Paraphrasing
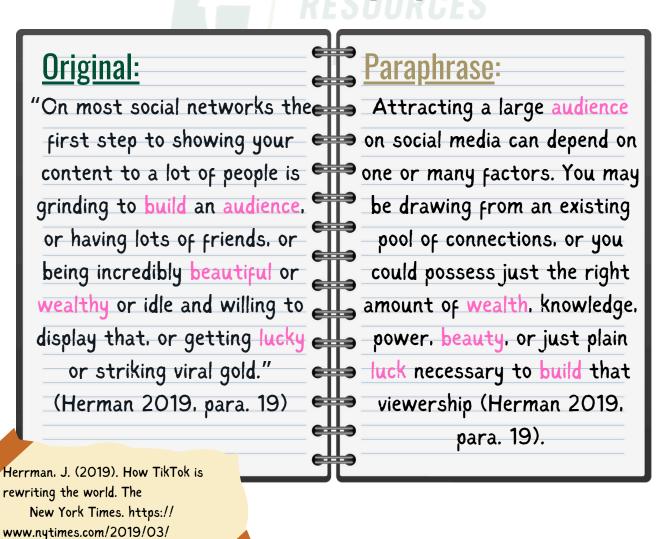
What Is a Paraphrase?

A paraphrase is a restatement of a source that emphasizes its precise **content** over its **wording**.

We can think of a paraphrase in this way: if a *quote* seeks to replicate a source's words exactly, and a *summary* is more interested in the overall "point" of a source, then a paraphrase is the middle ground that is interested not in <u>how</u> a source says something, but <u>what</u> it's saying, and what it means overall.

Let's look at an example of an **effective paraphrase.**

Original:

"On most social networks the first step to showing your content to a lot of people is grinding to build an audience, or having lots of friends, or being incredibly beautiful or wealthy or idle and willing to display that, or getting lucky or striking viral gold."
(Herman 2019, para. 19)

Paraphrase:

Attracting a large audience on social media can depend on one or many factors. You may be drawing from an existing pool of connections, or you could possess just the right amount of wealth, knowledge, power, beauty, or just plain luck necessary to build that viewership (Herman 2019, para. 19).

Herrman, J. (2019). How TikTok is rewriting the world. The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/10/style/what-is-tik-tok.html.

Paraphrasing, cont.

What Makes This Paraphrase Effective?

This paraphrase is effective because it includes most of the details from a source to communicate the same idea.

Notice the words in pink. Since you are adapting *ideas* from the source material, you will inevitably see similarities in the vocabulary between the source and your paraphrase. The key is to ensure your sentence construction and syntax is distinct enough from the source material.

Tips for Paraphrasing:

- Try to explain the main points of what you've read to a friend *without* looking back at the source material
- Simplify any complex or formal language used in the original source, and then look up the meaning of unfamiliar words. Use synonyms of these words if necessary.
- Do a brief freewrite, discussing what interests, confuses, or provokes you about what you've just read. This is especially helpful for longer sections you want to paraphrase. From there, you can make your own analysis that weaves both the source's ideas and your own synthesis (while still properly citing!)