ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΑΙΓΑΙΟΥ

English I
Course Unit 6: Writing 3

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Άδειες Χρήσης

Χρηματοδότηση

Writing 3: Summarizing

Summarizing a text needs practicing three important skills:
- **finding the main ideas in a text**
- **paraphrasing**
- **connecting your sentences**

Finding main ideas in a text

In order to summarize a text, you have to select the **main ideas** from every paragraph of a text.
Remember that main ideas ARE NOT:
- ❌ examples
- ❌ too specific details / supporting details

Also remember that all arguments or points in a paragraph **support** the main idea.

Exercise 1
Choose the sentences that express the *main idea* of the following paragraphs.

Alan Turing: A tragic end
So, what happened next in the life of this highly talented man? His great achievements in code-breaking and computing happened in his twenties and thirties. He was still a young man - in the same year that his computer worked for the first time, he nearly ran in the Olympic Games for Britain. We know that he had many ideas to develop in digital computing, quantum physics, biology, and philosophy. Sadly, he wasn't able to work fully on these ideas. Turing had to stop doing code-breaking work for the British government because his personal life was considered a 'security risk'. Finally, he was arrested by the police and in March 1952 he was found guilty at a criminal trial. Two years later, Alan Turing was dead. He killed himself by eating an apple containing the poison, cyanide. The apple - the symbol of the physics of Newton, of forbidden love, of knowledge itself - became the symbol of tragic death.

a) In the same year that his computer worked for the first time, Turing ran in the Olympic Games for Britain.
b) Turing had many ideas to develop but he wasn't able to work fully on them because he had to stop code-breaking work for the British.
c) In March 1952 Turing was found guilty at a criminal trial.
d) Turing killed himself by eating an apple containing the poison, cyanide.

Cryptology today
Today, as the Internet and other forms of electronic communication become more and more popular, electronic security is becoming more and more important. This is why cryptology (or cryptography) today is used to protect e-mail messages, credit card

information, and company data. Modern cryptography techniques are almost unbreakable; however, cryptanalysis, or code-breaking, can be used sometimes to break encrypted messages. As a result, cryptography techniques are developing all the time, in order to be more secure. There are many cryptography systems used on the Internet, but one of the most popular, which is also very effective and free, is *Pretty Good Privacy.*

a) Electronic security is becoming more and more important today.
b) Cryptology (or cryptography) today is used to protect electronic data and is developing all the time, in order to be safer against security risks.
c) Modern cryptography techniques are almost unbreakable.
d) One of the most popular cryptography systems, which is also very effective and free, is *Pretty Good Privacy.*

Paraphrasing

A. What is paraphrasing

Paraphrasing means to say or write something using ***different*** words.

Paraphrasing is a very important academic skill, because copying another person's word is a serious offence: it's called *plagiarism* and you should avoid it when writing papers.

Paraphrasing is also useful when you write a summary of a text or you answer questions about a text and you don't want to copy whole sentences from the text.

B. Ways to paraphrase

There are two basic ways of paraphrasing. You can:
- replace a word with a ***synonym**** (= a word or phrase that has a similar meaning)
- change the ***syntax*** of a sentence (e.g. change the word order)

*Remember: it is NOT always possible to find synonyms for all words, and NOT all synonyms can replace certain words.

Exercise 2

Practice paraphrasing with the following sentences that are taken from the text "Cryptology" (Reading 3)*. Look at the example first.

