Academic Writing

To infinity and beyond.

Paul Murphy

Academic Writing

Mastering Citation and Referencing

Contents

Introduction

In-text citation – An explanation

All academic writing requires students to use in-text citation in order to acknowledge where their research comes from.

Students can use a range of sources through independent research or as recommended by their course tutors.

Citation style varies depending on the source, but one fundamental requirement is to include:

- the **author's surname**
- the **year of publication**.

For example, this short text is taken from an academic journal article written by Jennifer Hornby in 2020:

> The dominance of English as an international language may continue until the end of the 21st Century. However, the number of native English speakers is decreasing, while the world population of native Arabic and Spanish speakers is rising. It is not certain that English will be the world's most dominant language in the 22nd Century.

If students want to use the ideas expressed by the author, they have to mention whose ideas they are (i.e. Jennifer Hornby's).

They must also mention the year of publication (i.e. 2020).

> ***For example:*** According to Hornby (2020), it is possible that English will not be the most important international language in the 22nd Century.

In this example, one of Hornby's ideas has been paraphrased and she has been cited.

In this book, we will look at different ways to paraphrase and cite sources.

> *For example:* Hornby (2020) claims that, "it is not certain that English will be the world's most dominant language in the 22nd Century" (p.25).

In this example, one of Hornby's ideas has been quoted and she has been cited. In this book, we will look at how quotations are integrated into essays.

Reference lists – An explanation

In addition to the requirement for in-text citations, students must also include a reference list at the end of a written research assignment.

This enables teachers to access the sources of the student's work to ensure that these sources are:

- reliable
- suitably academic
- accurately used.

In a reference list, each entry contains significantly more detail than an in-text citation. It usually includes, as a minimum:

- the surname(s) of the author(s)
- the first initial(s) of the author(s)
- the year of publication
- the title of the article or book
- the name of the publication
- a link to the publication.

Additional details may also be required. For instance, a reference for a journal article includes volume number, issue number and page numbers.

> *For Example:*

> Davis, F, (2022). The impact of urbanisation on rural communities in Thailand's northeast. *The International Journal of Urban Studies*. 12(2), 186–203. https:doi. org.20.1247.//jtm0000

As many different types of publication can be used, there is variation in how to write a reference for each type. In addition, some sources have no individual author, while others can be video rather than written.

This book looks at this variation, and advises on the differences while also enabling students to practise writing reference lists.

In addition to the written details required in a reference list, students must also pay close attention to small stylistic details. For example:

- Journal titles are written in italics.
- The reference list should be in alphabetical order.
- A reference should be indented after the first line.

The principles of writing a reference list are fairly simple. However, the variety of styles and requirement to follow specific guidelines can make it somewhat daunting for students.

The following pages aim to give students more confidence in writing reference lists by enabling them to identify the key features before writing.

Different styles of citation and referencing

All universities require students to use citation and referencing in their research assignments. However, there are several different styles or conventions to follow.

While other styles exist, five of the most widely used referencing systems are:

- APA (American Psychological Association)
- Harvard
- MLA (Modern Languages Association)
- MHRA (Modern Humanities Research Association)
- Vancouver.

Universities may adopt one main system. However, even within the same university, different faculties may use different systems. Some universities may have their own 'house style', which could be a combination of some of the different systems.

Students will ultimately have to adapt to the system that is used by their university or department, but the overall principles are similar.

The practice tasks in this book are mainly drawn from the APA system, which is very similar to the Harvard system. This means that students can easily adapt their style to either system if required.

The APA and Harvard systems are widely used globally, so students may be able to use them in many different international contexts.

This book does not attempt to cover every detail of these systems because the scope is much too wide. APA's 7th Edition (*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Seventh Edition*), published in 2020, provides guidance on every possible aspect of citation and referencing using this system.

Instead, this book attempts to use citation and referencing guidelines and help students put them into practice in practical academic contexts. Just as important as the guidelines are the skills required to use sources effectively, especially paraphrasing.

'Sources' used in practice activities

Finally, the source material used in this resource is fictitious. There is no intention to use the names of actual authors and publications. The names used are created purely for the purpose of practising skills. Any similarities with actual publications or academic authors is entirely coincidental.

About the author

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Unit 1
World languages

Paraphrasing 1 – Using synonyms

Paraphrasing is the skill of expressing something that someone else has written in our own words. It is essential that the meaning is the same but most of the words are different.

