

Paraphrasing Handout

Rules for accurate and effective paraphrasing include:

- 1.) Change the sentence structure. (Be careful: Inverting the sentence (moving the back to the front) is unacceptable. You must create an entirely new sentence(s).
- 2.) Do not change the meaning of the original statement(s).
- 3.) Do not leave out key details or ideas. Your paraphrase should be roughly the same length as the original. (Paraphrasing is not summarizing.)
- 4.) If you use three or more consecutive words you must wrap them in quotation marks.
- 5.) Include a parenthetical citation at the end of the sentence that includes the author and page number. (See exceptions handout.)

Why Paraphrasing is Important:

- 1.) Writing an idea in your own words is one of the best ways to demonstrate to yourself and to others that you truly understand it.
- 2.) If you use too many direct quotations in your paper, then your voice will get lost and the paper will become choppy and difficult to read.
- 3.) Neglecting to cite your sources and citing your sources poorly both result in plagiarism, an academic crime. Keep in mind that, according to the MLA Handbook 2009:

Let's practice:

"The plot structure of *Of Mice and Men* reflects Steinbeck's intention of writing a novel that could be played on stage without extensive adaptation. Only three settings are created for the six chapters of the novel, with each chapter confining its action to a single setting or scene, and each setting used for only two chapters" (Burkhead 48).

Directions: Rate the following samples. Which one is the strongest? Why? What makes the others weak?

Sample A

In the plot of *Of Mice and Men*, Steinbeck intended to write a novel that could become a play without too many changes. He only used three settings and six chapters. Each chapter used a single setting. (Burkhead 58)

Sample B

Steinbeck wrote *Of Mice and Men* intending for it to be easily adapted for the stage. He limited the novella to three settings, none of which appeared in more than two of the novella's six chapters.

Sample C

Steinbeck designed *Of Mice and Men* to be adapted easily to the stage. With this goal in mind, he limited the novella to three settings within six chapters, focusing each chapter in a single setting. No more than two chapters featured the same setting (Burkhead 58).

Let's go back in to see how that's done:

"The plot structure of *Of Mice and Men* reflects Steinbeck's intention of writing a novel that could be played on stage without extensive adaptation. Only three settings are created for the six chapters of the novel, with each chapter confining its action to a single setting or scene, and each setting used for only two chapters" (Burkhead 48).

Tip #1: Sometimes it helps to underline key phrases and then make a short list of the most important ideas:

- ✓ Novella into play with few changes
- ✓ Kept it simple: used only 3 settings
- ✓ Kept each chapter simple – one setting per chapter
- ✓ No more than two chapters per setting

Tip #2: It's tempting to think there is no other way to word the author's ideas, but this is not true. It's easier to read the original, look away and think about it, then write. This gives your mind a change to detach from the author's use of language.

Tip #3: Take the time to look up words you don't know. It's difficult to paraphrase what you don't understand.

Directions: Now, it's your turn. Paraphrase the following excerpts to the best of your ability. Use your notebook to record your responses.

1. "The setting Steinbeck chose for *Of Mice and Men* was a familiar one for the author. The novel recreates the landscape of his maternal grandfather Samuel Hamilton's ranch in King City, California, where Steinbeck spent time as a youth" (Burkhead 48)
2. "While he wrote very compelling journalism later in his career, this first journey away from fiction was a failure. What he wrote was far too figurative for the news. He was eventually fired" (Burkhead 4).
3. "One element of the Arthurian legends [of King Arthur] that spoke strongly to **Steinbeck** was their atmosphere of moral conviction, a clear sense of right and wrong. This proves to be another pattern in **Steinbeck's** work. Some of his most memorable characters are those who are defined by their moral convictions and a desire to see the right thing done even when they personally suffer for it" (Bloom).
4. "John Ernst was restless and often de-pressed, conditions that resulted from his losing his job at the Sperry flour mill, which closed partly because of his mismanagement. Olive Hamilton prevailed upon a family friend to arrange an accounting position for her husband at the Spreckels sugar plant, a company where young John also later worked. This same friend later arranged for John Ernst to fill the vacant position of treasurer of Monterey County, a position John Ernst kept for the remainder of his life. Even though he was now able to provide for his family, John Ernst remained distant from them, never completely regaining the self-assurance lost when the flour mill collapsed" (Burkhead 2).
5. "In many ways, Carol heavily influenced Steinbeck's literature for the next ten years. She was self-assured, independent, and assertive, but she was also very supportive of her husband's work. Carol typed his manuscripts, and, the most taxing job of all, she corrected his grammar and spelling. She was also an informed advocate of social justice; this seems to be the area where she most influenced Steinbeck's work, which previously is marked by themes focusing on the individual. Steinbeck wrote his greatest social and political works while married to Carol, including *In Dubious Battle*, *Of Mice and Men*, and *The Grapes of Wrath*" (Burkhead 5).