



Preparation for Activity 2

Paraphrasing well is much more difficult than quoting or even summarizing a passage from a text; however, it is a skill that is essential in expository writing. After reviewing with students what a paraphrase is and why writers often use paraphrase rather than quoting large chunks of text, help students analyze the example below and ask them to explain the rhetorical choices that a writer makes when deciding which technique to use.

Rhetorical Grammar Concepts

Note: The materials labeled Rhetorical Grammar Concepts are for your reference as you plan instruction for this unit. Your students have an abbreviated version of these concepts in their materials.

Paraphrase

Expository writing often involves evaluating texts written by others. The first step is to tell your readers what the author said by either quoting or paraphrasing. Quoting is most effective for short pieces of text, such as a few distinctive words or sentences. Paraphrasing is helpful when you want to communicate the main ideas of a passage while avoiding long quotations.

As you write about an author's work, it is essential to avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism is the act of using someone else's words or ideas as though they were your own. Sometimes inexperienced writers feel that it is all right to "borrow" from a text in order to make their own writing better. However, other people's writing is their intellectual property. Using that writing without appropriate credit is the equivalent of stealing. You can fail an entire course or even be expelled if you are caught plagiarizing.

Writers use two approaches to avoid plagiarism. One is to quote the writer's exact words using quotation marks and providing the name of the author and the source of the words. Another way is to paraphrase the writer's words. When you put the writer's ideas into your own words, you can't just move the author's words around; to avoid plagiarizing, you must explain the author's ideas completely in your own words. In both cases, you must indicate whose words or ideas you are using and what the source of those words or ideas is. This is usually accomplished through citations. When you are editing your essay, check that you have quoted or paraphrased accurately and that you have given the source correctly. Your readers will judge your credibility as a writer, in part, by the precision with which you quote and paraphrase.

Here is an example of paraphrasing.

Krakauer's actual words

"Driving west out of Atlanta, he intended to invent an utterly new life for himself, one in which he would be free to wallow in unfiltered experience. To symbolize the complete severance from his previous life, he even adopted a new name. No longer would he answer to Chris McCandless; McCandless was now Alexander Supertramp, master of his own destiny" (23).



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Paraphrase of Krakauer's words

Krakauer concluded that when Chris McCandless left home, he hoped to create a new identity and divorce himself from his old life. To show that he was completely free of his past and open to new experiences, McCandless took a new name: Alexander Supertramp (23).

(The writer gives us a perspective on what he is paraphrasing by using "concluded" to introduce it. The idea of the passage is expressed in different words. The writer doesn't have to put quotation marks around "Alexander Supertramp" because it is a name.)

Paraphrase that includes quoted material

Krakauer concluded that when Chris McCandless left home, he hoped to create a new identity and divorce himself from his old life, leaving him "free to wallow in unfiltered experience." To show that he was completely free of his past, McCandless took a new name: Alexander Supertramp (23).

(The writer uses a quotation because being "free to wallow in unfiltered experience" implies a judgment about McCandless on Krakauer's part—that he was perhaps being self-indulgent—that the simple paraphrase doesn't capture. It is also a case where the author's words are particularly expressive and, therefore, worth preserving in the paraphrase.)

Guidelines for Paraphrasing

- Reread the passage you intend to paraphrase. Check any unfamiliar words in a dictionary so you are sure you understand the passage accurately.
- Write your paraphrase without looking back at the passage. Use your own words.
- Check what you have written against the original to make sure it is accurate. Make any needed changes.
- If you have used any distinctive words or phrases from the original, put quotation marks around them.
- Make sure you have included the name of the author, the name of the source (if not already given), and the page reference for the passage you have paraphrased.

Activity 2: Paraphrasing a Paragraph

Have the students complete the paraphrasing activity on their own, in pairs, or in groups.

Activity 2: Paraphrasing a Paragraph

This activity is based on the last paragraph of Chapter Eight, “Alaska.”

Write a paraphrase of the following paragraph (the last paragraph in Chapter Eight). Be careful to use all your own words; do not use any quotes. Also, check any words that are unfamiliar in a dictionary to ensure your paraphrase is accurate.

