

PARAPHRASE and SUMMARY

A **paraphrase** puts information that you read *into your own words*. It is about as long as the original.

A **summary** briefly restates the original passage *in your own words*. It should include only the main point and key supporting points. It is much shorter than the original.

Guidelines

- Read the original passage carefully.
- Include all important information.
- Do not include your own opinion or additional comments in either paraphrase or summary. You may sometimes use **direct quotations** in your paraphrase or summary. Use them sparingly and only when the writer's phrasing is so well stated or technical that it would be difficult to put into your own words. Remember to use quotation marks.
- Even though you paraphrase the passage in your own words, you need to use a parenthetical citation identifying the original source to avoid plagiarism.
- Do not imitate the author's sentence structure or merely substitute synonyms for the author's words.

The following is an example of a paragraph from a biology textbook. On the reverse side, you will find examples of a paraphrase and a short summary of the original passage.

Original Passage

The honeybee colony, which usually has a population of 30,000 to 40,000 workers, differs from that of the bumblebee and many other social bees or wasps in that it survives the winter. This means that the bees must stay warm despite the cold. Like other bees, the isolated honeybee cannot fly if the temperature falls below 10 degrees C (50 degrees F) and cannot walk if the temperature is below 7 degrees C (45 degrees F). Within the wintering hive, bees maintain their temperature by clustering together in a dense ball; the lower the temperature, the denser the cluster. The clustered bees produce heat by constant muscular movements of their wings, legs, and abdomens. In very cold weather, the bees on the outside of the cluster keep moving toward the center, while those in the core of the cluster move to the colder outside periphery. The entire cluster moves slowly about on the combs, eating the stored honey from the combs as it moves.

“Winter Organization,” in Helena Curtis, *Biology*, second edition, (New York: Worth, 1976), 822-823.

Paraphrase

Honeybees, unlike many other varieties of bees (such as bumblebees and wasps), are able to live through the winter. The 30,000 to 40,000 bees within a honeybee hive could not, individually, move about in cold winter temperatures. But when “clustering together in a dense ball,” the bees generate heat by constantly moving their body parts. The cluster also moves slowly about the hive, eating honey stored in the combs. This nutrition, in addition to the heat generated by the cluster, enables the honeybee to survive the cold winter months (Curtis 822).

Summary

Honeybees, unlike many other varieties of bees, are able to live through the winter by “clustering together in a dense ball” for body warmth (Curtis 822).

Examples from: *Reading for College Writers* by Laurence Behrens and Leonard J. Rosen. (Boston, Little, Brown & Co., 1987), 58-59.