A synonym is a word that has a similar meaning to another. For example:

- **large** is a synonym of **big**
- **little** is a synonym of **small**
- **adverse** is a synonym of **negative**

Synonyms are very important in effective paraphrasing.

Look at the words in the box, and match them to the synonyms (**1–10**) that follow.

> begin   creative   assess   appropriate   consensus
> demonstrate   reaction   adequate   crucial   obvious

1 vital   _____

2 show   _____

3 agreement   _____

4 evaluate   _____

5 suitable   _____

6 clear   _____

7 sufficient   _____

8 start   _____

9 response   _____

10 inventive   _____

Tip: Remember that synonyms only have a **similar** meaning. We can't always use them in exactly the same way as the original word.

For example:

- Graduation is an important event.   ✔
- Graduation is a significant event.   ✔
- It is important to edit essays carefully.   ✔
- It is significant to edit essays carefully.   ✖

Collocation and subtle differences in meaning are important to be aware of when using synonyms.

Practice

Before you start to paraphrase, look at the original text and think of some possible synonyms.

However, remember that you cannot always change every word. Some key words must not be changed to ensure that the meaning is not altered.

> *For example:* Written and oral examinations are the most common ways to evaluate students' language ability.

- oral   ➔   speaking
- examinations   ➔   tests, assessments
- way   ➔   method
- evaluate   ➔   assess, test
- language   ➔   linguistic
- ability   ➔   skill, competency
- KEY WORDS   ➔   students

Look at the following sentences. Identify possible synonyms for some of the words.

1   In most countries, children begin learning a foreign language in primary school.

- _____

- _____

- KEY WORD(S) _____

2   A high level of skill in spoken English is crucial in many careers.

- _____

- _____

- KEY WORD(S) _____

3   In a speaking exam, students must show that they have an adequate level of English in a particular context.

- _____

- _____

- KEY WORD(S) _____

Paraphrasing 2 – Changing the word order

Effective paraphrasing requires more than one technique. Just using synonyms is not sufficient, so being able to change the word order is also important.

The most common way to do this is by changing the focus of the sentence.

This often means that the subject becomes the object or a prepositional phrase moves from the beginning to the end of a sentence.

> *For example:* In Canada, French is the mother tongue of almost a quarter of the population.
>
> - Almost a quarter of the population of Canada use French as their mother tongue.

While changing the word order is useful, it must be combined with the use of synonyms to be effective.

For example: Approximately 25 per cent of people in Canada speak French as their first language.

- Canada moves from the start of the sentence to the middle
- The subject of the sentence changes from 'French' to 'Approximately 25 per cent of people'
- Note that 'mother tongue' has been changed to 'first language'. Sometimes we can use more than one word as alternatives for fixed expressions.
- 'Almost a quarter' becomes 'Approximately 25 per cent'
- 'the population' becomes 'people'
- 'Canada' and 'French' are key words that cannot be changed

Object to subject

Changing the object of a sentence to the subject is another useful method of changing the word order.

For example: In the 20th Century, France was the most popular holiday destination for British people.

- For British people, the most popular holiday destination during the 20th Century was France.
  - The object of the original sentence has become the subject of the rewritten sentence.
  - The prepositional phrases at the beginning and the end of the original sentence have changed places.
  - 'in' has been changed to 'during' to make it sound more natural.

However, we also have to use synonyms to make this a suitable paraphrase:

- British people's favourite tourist destination during the 20th Century was France.
  - The best alternative to 'most popular' is 'favourite', so we have to change the subject of the sentence to ensure that the English is natural.
  - 'holiday' is changed to 'tourist'. In this context they are nouns as adjectives, and are suitable synonyms when combined with 'destination'.
  - '20th Century' could become '1900s', but it doesn't sound natural here.

Practice 1

Look at the following sentences. Change the word order, but ensure that the meaning remains the same.

> *For example:* Spanish is the most widely spoken foreign language in the USA.
>
> - In the USA, the most widely spoken foreign language is Spanish.

1   English is one of the official languages of the Philippines.

_____

2   Mandarin Chinese is the most common first language in the world.

_____

3   Because of colonialism, Spanish is the first language of many South American countries.

_____

4   German, French and Italian are the official languages of Switzerland.

_____

Practice 2

Look at the following sentences. Change the word order and/or use synonyms to paraphrase them as effectively as possible.

