourage new ways of thinking rather than simply provide facts.	The author argues that education fosters new thinking, not just fact learning.

- **Paraphrase:** restate a short passage at similar length and detail.
- **Summary**: condense a whole text to its essential claims.
- **Quote** only when exact wording matters—a key term or wording you'll analyze.
- Decide by source length, reader's need for detail, and discipline conventions.
- All three need citation—your own words still borrow the idea.

Reading for Gist and Key Information

- Skim first for topic, purpose, and the author's main claim
- Use topic sentences, headings, signposting words, and repeated concepts
- Separate main ideas from examples, statistics, and side comments
- Watch scope words (all, most, some) and hedging (may, suggests)
- Draft a one-sentence gist statement in your own words



Working from Notes, Not from the Source

- Note the author's key points in your own words; record source and page immediately
- Set the original aside — writing from notes is your best defense against patchwriting
- Keep reactions and connections in a separate column or color
- Turn notes into full sentences, add citation, then check against the original
- Mark indispensable phrases as quotations at note-taking time
- Weak notes reproduce wording; strong notes reproduce understanding



Paraphrasing Techniques: Changing Wording and Structure

- Change both vocabulary and sentence structure — synonyms alone are not enough
- Useful moves: active/passive shifts, clause restructuring, nominalization, reordering information
- Choose synonyms that preserve register, precision, and collocation; informal substitutes distort tone
- Keep technical terms, proper nouns, and fixed expressions unchanged where appropriate
- Preserve the original logic and sequence of ideas — do not add, remove, or re-weight claims

Original sentence

The researchers analyzed the data in order to identify key patterns.

Paraphrased sentence

In order to identify key patterns, the researchers analyzed the data.

Vocabulary (word choices)

analyzed	→	examined
identify	→	determine

Structure (clause order)

Subject Verb Object

↓

Purpose clause | Main clause

What Patchwriting Is and Why It Fails

- Rewording that stays too close to the source's wording or structure
- Common moves: deleting words, one-for-one synonym swaps, small grammar tweaks
- Can count as plagiarism even when the source is cited
- Legitimate early step for understanding new terminology — never in a final draft
- Fix: look up unclear concepts, then rewrite with the source closed

Source Paragraph

Regular physical activity can improve mental health by reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression. Exercise also helps people sleep better and feel more in control of their daily lives.

↓

Patchwritten Draft

Regular physical activity can improve mental health by reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression. Exercise also helps people sleep better and feel more in control of their daily lives.

↓

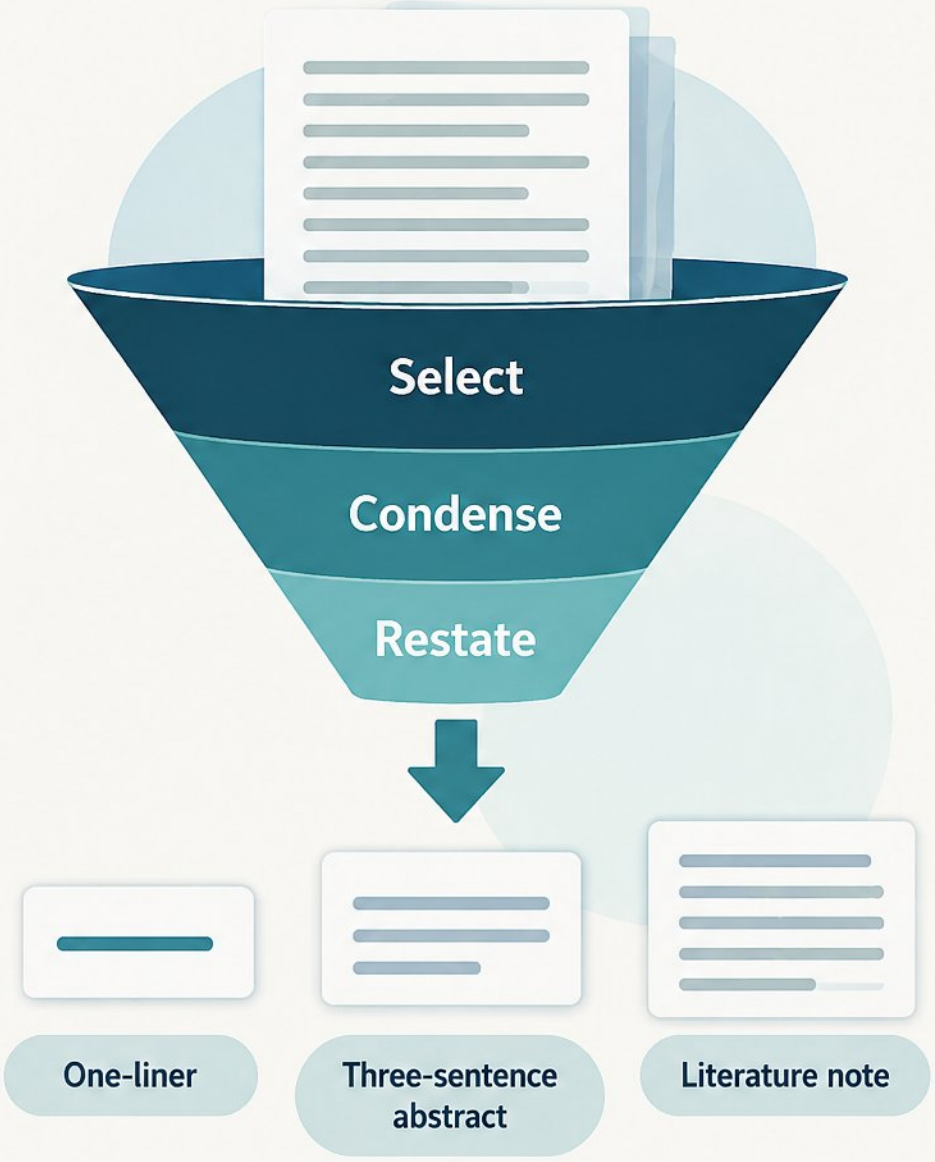
A Stronger Rewrite

Being active can boost your mood and ease feelings of anxiety or depression. It may also lead to better sleep and a greater sense of control in everyday life.



