

Paraphrase

A technique that helps you understand and elaborate on any piece of text (e.g., a poem, paragraph from an article, a math problem, a procedure).

Success Criteria

An effective paraphrase needs to

- Capture the main idea (summary)
- Elaborate on ideas in a text without distorting content
- Give important and supporting points
- Cite the original source
- Be in your own words
- May differ in length from the original source

original text

The Garbage Patch

Scientists say the garbage patch is just one of five that may be caught in giant gyres scattered around the world's oceans. Abandoned fishing gear like buoys, fishing line and nets account for some of the waste, but other items come from land after washing into storm drains and out to sea.

Plastic is the most common refuse in the patch because it is lightweight, durable and an omnipresent, disposable product in both advanced and developing societies. It can float along for hundreds of miles before being caught in a gyre and then, over time, breaking down.

But once it does split into pieces, the fragments look like confetti in the water. Millions, billions, trillions and more of these particles are floating in the world's trash-filled gyres.*

From Hoshaw, Lindsey "Afloat in the Ocean, Expanding Islands of Trash." *New York Times* (November 10, 2009).

*Gyre: a circular or spiral motion, especially a circular ocean current. (Definition from www.thefreedictionary.com)

A Summary

Garbage, mostly plastic, is collecting in giant patches in the gyres of the world's oceans.

Higher-level Paraphrase

There are large garbage patches forming in the ocean. These areas of garbage accumulate where the ocean currents move in a circular motion causing the garbage to be trapped in a swirling area of water. Most of this garbage is plastic from various countries in the world. Plastic is everywhere, and it is used in all kinds of products that are thrown away. Some of this plastic makes its way to the ocean. Even though the plastic may break down, it doesn't totally disappear. So there are trillions of specks of plastic infesting the ocean, and these garbage patches continue to grow (Hoshaw, 2009).

Description of quality: This paraphrase contains all of the success criteria listed above. It elaborates by defining gyres in a way that is more easy to understand. It also includes all the important information.

Level 2 Paraphrase

Scientists warn that garbage is collecting in the ocean's gyres. Some of the garbage comes from the fishing industry, but most of it comes from what people are throwing away on land. This is a huge concern because the garbage isn't going away. It continues to build up in the ocean (Hoshaw, 2009).

Description of quality: This paraphrase captures the main idea, and does some elaboration which helps with understanding the text. However, it misses some key points.

Level 1 Paraphrase

Garbage, particularly plastic, is washing into the world's oceans. This garbage is collecting in large patches in swirls in the ocean. The plastic is beaking down into a trillion pieces (Hoshaw, 2009).

Description of quality: This paraphrase captures the main idea, but it does not elaborate. It also misses some important details, for example, the concern related to the problem.

Below Level 1

Scientists say there is a giant garbage patch, one of five, scattered around the world's oceans. Abandoned gear from fishing, for example nets, is some of the garbage, but other items come

from land.

Plastic is the most common item in the patch because it is lightweight, durable and everywhere in both developed and undeveloped countries. It can float along for hundreds of kilometers before being caught in a swirling ocean current and then, over time, break apart.

But once it does disintegrate, the fragments become millions, billions, trillions of particles are floating in the world's oceans.

Description of quality: This is not a paraphrase. It is often called patch writing. In fact, it is an example of plagiarism. Words are simply replaced with other words. This does not show that the writer has a clearer understanding of what this means.

Below Level 1

Garbage is everywhere, even in places you would not expect. The oceans have a lot of garbage. Fishermen need to make sure their equipment is getting dumped in the water. There are a lot of things that fishermen use that can easily get left in the ocean. Other people need to do a better job of taking care of their garbage. For example, if we recycled more, we would not have so much waste. Waste is becoming a huge problem. It is an environmental issue that will kill us if we don't do something soon.

Description of quality: This is not a paraphrase. This paragraph elaborates too much and no longer captures the main idea of the original.

References

Dawe, Robert, Malott, Paul. *Reference Points: A Guide to Language, Literature, and Media*. Toronto: Prentice Hall, 2001. Print.

Simon Fraser University Plagiarism Tutorial: Writing Skills. Simon Fraser University, 2013. March 21, 2013.

The Purdue OWL. Purdue U Writing Lab, 2010. Web. March 21, 2013.