

Sample Lesson #3

Writing a Report: Using your Own Words

In order to write a research report, you will look at large amounts of information and then summarize your findings. When you **summarize** or **paraphrase**, you use your own words. A summary includes the main ideas and some supporting details, not all the extra information.

Let's practice. Go to your *Help Pages* and locate the story, "Incredible Collectibles." Use your chunking technique; cover up all but the first paragraph. Read that chunk. Then, choose the sentence that best summarizes the main idea of that first paragraph.

- A) Garage sales, flea markets, and websites are some of the venues that collectors visit to buy, sell, and trade their collections.
- B) People love to collect and trade items, big and little, unusual or everyday items; it doesn't matter.

Sentence A is **not** the best summary of the first paragraph for two reasons. First, it is not a summary but rather a plagiarized statement, copied right from the selection. Also, sentence A does not include the main idea but only one detail about people buying and selling collections. Sentence B, on the other hand, is a concise (short) summary of the first paragraph. It is paraphrased and includes only the key points.

When writing a research report, you may need to summarize several sources of information. Look at the following steps for assistance.

Summarizing Steps

- Step 1: Read all of the information you gathered about your topic. Highlight or jot down some key points on paper or index cards as you are reading. Be sure to write the title and the author's name at the top of your notes so you can keep your sources straight.
- Step 2: Begin your report by using your own words to explain the main points that you recall without looking at your notes. Each of those main points should relate to your topic. Those same main points can be used as your topic sentences.
- Step 3: Next, go back to your resources and pull out supporting details for each of the main ideas. Be sure to paraphrase, using your own words.

1. In the first paragraph of this lesson, what does *paraphrase* mean?
A) pair of phrases C) two sentences
B) use your own words D) an encyclopedia

2. To summarize, narrow your research findings down to only _____.
fun stuff topics key points conclusions

3. If you wanted to locate the Atacama Desert, where would you look?
a dictionary an almanac a thesaurus an atlas

4. You need to start with a _____ to locate information in an almanac.
dictionary key word thesaurus map

5. When you narrow your findings down to only main ideas and a few supporting details, you are _____.
chunking summarizing rhyming

6. If you copy someone's work, it is called _____.
plagiarism summarizing paraphrasing chunking

7. Which of these resources could help when writing a report?
____ dictionary ____ thesaurus ____ almanac
____ Internet ____ encyclopedia ____ atlas

8. Put these words in alphabetical order by numbering from 1 to 6.
____ antagonize ____ absolute ____ amazement
____ abdicate ____ antisocial ____ azalea