1   An English communication test is the best measurement of a student's listening and speaking ability.

_____

2   Many people find it difficult to speak Thai because it is a tonal language.

_____

3   In Japan, most children start studying English in kindergarten.

_____

4   In Nigeria, the official language is English, but most people speak a second language.

_____

Paraphrasing 3 – Recognising effective paraphrasing

It is important to master the basics of changing word order and using synonyms to be able to paraphrase effectively.

However, it is also important to be aware that good paraphrasing requires more than just these two techniques.

Look at the original text in the following example, and read the explanation of which is the most effective paraphrase from the choices given.

Original text: Building vocabulary is a necessary step in learning a new language.

Paraphrased texts:

a   Constructing vocabulary is an essential step in studying a new language.

b   An important stage in learning a new language is vocabulary.

c   An essential stage in language learning is developing vocabulary.

Analysing possible answers

a   Constructing vocabulary is an essential step in studying a new language.

   INEFFECTIVE

- Although 'constructing' can be a synonym of 'building', 'building vocabulary' works as a collocation, but 'constructing vocabulary' does not.
- The sentence structure remains the same: 'essential' and 'learning' work okay as synonyms, but it is generally too similar to the original.

b   An important stage in learning a new language is vocabulary.

   INEFFECTIVE

- 'important' and 'necessary' have different meanings.
- 'vocabulary' is not a 'stage'. To describe it as a stage, it must be preceded by a gerund form (e.g. 'learning'; 'studying'; 'developing').

c   An essential stage in language learning is developing vocabulary.

EFFECTIVE

- The word order has been changed.

- Appropriate synonyms are used (e.g. 'essential'; 'stage'; 'developing').

- 'learning a new language' is rephrased to 'language learning' – the use and meaning are interchangeable.

TIP: If you have time, use a collocations dictionary when you are paraphrasing.

Remember, faulty use of collocations is one of the most common features of ineffective paraphrasing.

If you don't have time to look up a collocations dictionary, just Google the combination of words. If you search for 'constructing vocabulary', you will not find examples.

However, if you search for 'developing vocabulary', you will see this combination in multiple results.

Practice

Now look at the original texts in the following examples (**1–5**), and select the most effective paraphrase from the choices given (**a–c**).

1   *Original text:* At the beginning of a language class, basic conversation about familiar topics is often the focus.

   a   Simple discussions about familiar topics are frequently the focus at the start of a language lesson.

   b   At the start of a language lesson, basic communication about familiar topics is often the focus.

   c   Language classes always have basic conversations about famous topics.

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2   *Original text:* Writing in a different alphabet is often the biggest challenge for Europeans who study some Asian languages.

   a   The biggest challenge for Europeans who learn some Asian languages is writing in a new alphabet.

   b   Europeans who learn Asian languages always have problems with writing.

   c   For European students, the most difficult aspect of learning some Asian languages is often writing in an unfamiliar alphabet.

3   *Original text:* Passing a language exam is a requirement for students who want to study abroad.

   a   A requirement for students who aim to study abroad is passing a language exam.

   b   Students who wish to study overseas must pass a language test.

   c   Passing a language test is necessary for overseas students.

4   *Original text:* Language skills are vital in today's job market.

   a   In today's job market, language skills are crucial.

   b   For many employers, the ability to speak foreign languages is very important.

   c   To work at a market, employees must speak more than one language.

5   *Original text:* Research suggests that learning European languages is becoming less popular.

   a   According to research, fewer people are studying European languages.

   b   Research indicates that studying European languages is becoming less popular.

   c   According to research, European languages are becoming less important.

In-text citation and paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is essential when using academic sources as it helps the writer to avoid plagiarism.

Plagiarism is the copying of someone else's writing and pretending that it is yours. This is an extremely serious offence at schools and universities.

By paraphrasing effectively, the risks of plagiarism are much lower.

The purpose of using academic sources is generally to support ideas that we have.

The following text is from an article written by Sacha Khan in 2019.

> English is the official language of both Nigeria and India, which are two of the most populous countries in the world.

A student wishes to support an idea by referring to Sacha Khan's article:

> *English is considered a global language for many reasons. For example, two of the world's most populous nations – Nigeria and India – use English as their official language (Khan, 2019).*

The in-text citation – (Khan, 2019) – is the writer's acknowledgement that they read Sacha Khan's article to find this idea and the specific examples of Nigeria and India.

The paraphrasing in the second sentence is effective because:

- the word order has been changed; synonyms have been used; some expressions have been rephrased.