0.1.   Secret codes are not a new idea.
Secret codes are an old idea. (here the phrase "an old idea" replaces the phrase "not a new idea" in the sentence)

0.2. **We know that the ancient Egyptians and Greeks used secret codes, as did the Arabs of a thousand years ago.**

It is well-known that secret codes were used by ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Arabs. (here the phrase "it is well-known" replaces the phrase "We know" in the first sentence. Also, the syntax has changed from active voice in the first sentence ("ancient Egyptians and Greeks used secret codes…") to passive voice ("secret codes were used by ancient Egyptians, Greeks, …"))

*Use a dictionary/thesaurus to help you, like Collins thesaurus
(http://www.collinsdictionary.com/english-thesaurus**)***

1. Codes were especially important in war.
……
2. They wrote their plans in code.
……
3. One of the most famous codes is the Enigma code, invented by the Germans.
……
4. One man managed to break it. He was a brilliant young mathematician called Alan Turing.
……

Connecting sentences

A. Introduction

Connecting sentences means using different ***connectors*** (= connecting words) to link sentences ***logically***.

B. Ways to connect sentences

Some simple connectors that can be used to connect sentences are the following:
- **first, second, third, then, after that, finally** (show the order of events or steps in a procedure): ***First**, you have to understand the problem. **Then**, you have to find a solution.*
- **because, since** (show why something has happened): e.g. *I can't come to the party tonight **because / since** I have a lot of studying.*
- **As a result / So** (show result): e.g. *My leg started hurting, **so** I stopped running. Our company is doing well. **As a result**, we have a big profit.*
- **However / Although / but** (show a contrast): e.g.
    - *She's hard-working, **but** she doesn't get good exam results.*
    - *She's hard working. **However**, she doesn't get good exam results.*
    - ***Although** she's hard working, she doesn't get good exam results*

Exercise 3

Connect the following sentences with appropriate connectors. You can also paraphrase the sentences and make any other necessary changes. Look at the example first.

0. **Secret codes are an old idea. It is well-known that they were used by ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Arabs.**

Secret codes are an old idea, **since** *it is well-known that they were used by ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Arabs.*

1. People do not want others to understand their messages. They write their messages in secret codes.

……

……

2. People thought that the Enigma code was difficult to break. Alan Turing managed to break it.

……

……

3. When British students graduate, they have debts of more than £20,000. They cannot afford to buy a house for many years.

……

……

Conclusion

To sum up, in order to make a summary, you have to collect the *main* ideas from most paragraphs of a text, *paraphrase* them, and *connect* them together in one paragraph. You should also use a *topic sentence* which will show the general topic of the text you are summarizing.

For example, the structure of a summary will look like this:
1. Topic sentence *(This text talks about….)*
   a. main idea 1
   b. main idea 2
   c. main idea 3

Exercise 4

Write a 90-100 word summary of the text in Reading 3 (Cryptology). You can start your summary like this:

This text talks about secret codes.

***Use a dictionary/thesaurus to help you, like Collins thesaurus
(**http://www.collinsdictionary.com/english-thesaurus**)***

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Exercise 5 (assignment)

**Write a 100-120 word summary of the text *What's a University Education
Worth* below.**

What's a University Education Worth?

Every year, it costs British students more and more to attend university. Students are
graduating with larger and larger debts. So is a university degree really worth it?

In 2006, the UK government started to allow universities in England and Wales to charge
British students tuition fees. As a result, more than 80% of students in England and
Wales now take out a student loan in order to go to university. They use the loan to pay
for tuition fees, books, and living expenses. Although the interest on student loans is
quite low, it begins as soon as the student receives the loan.

The average student in England and Wales now graduates from university with debts of
around £12,000. Students of medicine, who study for longer, usually have debts of more
than £20,000. That is a lot of money. It means graduates cannot afford to buy a house
for many years. They even struggle to pay rent on a flat, because they have to start
paying back the student loan when they reach the April after graduating (or after leaving
a course). If you start to earn over £15,000 a year, the government takes repayments
directly from your monthly salary. Is it any surprise, therefore, that the average British

person does not leave their parents' home until they are 30 years old?

You might think that a British person with a degree will find it easy to get a well-paid job. However, most people in "white-collar jobs" seem to have a degree these days, so there is a lot of competition. Also, British companies tend to value work experience over a piece of paper. Like everyone else, graduates usually have to start at the bottom and work their way up. That can be very frustrating for them, since they are often over-qualified for the work they are doing. While at university, they had dreams of getting an exciting, challenging job. Therefore, life after university ends up being quite disappointing for a lot of graduates.

