
Semantic Paraphrasing

Technique	Original Text	Paraphrased Version
<i>Using synonyms</i>	Music can give us pleasure and comfort.	Music can bring us joy and solace.
	Incorrect versions of meeting were supplied to the committee on several occasions.	The committee was given fake <i>false</i> accounts of meetings a number of times. (<i>Fake</i> might suggest that the meeting themselves were invented, or that true reports exist elsewhere.)
<i>Using antonyms with appropriate negation markers</i>	Cats are nocturnal animals.	Cats are non-diurnal creatures.
<i>Explaining or defining</i>	Cats are nocturnal animals.	Cats are active at night. / Cats are inactive in the day.

Notes

- In reality, cats can be active in the day and many are seen sleeping for long hours regardless of day or night. However, we can think about the intention and the information the author wants to convey: a special characteristic of cats. If we argue that being active at night does not mean that cats cannot be active in the day, then there would be no need to use the word ‘nocturnal’ in the first place. Thus, antonyms such as ‘inactive in the day’ can be used here.
- Although antonyms can be useful if we are stuck or if all else fails, the paraphrase can be confusing; remember to add an appropriate marker and check that the meaning is correct. For example, ‘too small’ can be rephrased as ‘not large enough’. Omitting the negation marker ‘not’ and replacing ‘small’ with ‘large’ can twist the entire meaning.
- Many words cannot be replaced with antonyms. For example, ‘did not increase’ does not mean ‘reduced’ as it could mean that something stayed the same; ‘poor’ does not necessarily mean ‘not rich’ as ‘not rich’ may mean ‘average’ or ‘living a simple but contented life’.

<i>Summation</i>	Many city parks are cherished, for they offer something special for everyone: they are instrumental in social cohesion. There is room for a variety of activities, for example, sporting,	These public spaces offer opportunities for a myriad of endeavours, for individuals and groups, the athletic as well as aesthetically inclined.
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from the solo jogger cocooned by his headphones from social interaction, to gregarious footballers; artistic, from writers, readers or painters in some secluded spot to partake in open-air concerts and exhibitions.

Notes

The focus is about parks offering all sorts of activities and the emphasis is on ‘solo’ (individual) versus ‘gregarious’ (groups), ‘jogger’ (athletic) versus ‘artistic’ (aesthetically inclined). Note that in the paraphrased version, ‘city parks’ has been generalised as ‘public spaces’.

Nominalisation

Smallpox was totally eradicated because everyone was immunised in a programme that was very intensive. The successful/complete elimination of smallpox was a direct result of // was entirely owing to a comprehensive programme of immunisation.

Generalising (making something technical less technical) or making the abstract more concrete

The frontal lobes of teenagers are still growing... the lobes are responsible for controlling emotions and actions... thus it is natural that teenagers have a likelihood of being easily influenced. Teenagers can be immature as their minds/brains are not fully developed and thus they tend to be impressionable.

Some people are more creative while others are more logical. Certain people are more right-brained while others are more left-brained.

First, there were the Nautiloids, then the Eurypterids, followed by the dinosaurs, and subsequently the Great Ice Age, and finally came homo habilis, homo erectus, the Neanderthals and homo sapiens. There were various types of early life forms before the birth of human beings and their predecessors.

In today's world, travel and communication over long distances has been made easier by technology.

In the modern world, geographical boundaries no longer matter thanks to the annihilation of distance by technology // as technology has annihilated the distance.

Notes

Semantic paraphrasing is useful for creating coherence and cohesion in a text.

Wealth needs to be redistributed from the rich to the poor. This method of establishing greater social equality has been adopted by many Western countries to encourage sustainable economic growth // to boost and sustain the economy, thereby improving the living standards.

Wealth needs to be redistributed from the rich to the poor. Such is a tactic of achieving/ensuring // Such is a strategy for promoting social equality (that) it has been employed by many Asian governments, particularly Vietnam, to promote the sustainability of the economic recovery, hence the amelioration of living standards.

Notes

All of these techniques are also useful for paraphrasing figurative and metaphorical expressions. However, it is advisable not to rephrase a metaphorical expression with another metaphor or more abstract construction unless we are doing the *Sentence Transformation* task of the *Cambridge English: Advanced/Proficiency*. To paraphrase, simply explain the contextual meaning; it is optional to state the literal or contextual meaning for the paraphrases containing metaphors. Note that these metaphorical and figurative paraphrases are very uncommon and unusual in the IELTS test.

These days, very few investors keep all their eggs in one basket.

Investors nowadays rarely place all their assets in a single financial institution.