Summarizing: Selecting, Condensing, and Restating

- Summarize a short passage: capture only the author's main claims
- Omit examples, repetition, and minor details; avoid the source's original order
- Condense with general verbs, category words, and concise noun phrases
- Adjust length and density to purpose: one-liner, three-sentence abstract, or literature note
- Summarize arguments, processes, and data differently — preserve the conclusion and stance
- Always cite the source, even when using your own words



Reporting Verbs, Attribution, and Citation Basics

Neutral	Hedging	Evaluative	Evaluative
states	**suggests**	**claims**	**argues**
“The report states that the plan is under review.”	“The study suggests that further analysis may be needed.”	“The article claims that the approach will be effective.”	“The paper argues that this is a critical step forward.”
(Author, Year)	(Author, Year)	(Author, Year)	(Author, Year)

- Reporting verbs carry stance: states is neutral; argues and claims evaluate; suggests hedges.
- Match verb strength to the source — don't make a cautious author sound certain.
- Cite in-text beside the borrowed idea, not at the paragraph's end.
- Distinguish paraphrase, summary, and quotation; use quotation marks for borrowed wording.
- In workplace writing, name source plainly: report title, team, date.



Checking Accuracy and Fidelity to the Source

- Compare your version with the original: meaning, scope, emphasis, hedging
- Accuracy checklist: key facts kept, no added opinion, no dropped qualifications
- Self-edit for clarity and natural English; it should not read like a translation
- Patchwriting check: too-close wording counts as plagiarism even when cited
- Peer review: swap drafts, highlight lifted phrases, verify citations together



Common Pitfalls and Quick Fixes

Spot the issue. See a better approach.

Synonym overload Rewording every word yields unnatural, imprecise prose.	**Rewrite the idea instead.**
Distorted emphasis Turning 'may' into 'does', or a partial finding into a general rule.	Keep the original level of certainty and scope.
Missing or misattributed author stance Especially in summaries that flatten disagreement.	Identify and preserve the author's stance, including points of disagreement.
Over-compression or under-compression Over-compression in summaries (losing the main claim) and under-compression in paraphrase (keeping every example).	Keep the main claim and essential support; remove nonessential detail.

Quick fixes: read-aloud check, back-translation, bullet-point reconstruction, or switch to a direct quote.



Write accurately. Represent ideas fairly.

Practice: Rewording an Academic Abstract

- Guided walkthrough: read a short B1–C1 abstract, draft a gist statement
- Then produce one full paraphrase and one two-sentence summary
- Compare a strong response with a patchwritten version side by side
- Identify lifted phrases and structures, including one-for-one synonym swaps
- Annotate where hedging and scope words were kept or lost
- Note how technical terms stay unchanged while everything else is restated
- Remember: changed vocabulary alone is not enough — structure must change too



Source abstract (B1–C1)

Urban green spaces can improve mental well-being by providing opportunities for physical activity, social interaction, and exposure to natural environments. However, the benefits may vary across different population groups, and further research is needed to understand the long-term effects.

1. Gist statement

Write a brief statement of the main idea in your own words.

2. Full paraphrase

Restate the abstract in full, using different wording and structure.

3. Two-sentence summary

Summarize the main points in two sentences.

Strong response (reworded)

Patchwritten version

Practice: Workplace Texts — Email Thread and Report Excerpt

FROM SOURCE TO CLEAR, USEFUL WRITING

Email Thread

Two actionable sentences

Report Excerpt

Paraphrased for a slide

- Summarize an email thread into two actionable sentences for a colleague
- Paraphrase a report excerpt for a slide, keeping figures and conditions intact
- Compare your draft with strong and weak models; check register and precision
- Discuss professional risks: wrong decisions, lost nuance, misplaced commitment



Applying the Skills: Study and Work Scenarios

Literature Reviews



Meeting Minutes



Slide Summaries



Routine



- **Literature reviews:** summarize each source first, then paraphrase key points
- **Meeting minutes:** record decisions, owners, and deadlines — no editorializing
- **Slide summaries:** lead with the main claim, then one supporting detail
- **Routine:** skim, note in your own words, draft, check, cite
- **Transfer plan:** pick two recurring tasks this week and apply the routine

Review, Self-Assessment, and Next Steps

Build confidence. Use the right strategy. Keep practicing.

Key Points Checklist

- Choose: quote, paraphrase, or summarize — match your reader's need for detail
- Self-check: accurate meaning, new wording, preserved hedging, cited, no patchwriting
- Mini assessment: paraphrase and summarize one short text; compare to model
- Weekly habit: one summary and one paraphrase from your own reading
- Help: writing centers, citation guides, and your discipline's style manual

Mini Assessment

Paraphrase and summarize one short text; compare to model.



Weekly Habit

One summary and one paraphrase from your own reading.



Read with purpose.
Write with integrity.
Keep going.



PersonWise.

PersonWise • AI digital-human course platform

Scan the code or click anywhere to watch this course live, with voice Q&A

personwise.ai/t/9843c115/public