

Paraphrasing

Sample Activity
Science

Defining the Strategy

The paraphrasing strategy helps students learn to read, “chunk,” and recall information in their own words. Students work with short passages to identify key points and then reword them. This technique builds confidence in a student’s ability to remember details accurately and state the meanings of new terms, sentences, or problems.

Teaching the Strategy

Objectives

- Students will practice reading and rephrasing the content of short passages.
- Students will identify the main idea of the passage.
- Students will identify facts and details that support the main idea.
- Students will utilize note-taking skills to recall and rephrase reading passage.

Materials

- Informational text (one copy per student)
- Sticky notes (when students cannot write on the text)
- Paraphrasing model chart
- Question chart
- Paraphrasing handout (one or more per student depending on length of text)
- Dictionary

Timeframe

20 minutes

Activity

1. Prepare and post a chart for your room featuring the following questions:
 - a. What is this graphic or selection about?
 - b. What are some clues to the meaning of this passage or main idea?
 - c. What other facts and details stand out?
2. Prepare and post a paraphrasing chart for your room (sample provided).
3. Make copies of the paraphrasing handout for students. Students will need one form for every three paragraphs they read.
4. Select a brief, high interest reading for students.

**Teaching
the Strategy**
continued

Survey and Skim Text

5. Ask students to preview or survey the selected text to get an idea of the topics covered in the reading. Surveying involves looking only at headings/subheadings, bold faced terms, pictures, charts, captions, and other graphics. This process allows students to access prior knowledge before reading and deepen their comprehension of new text.

6. Now ask students to skim the text. Skimming involves quickly reading key parts of the text such as first and last sentences, reading all italicized print, locating details that support the subheading ideas, reading specifically for answers to the questions listed below, etc. Ask students to skim the first paragraph or subheading section to identify supporting facts and details that stand out. Direct students' attention to the chart in the room. Ask them to focus on these questions:
 - a. What is this graphic, subheading section, or paragraph about?
 - b. What are some clues to the meaning of this passage or main idea?
 - c. What other facts and details stand out?

After students read one section silently, discuss these questions as a group for guided practice.

Reading the Paragraph or Section in Depth and Taking Notes

7. Direct students to read the subtitle and the text selection completely. Ask them to highlight difficult or important lines or passages or use a sticky note as a flag to indicate importance or difficulty. Instruct students to write any thoughts or questions on sticky notes and place them in the margins as they read. Students should use a dictionary look up the meanings of any words they don't know. These notes will assist students as they complete the Paraphrasing Chart.

Put It in Your Own Words

8. Direct students' attention to the paraphrasing chart in the room. Tell students that, for each paragraph or section they read, they'll use the chart to
 - a. Write the main idea or important details
 - b. Write a sentence or two paraphrasing the idea or concept
 - c. Write thoughts about the concept. These thoughts may be related to prior knowledge, new insights, questions related to the main idea, etc.

Strategic Reading in the Content Areas – Boosting Achievement in Grades 7-12

Teaching the Strategy continued

9. Pass the paraphrasing handouts to students.
10. As guided practice, ask students to repeat the process for the next section or paragraph with a partner.
 - a. Remind students to keep the key questions from the chart in mind.
 - b. Instruct students to avoid using quotes from the text. Direct them to put quotation marks around quotes from the reading selection.
 - c. Remind students that they should use their own words to describe anything they have seen, heard, or read.
11. Assign the rest of the paragraphs or sections to be completed independently.

Skills Correlations

Essential Skills Survey

- Preview informational text to anticipate content. (e52)
- Identify, collect and/or select pertinent information while reading. (e5)
- Discriminate important ideas from unimportant ideas while reading. (e15)
- Apply, extend, and expand on information while reading. (e46)

NWEA

- Locating information
- Reading for detail
- Prediction

Connecting the Strategy



At the end of this exercise, have students use their charts to write summaries of the entire article. They can use their completed paraphrasing handouts to report the key concepts and supporting details from their reading. Use the summaries to assess reading comprehension and summarizing skills.

SOURCE

Burke, Jim. *Reader's Handbook: A Student Guide for Reading and Learning*.
Wilmington, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2002.



The Ocean Tides and the Pull of the Moon

Learning the Strategy

When you paraphrase something you have read, you simply restate the text using different words. Putting the text in your own words can help you better understand and remember what you've read. It is especially good for reading graphics, math problems, essays, poems, and difficult text in any subject.