The following text is from an article written by Emma Clark in 2021.

> It is unlikely that the Welsh language will become extinct because all school pupils in Wales must study Welsh as a first or second language.

A student wishes to support an idea by referring to Emma Clark's article:

> *Many countries have taken steps to protect their languages. For example, learning Welsh as a first or second language is compulsory at all schools in Wales (Clark, 2021).*

The in-text citation – (Clark, 2021) – is the writer's acknowledgement that they read Emma Clark's article to learn or confirm that studying Welsh was mandatory in Welsh schools.

*Note that in the paraphrased second sentence, 'school pupils' are not mentioned. This has been omitted because it is unnecessary. It is obvious that studying in schools relates to school pupils.

Avoiding plagiarism

A failure to use citation and paraphrasing appropriately can result in plagiarism. As mentioned previously, this is a serious offence that can result in severe penalties for students.

Let's look again at the first text extract from an article written by Sacha Khan in 2019.

> English is the official language of both Nigeria and India, which are two of the most populous countries in the world.

A student wishes to support an idea by referring to Sacha Khan's article:

> *English is considered a global language for many reasons (Khan, 2019). For example, two of the world's most populous nations – Nigeria and India – use English as their official language.*

This could be considered plagiarism because the citation (Khan, 2019) is in the wrong sentence. The information in the second sentence comes from Khan but this is not made clear.

Another student wishes to support an idea by referring to Sacha Khan's article:

> *English is considered a global language for many reasons. English is the official language of both Nigeria and India, which are two of the most populous countries in the world (Khan, 2019).*

This is plagiarism. Even though there is a citation in the correct place, the student has just copied the exact words from Khan's text and presented them as their own words.

A third student wishes to support an idea by referring to Sacha Khan's article:

> *English is considered a global language for many reasons. It is the official language of both Nigeria and India, which are two of the world's most populous countries (Khan, 2019).*

This is plagiarism. There are very slight changes to the original text, but very little effort has been made to the paraphrased content.

Practice – In-text citation and paraphrasing to support an idea

These sentences come from an academic source that you want to use to support an idea.

Paraphrase each sentence (**1–4**) to support the idea, and don't forget to add the in-text citation at the end.

1   The following text comes from an article written by Edward Rodgers in 2020.

> There are 270-million native speakers of Portuguese in the world.

Use Rodgers' information to support the following sentence:

Portuguese is one of the world's most widely spoken languages.

_____

_____

2   The following text comes from from an article written by Fatima Sanchez in 2017.

> It can be very difficult to learn how to pronounce words in tonal languages.

Use Sanchez's information to support the following sentence:

Many people who study tonal languages find speaking the most difficult skill to master.

_____

_____

3   The following text comes from an article written by Jordan Green in 2019.

> Some of the kanji characters that are used in Chinese and Japanese are more than 6,000 years old.

Use Green's information to support the following sentence:

Kanji has a very long history.

_____

_____

4   The following text comes from an article written by Reiko Hoshikawa in 2020.

> Because of Japan's close links to Brazil, many Japanese students choose to learn Portuguese as their second language.

Use Hoshikawa's information to support the following sentence:

Portuguese is surprisingly popular in Japan.

_____

_____

Answers

Unit 1: World languages

Paraphrasing 1 – Using synonyms

1	vital	→	crucial
2	show	→	demonstrate
3	agreement	→	consensus
4	evaluate	→	assess
5	suitable	→	appropriate
6	clear	→	obvious
7	sufficient	→	adequate
8	start	→	begin
9	response	→	reaction
10	inventive	→	creative

Practice

Possible answers:

1 In most countries, children begin learning a foreign language in primary school.

- most → the majority of
- countries → nations
- begin → start
- learning → studying
- KEY WORD(S) – **foreign language; primary school**

2 A high level of skill in spoken English is crucial in many careers.

- high → advanced
- crucial → vital
- many → several
- careers → occupations
- KEY WORD(S) – **skill; English**

3 In a speaking exam, students must show that they have an adequate level of English in a particular context.

- exam → test; assessment
- show → demonstrate
- level → standard
- particular → specific
- KEY WORD(S) – **students; English**

Paraphrasing 2 – Changing the word order

Practice 1

1 One of the official languages of the Philippines is English.

2 The most common first language in the world is Mandarin Chinese.

3 Spanish is the first language of many South American countries because of colonialism.

4 The official languages of Switzerland are German, French and Italian.

Practice 2

Possible answers:

1 The most effective method of measuring a student's speaking and listening skills is to use an English communication assessment.

