

# COMMUNICATION SKILLS

## Learn to Paraphrase & Clarify to **UNDERSTAND**

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Ticket 2 Go  
Admit 1

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Excused for \_\_\_\_\_

Date By Patty Ann

## A Peer Coaching Game

**with AWARDS!**

**Learn to  
Paraphrase  
& Clarify to  
Understand**

**A Peer Coaching Activity**  
FUN FOR ALL AGES & GROUPS!

by **PATTY ANN**

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# **Activity Topics**

**Description and Objective**

**Training Outline**

**Paraphrasing and Clarifying Statements**

**Paraphrase Practice Worksheets**

**Classroom Ideas & Award Sheets**

**Additional Coaching Questions**



# Training Outline

## Training Time

Time allowed for the Paraphrase to Understand Activity depends on the age group and environment where this activity is used.

A basic timeline that is recommended calls for:

1. Introduction to the activity. (10 minutes)
2. Define the term Paraphrase as needed. Examples provided in this guide. (20 minutes)
3. Setting criteria for the 'award' is age dependent. However, set clear award objectives. (10 minutes)
4. Ongoing coaching and mentoring is by observation. (No set time)
5. Reminders, daily or weekly to keep the active participation. (5 minutes)

## Define the Word Paraphrase

First define the term **paraphrase**. You might start with a list of words that describe it.

- *Restate* in your own words what someone else said.
- *Reword* someone's statement to gain understanding.
- *Rephrase* something you heard to comprehend the context.
- *Revise* the sentence structure to make it make sense to you.

Have participants add to this list until there is understanding around the word paraphrase.

When listeners paraphrase it also means what was said. Paraphrasing is restating back to the speaker what the listener thought was said. Paraphrasing is a form of clarifying, but clarifying is not always paraphrasing. Coaching and practice handouts will help define further.

## Define the Word Understand

Define the word **understand** using other words. This is important so that the audience can connect it to the importance of paraphrasing.

Ask your class what words describe how to *understand*. For instance...

- Recognize
- Know
- Are
- the participants add to this list

**The Goal** for teaching the definitions is to establish comprehension of the word *paraphrase* until it is understood, and absorbed.

### **Explain Activity to Participants**

Encourage everyone to participate. This learning is playful and rewarding.

**You May Elect to use this Script:** Your goal is to recognize and award your peers when they take action to paraphrase an unclear statement. You and/or your peer can restate in your own words until understanding by both of you prevails.

Just like the times you need to rewrite an essay for clarity, there are times you will need to comprehend better what someone else says.

This activity will be ongoing for this month (or within a specified time period). It is to raise your level of awareness by learning how to paraphrase. The activity is about gaining mutual understanding by rephrasing a statement spoken that is not understood.

### **Here is How it Works:**

- 1.** When someone talks to you, listen for confusing statements. They will use words you don't understand. Or their message is confusing or unclear.
- 2.** Paraphrase what they said back to them. Reword what they said, or ask for another meaning until you both agree on what was said and meant. (Emphasize that paraphrasing is using clarifying, inductive statements.)
- 3.** The person who said the confusing message will present their peer, who paraphrased, an award immediately, or as soon as it's possible.

That is it! This exercise is simple, easy and takes only a minute or two to reward!



# Paraphrasing and Clarifying Statements

## Starter Statements

The objective is to have students (or employees, peers, family and friends) reword a confusing sentence sensibly back to who communicated it initially. However, a simple restate statement may be necessary, to precede the actual paraphrase statement.

Starter statements are an alert to the speaker there is confusion about what was said. These brief interruptions are to help everyone to get on the same page to understand. Some examples include:

- I don't know what you want.
- Can you repeat that again?
- Please talk slower I didn't get what you said.
- Can you explain that again?
- I am not sure what you just implied.
- I am unclear what you are asking.
- What did you just say?

A starter statement is a great introduction to paraphrasing. Encourage students to use a starter statement if they are unsure how to paraphrase. This will alert their others to reword and restate what was said. Mutual understanding is important in all relationships.

## Paraphrase and Clarify

Paraphrasing is at the heart of communication. What is said (content) versus what is meant (relational) is the essence behind paraphrasing. Here are some examples of how to paraphrase.

Paraphrasing statements is when a listener rephrases, or rewords, back to the speaker what the listener thought was said, meant, or implied. Paraphrases use specific clarifying words to understand.