McCandless didn't conform particularly well to the bush-casualty* stereotype. Although he was rash, untutored in the ways of the backcountry, and incautious to the point of foolhardiness, he wasn't incompetent—he wouldn't have lasted 113 days if he were. And he wasn't a nutcase, he wasn't a sociopath, he wasn't an outcast. McCandless was something else—although precisely *what* is hard to say. A pilgrim, perhaps (85).

*“Bush” means wild, uncleared country; a bush-casualty is someone who has gone into the wilderness and died.

(Possible response)

McCandless was different from other people who tried to escape their problems by going into the wilderness. He wasn't crazy or criminal or unable to get along with people. He was reckless and ignorant about the Alaskan wilderness, but he was able to take care of himself since he survived for 113 days. Unlike others, McCandless was searching for spiritual answers.

Quotations

Rhetorical Grammar Concepts

Preparation for Activity 3

Most students know the rudiments of quoting a text although they may not know the finer points of punctuating quotations. However, students often rely overly on quoted material to avoid having to paraphrase. As you go over the examples, review the conventions of incorporating quotations, but it is even more important for students to understand that they need to make thoughtful decisions about what and how much they choose to quote. Emphasize that they must quote accurately. Writers check and recheck their quotations to make sure they have used the exact words of the person being quoted. Sloppy quotations send a negative message to readers and damage a writer's ethos.

Quotations

Writers choose to quote when the author's words are especially distinctive or when the meaning might be lost in a paraphrase. Sometimes this means that a writer will quote whole sentences or even a whole paragraph. Often, however, the best strategy is to use a single sentence or even a phrase from the text and incorporate it into your own words about the text.

Quoting multiple sentences

Jon Krakauer in *Into the Wild* observes:

Alaska has long been a magnet for dreamers and misfits, people who think the unsullied enormity of the Last Frontier will patch all the holes in their lives. The bush is an unforgiving place, however, that cares nothing for hope or longing (4).

Quoting a single sentence

Krakauer describes the way in which Alaska has always attracted people who hope to escape the problems in their lives. They often find new problems, however, because "the bush is an unforgiving place . . . that cares nothing for hope or longing" (4).

Quoting a phrase

Krakauer calls Alaska "a magnet for dreamers and misfits" (4). According to him, people try to escape their problems by going into the wilderness, but they discover that the wilderness has no sympathy for their dreams.

Guidelines for Quoting

Guidelines for Quoting

- Always introduce the quotation using your own words. Use a variety of verbs to introduce quotations and to suggest how you feel about the quotation.
- Fit the grammatical structure of the quotation into the grammatical structure of your own sentence.
- Give the author's full name the first time you refer to him or her. After that, use only the last name. Put the page number at the end of the quote.
- Give the name of the source the first time you quote from it. Underline or use italics for books, movies, and longer works: *Into the Wild*. Use quotation marks for the titles of articles, essays, and chapters in books: "The Stikine Ice Cap."
- If the quotation is longer than four lines (for example, see the quotation in Activity 2), introduce it with a colon and indent the whole quotation.
- If you leave words out of the quotation, indicate the omission with an ellipsis, three spaced periods (. . .). If you insert words, put them in brackets ([]) to show that they were not in the original text.

Keeping sentences grammatically correct when quoting

When you integrate a quotation into your own writing, your words and the quoted words must fit together grammatically. This means that you have to be careful about what you quote and where you insert the quotation. You may also have to make changes within the quote, in which case you need to put brackets around the changed words.

Krakauer's actual words

"That put us into a kind of a tizzy," Walt admits. Both Billie and I come from blue-collar families. A college degree is something we don't take lightly, OK, and we worked hard to be able to send our kids to good schools. So Billie sat him down and said, 'Chris, if you really want to make a difference in the world, if you really want to help people who are less fortunate, get yourself some leverage first. Go to college, get a law degree, and then you'll be able to have a real impact'" (114).*

*This shows how to punctuate a quotation within another quotation. Krakauer is quoting McCandless's father, who is quoting his mother.

Incorporating a sentence

McCandless's parents were upset when he told them that he wasn't going to college. His mother Billie advised him, "Chris, if you really want to make a difference in the world, if you really want to help people who are less fortunate, get yourself some leverage first" (114).

