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| Communication Skills: Paraphrasing | |
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| When we paraphrase we take the ideas someone else has said or written and restate them using our own words. We paraphrase in three situations:   * we want to tell someone else what we heard or read. * we want to explain something in a different way so that it can be more easily understood. * we want to make sure that we have correctly understood someone.   We use reported speech to paraphrase what we heard or read.   * John Smith said that …. * John Smith wrote that …. * I heard from John Smith that… * John Smith told me that….   In academic writing and academic presentations we simply use the phrase “To paraphrase….”  *To paraphrase John Smith….*    We use the following ways to begin sentences when we want to explain something in a different way so that it can be more easily understood.   * Let me put it this way. …….. * Let me explain it this way. …….. * Look at it this way. …….. * In other words, ……….. * Another way to put it/phrase it may be…   We use the following ways to begin sentences when we want to make sure that we have correctly understood someone.   * If I have understood you correctly, ……. * If I have heard you correctly, ……. * I would just like to make sure I have understood you correctly. ….…. * Let me get this straight. ………. * Is that to say……….? * Are you suggesting……….? * Do you mean (to say)…….? * To check my understanding, …… * Just to clarify, …… * So, what you’re saying is…. * Let me make sure I’ve got this right. …….. | |

*A. In the dialogue below underline all of the expressions the speakers use to paraphrase and decide why the speaker is paraphrasing.*

Carol: Did you read *Relativity* by Albert Einstein?

Sue: Yes, I particularly enjoyed the chapter about *Relativity and the Problem of Space*.

Carol: Do you mean to say you actually followed all his arguments?

Sue: Yes. Let me explain it this way. The whole of space has an average density of matter which is the same everywhere.

Carol: Is that to say space consists of matter?

Sue: That’s right.  
  
Carol: I still don’t get it. In other words I need to study more!

*B. Paraphrase the following groups of sentences so that the language is simpler and easier to understand. Use the expressions above to start your sentences. Reduce the number of sentences.*

1. It is acceptable for you to take on a certain amount of personal debt in order to build your financial value. In fact, the only way to increase your personal wealth is to take on personal debt, such as a mortgage. While the amount of your debt stays fixed, the value of your assets increase, so you make money. It takes money to make money.

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2. There are three different learning styles. Some people learn by seeing the information. These are visual learners. Other people are tactile and kinaesthetic learners. They learn by feeling and doing. Finally, there are auditory learners. These people learn by hearing the information.

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3. A lot of employee stress can now be traced back to receiving too much information too fast. We are in an age of information overload. Information comes at us constantly---on billboards, on TV, on the radio, on the internet, in reports and in e-mails. The information just never stops coming and this can cause workplace stress.

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*C. Write three sentences about a topic that you are interested in and that you know a lot about. Include information that may be new to your peers. Share your information with a partner. Use the above expressions to paraphrase when necessary so that they understand. Paraphrase the information you hear from your partner to check that you have understood them.*

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