

Paraphrasing and Plagiarism: Many people find paraphrasing difficult because they are worried about too closely mimicking the language of their author in a way that could be considered plagiarism. However, plagiarism becomes less of a problem if you effectively change the focus of that author's ideas to reflect YOUR purpose as an author; the new focus is then how an idea relates to your topic.

Source Text:

"27% of Americans have suffered abusive conduct at work; another 21% have witnessed it; 72% are aware that workplace bullying happens."



If you are worried about plagiarism, a good rule of thumb is this: would the original author recognize the language as his or her own? If the answer is yes, then you probably need to further transform the source text.

Repeat:

According to a study from the Workplace Bullying Institute, an organization dedicated to studying and preventing abusive conduct at work, "27% of Americans have suffered abusive conduct at work; another 21% have witnessed it; 72% are aware that workplace bullying happens (2011). It seems like the majority of Americans are aware of the occurrence of workplace bullying, but less have experienced firsthand.

The writer uses a quotation sandwich to introduce the source text, deliver the quotation, and then interpret what the quotation is saying.



Rephrase:

According to the Workplace Bullying Institute, a staggering three-fourths of Americans realize that workplace bullying occurs, with more than one in four describing themselves as direct victims of workplace abuse.

The writer rephrases to amplify the source text's original argument. 72% becomes "three-fourths," a good approximation that emphasizes the magnitude of the number. Words like "staggering" and "more than" also highlight how bad this problem is.



Respond:

Separate studies by the Workplace Bullying Institute (2014) and Lutgen-Sandvik, Tracy and Alberts (2007) each found that over one quarter of U.S. employees have been victims of bullying behavior. Together these two studies provide compelling evidence that bullying is an ongoing problem in the U.S. workplace.

The writer responds to the text by inferring information not explicitly stated in the text. She uses the 27% to cast doubt on the survey's findings since she inferred its methodology was flawed. This claim, based on her own independent reasoning, transforms the statistic into evidence supporting her purpose, not the source text's.



Respond:

Although the Workplace Bullying Institute states that 27% of American employees have suffered from workplace abuse, they do not report how many individuals declined to complete their survey. Since those who have suffered from bullying are likely more motivated to complete a survey than those who have not, this survey likely over-represents the workplace bullying problem.

This writer "transforms" the source text by strengthening it; she combines data from two studies to show evidence of a trend. She uses words like "each found," "together," and "compelling evidence" to emphasize a relationship.