Incorporating part of a sentence

McCandless's parents were upset when he told them that he wasn't going to college. His mother Billie advised Chris that if he "really want[ed] to make a difference in the world," he should go to law school before he tried to help the homeless and the poor (114).

Activity 3: Incorporating Quotations

Have students complete Activity 3 in groups, in pairs or on their own.

Activity 3: Incorporating Quotations

This activity is based on Chapter Eight, "Alaska."

Write a short paragraph in which you explain what you think McCandless's motivation was for going into the wilderness. Incorporate one or more quotations from Chapter Eight, "Alaska." Remember that you can agree or disagree with Krakauer's interpretation that McCandless did not want or plan to die.

(Possible response—1)

Krakauer believed that McCandless was "a pilgrim, perhaps" (85), searching for the meaning of life far from civilization and friends. The notes that McCandless made in his books certainly suggest that he was trying to discover the meaning of life. He may even have realized towards the end that people mattered. However, I think he had a suicidal streak as well. If not, he would have listened to the advice that Jim Gallien, an Alaskan who was the last person to see McCandless alive, gave him. He would have prepared himself much better for his journey. Someone who wants to survive doesn't go into the wilderness with ten pounds of rice, two tuna sandwiches, and a bag of Fritos.

(Possible response—2)

Krakauer argues that "McCandless didn't conform particularly well to the bush-casualty stereotype" (85) and called him "a pilgrim, perhaps" (85). He searched for solitude, but he wasn't crazy, and he showed that he was resourceful during the 113 days he lived in the wilderness. He had rejected his parents' affluent lifestyle and wanted to simplify his life and find spiritual fulfillment, but he wasn't suicidal and didn't want to die. As he neared death, he left a note asking to be saved: "S.O.S. I need your help. I am injured, near death, and too weak to hike out of here. I am all alone, this is no joke, in the name of God, please remain to save me" (198). These are the words of someone eager to live and perhaps even to return to the civilization he had left behind.

Making the Speaker and the Context Clear

Rhetorical Grammar Concepts

Preparation for Activity 4

One of the biggest challenges that faces writers when they incorporate the text of others is to make clear to their readers who is speaking and what the context is for what they are saying. The following activity asks students to practice identifying speakers clearly, keeping their readers in mind, and select precise verbs to introduce quotations or reported speech.

Making the Speaker and the Context Clear

Writers try to make their writing interesting by choosing words that are precise and varied. It is possible to introduce every quotation with “He said . . .”, but it will produce boring and repetitive writing. Krakauer uses a variety of colorful verbs to introduce quotations (in bold below). He also varies the tenses that he uses to introduce quotations.

Verbs to Introduce Quotes and Reported Speech

shouts	muses	insists	remarks	describes
points out	observes	stresses	finds	remembers
explains	argues	maintains	suggests	discusses
notes	claims	believes	recommends	questions
admits	claims	asserts	advises	explores
reflects	feels	doubts	shows	asks
observes	stresses	emphasizes	concludes	examines

When you use the verbs in the first four columns to introduce reported speech, you will often use the pattern: **subject + verb + “that”** clause.

Roman stressed **that** “living off the land . . . is incredibly difficult” (185).

When you use the verbs in the last column to introduce reported speech, you will often use the pattern: **subject + verb + noun phrase** (including phrases that begin with a question word). Some verbs can use either pattern.

Krakauer explores **how** difficult it is for adults “to recall how forcefully we were once buffeted by the passions and longings of youth” (186).

Roman stressed the difficulties of “living off the land.”

As a writer, you can communicate your interpretation of a quotation or reported speech by the verb you choose to introduce it. Compare the two sentences:

Roman **said** that “living off the land . . . is incredibly difficult” (185).

Roman **stressed** that “living off the land . . . is incredibly difficult” (185).



Punctuating Quotations

Rhetorical Grammar Concepts

Preparation for Activity 5

While it's important not to get bogged down in the minutiae of punctuating quotations, correct punctuation is a component of academic writing valued in college and at work. Krakauer provides an engaging model since quotation is a stylistic device that he uses repeatedly and with rhetorical power in *Into the Wild*. Use the example below to clarify these punctuation rules for students before asking them to apply the rules to quotations from Chapter 18: "The Stampede Trail."