2 It is difficult for a large number of people to speak Thai due to the fact that it is a tonal language.

3 The majority of school children in Japan begin learning English in nursery school.

4 Although English is the official language of Nigeria, the majority of its people also speak a second language.

Paraphrasing 3 – Recognising effective paraphrasing

1 *Original text:* At the beginning of a language class, basic conversation about familiar topics is often the focus.

    a Simple discussions about familiar topics are frequently the focus at the start of a language lesson.

    EFFECTIVE:

- The sentence structure has been changed.
- Five synonyms are used.

    b   At the start of a language lesson, basic communication about familiar topics is often the focus.

          INEFFECTIVE:

- The sentence structure is the same.
- Just three synonyms are used – the only changes.

    c   Language classes always have basic conversations about famous topics.

          INEFFECTIVE:

- The meaning is different because:
    - 'always' is not the same as 'often'
    - 'famous' is not a synonym of 'familiar'.

2   *Original text:* Writing in a different alphabet is often the biggest challenge for Europeans who study some Asian languages.

    a   The biggest challenge for Europeans who learn some Asian languages is writing in a new alphabet.

          INEFFECTIVE:

- Although the sentence structure has been changed, it remains too similar to the original text.
    - Just two synonyms are used.
- The failure to use or provide a synonym for 'often' changes the meaning.

    b   Europeans who learn Asian languages always have problems with writing.

          INEFFECTIVE:

- The meaning is different: 'always' is not the same as 'often'; the failure to use or provide a synonym for 'some' changes the meaning.

    b   For European students, the most difficult aspect of learning some Asian languages is often writing in an unfamiliar alphabet.

          EFFECTIVE:

- The sentence structure has changed.
- There are several examples of synonyms and rephrasing (e.g. 'the biggest challenge' → 'the most difficult aspect').

3   *Original text:* Passing a language exam is a requirement for students who want to study abroad.

    a   A requirement for students who aim to study abroad is passing a language exam.

          INEFFECTIVE:

- Although the sentence structure has been changed, it remains too similar to the original text.
    - Just one synonym is used (i.e. 'aim').

b   Students who wish to study overseas must pass a language test.

EFFECTIVE:

- The sentence structure has been changed.
- Effective rephrasing is used with synonyms (i.e. 'passing a language exam is a requirement' → 'must pass a language test').

c   Passing a language test is necessary for overseas students.

INEFFECTIVE:

- The meaning is different: 'overseas' students are not the same as 'students who want to study abroad'.

4   *Original text:* Language skills are vital in today's job market.

a   In today's job market, language skills are crucial.

INEFFECTIVE:

- Although the sentence structure has been changed, it remains too similar to the original text.
    - Just one synonym is used (i.e. 'crucial').

b   For many employers, the ability to speak foreign languages is important.

EFFECTIVE:

- Effective rephrasing is used (i.e. 'in today's job market' → 'For many employers' and 'language skills' → 'the ability to speak foreign languages').

c   To work at a market, employees must speak more than one language.

INEFFECTIVE:

- The meaning is different: 'a market' is not the same as 'the job market'.

5   *Original text:* Research suggests that learning European languages is becoming less popular.

a   According to research, fewer people are studying European languages.

EFFECTIVE:

- The sentence structure has been changed.
- Effective rephrasing is used (i.e. 'becoming less popular' → 'fewer people are studying').

b   Research indicates that studying European languages is becoming less popular.

INEFFECTIVE:

- The sentence structure is the same
- Just two synonyms are used – the only changes.

c   According to research, European languages are becoming less important.

INEFFECTIVE:

- The meaning is different. There is no mention of studying and 'less important' is not the same as 'less popular'.

Practice – In-text citation and paraphrasing

Possible answers:

1   Portuguese is one of the world's most widely spoken languages. *It is the first language of 270 million people* (Rodgers, 2020).

2   Many people who study tonal languages find speaking the most difficult skill to master. *Learning the pronunciation of certain words is one of the main challenges in some tonal languages (Sanchez, 2017).*

3   Kanji has a very long history. *Chinese and Japanese languages use kanji characters that are over 6,000 years old (Green, 2019).*

4   Portuguese is surprisingly popular in Japan. *Due to the close links between Brazil and Japan, Portuguese is a popular second language for a large number of Japanese students (Hoshikawa, 2020).*