Practicing the Strategy

1. Preview your text first. Surveying and skimming will help you get an idea of the main ideas from your reading. Look first for any headings, pictures, bold face key words, captions; then skim the passage for details that relate to the questions below. Ask yourself these questions:
 - a. What is this graphic or selection about?
 - b. What are some clues to the meaning or main idea?
 - c. What are some details or facts that stand out or support the main idea?

Remember, right now, you are only looking for a general idea of the content.

2. As you read, use your margins or sticky notes to take notes. Focus on hard to read or difficult text. Write down any thoughts or questions you have. And be sure to look up any unknown words in the dictionary to discover their meanings.
3. At the end of each section or paragraph:
 - Use the paraphrasing chart to write the main idea or important details.
 - Write a sentence or two paraphrasing this idea or concept.
 - Write your thoughts about the concept.
4. Repeat this process with each paragraph until you have finished the text selection.

Paraphrasing

The Ocean Tides and the Pull of the Moon

Sir Isaac Newton, an English astronomer, scientist, and mathematician, was the first scientist to explain the phenomenon of gravity and the Earth's pull. He published his studies in a book called *Principia* in 1687. In it he explained how the law of universal attraction and the laws of motion apply to earthly phenomena such as the forces behind the ebb and flow of the oceans' tides.

The tides occur through the relationship of the Earth, the sun, and the moon. Based on its size, the sun would seem to have a greater influence on the Earth's waters than the moon. But because the moon is 400 times closer to Earth than the sun, it exerts more influence. The strong gravitational attraction between Earth and the moon actually causes the water of the great oceans to rise and fall.

Both the moon and Earth are attracted through gravitational pull. At the same time, they are held apart by centripetal force. If we imagine the earth as a sphere with water all around it, the gravitational forces of Earth hold the water on its surface.

The moon's gravitational forces pull the water on the side of Earth facing the moon, causing the water to bulge toward the moon slightly. At the same time, another bulge occurs on the opposite side of Earth. According to a widely held theory, the moon's attraction to the Earth's lithosphere (solid part of the Earth) is greater than it is for the water on the other side of the Earth. This water has less mass than the Earth and is farther away. The lithosphere is drawn toward the moon, leaving that water farther from the center of the Earth's center. These forces produce the high and low tides.

The sun also gets involved in the tides, especially when there is a new moon or a full moon. At this time, the sun-Earth-moon system is approximately in a straight line, and the tidal forces generated by the sun reinforce those of the moon. The sun pulls in the same direction as the moon, making the high tides higher and the low tides lower. Though the moon's tide-raising power is greater, the sun's attraction is strong. This is called a "spring tide" even though it has nothing to do with the seasons. After the new moon, during the first or last quarter-phases, the sun's gravitational pull works at a right angle to the gravitational pull of the moon, causing a "neap tide" with lower high tides and higher low tides. In this case, the tides produced by the sun then partly cancel those produced by the moon.

Different parts of the world experience differences in the tides. Near the equator, the tides are not as big, but the tides in the Bay of Fundy in Nova Scotia are very large. The difference is that at the equator, the volume of water is spread over a large area; but in Nova Scotia, the bay is so narrow that the water is forced upward to fit into the space.

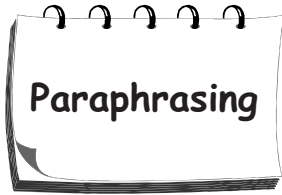
The moon is in motion revolving around Earth. Because this takes 24 hours and 50 minutes, the times of the high and low tides change each day. Information on the high and low tides is critical to those who work and play in the world's waters. The United States National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration charts and predicts the astronomical tides, working with scientists, mathematicians, and other experts to insure that the figures are as accurate as possible. They cannot, however, forecast the effects that rain, wind, and other weather may have on the size of the tides.

Paraphrasing Chart

Paragraphs/Lines/Subheadings:	My Paraphrase:
My Thoughts:	

Paragraphs/Lines/Subheadings:	My Paraphrase:
My Thoughts:	

Paragraphs/Lines/Subheadings:	My Paraphrase:
My Thoughts:	



Sample Solution

Paragraphs/Lines/Subheadings: <i>“The tides of Earth are affected by the Earth’s moon.”</i>	My Paraphrase: <i>The moon determines the tides of the oceans.</i>
My Thoughts: <i>The gravitational/magnetic pulls between the Earth and the moon create high and low tides of the oceans.</i>	