Punctuating Quotations

To quote a whole sentence: Introduce the quote with your own words, and use a comma and quotations marks (and usually a capital letter for the first word of the quoted sentence). Put the page number of the quote in parentheses after the closing quotation mark, and then add your end punctuation.

Example

Everett Ruess wrote in his last letter, "I have not tired of the wilderness; rather I enjoy its beauty and the vagrant life I lead more keenly all the time" (87).

To quote a word or phrase: Use quotation marks, but **do not capitalize** the first word of the quote.

Examples

Krakauer calls Alaska "a magnet for dreamers and misfits" (4). According to Krakauer, people try to escape their problems by going into the wilderness, but they discover that the wilderness has no sympathy for their aspirations.

Krakauer suggested that the word that best described McCandless was "pilgrim" (84).



To quote a longer passage: If you need to quote a passage that is four lines or longer, use a colon at the end of the sentence you have used to introduce the quote and indent the whole quote. When you do this, do not use quotation marks, but you still must indicate the page where the passage occurs.

Example

In a letter to Ron Franz, an old man who befriended him, McCandless sets out his philosophy of life:

The very basic core of a man's living spirit is his passion for adventure. The joy of life comes from our encounters with new experiences, and hence there is no greater joy than to have an endlessly changing horizon, for each day to have a new and different sun (57).

To shorten a quote, use an ellipsis. An ellipsis is three dots (. . .) separated by spaces that indicate that words have been left out. Use four dots if you are also leaving out a period from the original text. Be careful to make the final wording clear and smooth.

Example

McCandless recommended that Ron "adopt a helter-skelter style of life . . . and hit the Road" (57).

To change a word in a quote: If you must change a word (or words) in a quote to make it fit with your own words, use **square brackets** ([]).

Example

McCandless said that he hoped the next time he saw Ron he would "be a new man with a vast array of new adventures and experiences behind [him]" (58).

To quote a writer who quotes another person (a quote within a quote): Use regular (double) quotation marks (") to show that you are quoting the writer and **single quotation marks** (') around the words that the writer quoted.

Example

Krakauer noted, "Even staid, prissy Thoreau, who famously declared that it was enough to have 'travelled a good deal in Concord,' felt compelled to visit the more fearsome wilds of nineteenth century Maine and climb Mt. Katahdin" (183).

Activity 5: Punctuating Quotations

This activity is based on Chapter 18, “The Stampede Trail.”

Punctuate the following quotations from Chapter 18, “The Stampede Trail.” Be sure to compare each sentence to the original and find *exactly* which words are quoted. Cite the page number in parentheses at the end of the sentence that includes the quotation.

1. *Page 187:* In Alaska, McCandless discovered the truth of John Campbell’s observation that “the life of a hunter carries with it the threat of deprivation and death by starvation” (187).
2. *Page 187:* Before his death, McCandless had underlined the passage in Doctor Zhivago that asserts that “love of one’s neighbor” is essential for a human being to contribute to progress (187).
3. *Page 188:* According to Krakauer, despite having killed and eaten animals and birds and gathered wild potatoes, berries, and mushrooms, McCandless was on the “precarious edge” of starvation because he “had run up a sizable caloric deficit” (188).
4. *Page 189:* Krakauer seems to believe that McCandless had learned that he needed other people, and that he planned to “become a member of the human community” when he returned to the Lower Forty-Eight (189).
5. *Page 192:* According to Krakauer’s initial theory, McCandless “had committed a careless blunder, confusing one plant for another, and died as a consequence” (192).
6. *Page 198:* As he was dying, McCandless “abandoned the cocky moniker, . . . Alexander Supertramp, in favor of the name given to him at birth by his parents” (198).
7. *Page 199:* In spite of his lonely, agonizing death, McCandless’s last words were, “I HAVE HAD A HAPPY LIFE AND THANK THE LORD. GOOD-BYE AND MAY GOD BLESS ALL!” (199).