All of the above is beginning to make British people question whether a university degree is really worth the money. Even before the credit crunch started, the BBC stated, 'The number of British students at UK universities has fallen for the first time in recent history... from 1.97 million in 2007 to 1.96 million last year [2008]'. It looks like the figures will continue to decline, since loan companies are now telling some students that there are no loans available for them. Forecasts are that between 2009-19 there will be a fall of 6% in the number of 18-25 year-old university applicants across the UK.

Glossary

challenging = difficult

interest = extra money you have to pay when you repay a loan

repayment = money you pay back when you have taken a loan

salary = money you get from your job (every month)

to struggle = to fight, to try very hard

loan = money you borrow from the bank

tuition fees = money a student pays to study at a university

wage = money you get from your job (every week or every day)

- See more at: http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/uk-culture/whats-university-education-worth#sthash.J9FvTuUD.dpuf

Answers to the exercises

Exercise 1

Alan Turing: A tragic end
The sentence that expresses better the main idea of this paragraph is (b) (Turing had many ideas to develop but he wasn't able to work fully on them because he had to stop code-breaking work for the British). All the rest of the sentences are details or explanations that support this idea.

Cryptology today
The sentence that expresses better the main idea of this paragraph is (b) (Cryptology (or cryptography) today is used to protect electronic data and is developing all the time, in order to be safer against security risks). Sentence (a) is related to the main idea, but it is too general and leaves out information (e.g. that cryptography is developing all the time because of security risks). Sentence (c) is a detail; the rest of the ideas in this paragraph do not support this sentence. Sentence (d) is an example of a cryptography system.

Exercise 2 (suggested answers)

1. Codes were very/highly important in war (or: Codes were very significant in war)
2. They encoded (or: encrypted) their plans / They wrote their plans in secret form.
3. The Germans created the Enigma code, which is one of the most well-known codes.
4. Alan Turing, a young mathematician, found a way of breaking it.

Exercise 3 (suggested answers)

1. People do not want others to decode their messages *so* they write them in secret codes.
2. *Although* people thought the Enigma code was difficult to break, Alan Turing found a way of breaking it.
3. When British students finish University, they have enormous debts. *As a result,* they don't have the money to buy a house for many years.

Exercise 4
Your summary should contain the following *main ideas* from the text:
- that secret codes were used by in the past by ancient people and that they were very important in war.
- that Enigma was one of the most famous codes, because it was very hard to break.
- that British and Polish code-breakers tried to break the Enigma without success, and that Alan Turing managed to do it, after creating a special machine.
- that Alan Turing created the world's first digital computer in 1948.

- that cryptology today is used today to protect online communications and that it is developing all the time so that the messages are not broken.

Your summary will be OK if you have *paraphrased* sentences from the text and you have *connected* your sentences in the right way.

Exercise 5 (example students' answers)

Student's answer 1

The tuition fees of English universities are very high. Every year students have larger debts. A lot of students can't pay much money and they take loans in order to go to university. Students of medicine have the largest debts because they study for many years. Graduates also have to pay back the loans and it is very difficult to buy things such as a house. British companies want people with experience in their job, as a result they must be over-qualified (for their) to find work. British people think about the usefulness of the university and if it is worth so much money. Also there aren't many loans available for all students so there will be a decline in the number of British students attending University education.

Student's answer 2

For British students costs become higher year by year. In 2006 the charging of tuition fees at British and Wales Universities was authorized by the UK government. Most students are using student loans to pay their costs. Because of those expenses, they live in the home of their parents. When they finish the university, costs that have gathered are too many. In addition, finding a profession when they have finished university is harder because of people who have more experience in the job. As a result, in 2008 the number of students dropped considerably compared to the previous year. Concluding, most people in the UK are wondering if acquiring degree is worthwhile.