Teachers and facilitators, you may want to role play some statements that are ambiguous and ask students to create paraphrases and clarifying statements. Here are examples:

**Unclear** Statement: "Please put that over there."

**Starter** Statement: "I do not know what you mean."

**Paraphrasing** Statement: "Do you mean put the notebooks in the corner behind the desk?"

**Unclear:** "Can you help me wash the truck?"

**Starter** Statement: "Which truck?"

**Paraphrasing** Statement: "Do you want my help to wash the blue or red truck?"

**Unclear:** "Let's do the assignment in the back of our work book."

**Starter** Statement: "Which page and what book do we use?"

**Paraphrasing** Statement: "Do you mean the human anatomy Q&A in the biology work book?"

Notice that paraphrases include clarifying statements. Here are the components of a paraphrase:

- Paraphrases are statements instigated by the listener.
- Listeners rephrase in their own words what they thought was said, meant, or implied.
- Paraphrases use clarifying words/phrases to help listeners understand what was said.
- Listeners use paraphrases to ask for clarification from the speaker.

Teachers you could have the students role play this activity. Option 1: You can make up the unclear statement and ask for clarifying - paraphrasing statements. Option 2: You can have pairs of students come up with a simple scenario and role play to their peers. The more practice together as a class, the more confident students will become.

Make this an engaging activity. Remember to tell your students that everyone participating in this activity is a teacher, mentor and coach to their peers. And there are no wrong statements. Every paraphrase attempt is practice, and they will improve.



# Paraphrase Practice Worksheets



## Fill In the Blanks

Example Statement: "Walk the dog."

Paraphrase: "Do you mean our dog or the neighbor's dog we are caring for?"

Statement: "I don't feel good."

Paraphrase: \_\_\_\_\_

Statement: "I wish things would get better."

Paraphrase: \_\_\_\_\_

Statement: "I am overwhelmed with happiness."

Paraphrase: \_\_\_\_\_

Statement: "Leaving tomorrow."

Paraphrase: \_\_\_\_\_



# Classroom Ideas & Award Sheets

## Classroom Ideas

- Place posters on the walls as a reminder for this activity.
- Keep a stack of awards handy on your desk so students can help themselves, and a set number of awards to each student to make them accountable for participating in this activity.
- Teachers can also have students put their names on the back of the award before they give it to someone. This serves two purposes. First the recipient will remember who the award came from. Second, it keeps the giver watchful of participating.
- Have ten minute check ins for kudos or questions twice a week.
  - Students could share what it felt like giving or getting an award.
  - Have students share how learning to paraphrase has changed their language and how they communicate differently.
- While the activity is active, keep it alive by using reminders and check ins.

## Age Appropriate Reward

If you are using this activity with elementary children you may want to start with the awareness of unclear statements. Using the starter statements may be sufficient to give an award.

Teens can typically identify a confusing statement and jump right in to paraphrase it instantly.

Mentor and coach students for when and how they present awards to their peers. Have students identify and paraphrasing behavior, action, or language that merits giving out an award. For instance:

- When their friend alerts them to their unclear message.
- When their friend uses a starter statement.
- When their friend paraphrases to clarify their statement.

# Paraphrase to Understand Challenge!

- **Recognize** Paraphrasing in Action and by Language.
- **Participate** in the Paraphrase to Understand Activity to Create Understanding with Your Peers.
- **Observe and Award** Outside Your Circle of Friends.
- **Paraphrase** Every Time You Hear an Unclear Statement.
- **Recognize** Paraphrase Language so You Can Award Others.
- **Acknowledge** Your Peers When You Witness Clarifying Paraphrase Statements and Language.
- **Give an Award** To Your Peers for Paraphrased Sentences Caught in Action.
- **Understand that Paraphrasing** is a Learned Behavior and Takes Practice to be Proficient.
- **Paraphrasing** Results in More Understanding and a Positive Communication Climate.





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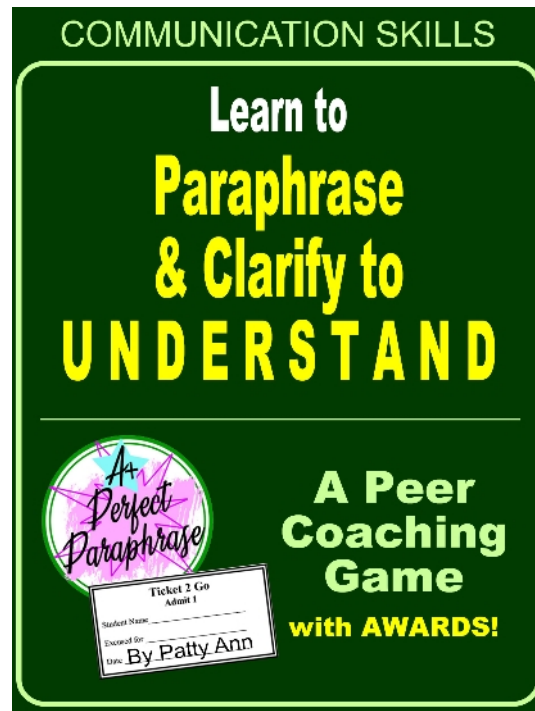
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**Paraphrase to Understand Activity**

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