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CHAPTER ONE

01

Consider the two sentences below. Can you identify the method of paraphrasing/rephrasing used?

A It's really hard to concentrate on the text.



B It's quite difficult to focus on the text.

CHAPTER ONE

Understanding Synonyms

01

When we're asked to express something differently, we often think of using synonyms. While this technique isn't wrong, it's often misused.

Let's explore why:

1 Nuances of Meaning

Similar words can have subtle differences in meaning.

Consider 'sad' and 'upset' as an example. Many students use these interchangeably, but there's a small difference:

> **Sad:** When you feel sad, you feel unhappy. The feeling may be brief or long-lasting.
>
> **Upset:** When you're upset, you may feel unhappiness, worry, or irritation, often in response to a particular event.

So, even very similar words might have slight differences in meaning.

■ PRACTICE

Use a dictionary to explore the nuances in meaning between the word pairs listed below:

Beautiful vs pretty | Nice vs good | Hot vs warm | Cold vs cool | Important vs crucial | Increase vs escalate | Ruthless vs determined | Happy vs joyful | Lazy vs lethargic | Funny vs hilarious

2 Style

Language style refers to the words chosen by different groups based on the situation or the person they're speaking or writing to.

In terms of vocabulary, there are generally three styles:

A Informal

Used for casual conversations or writing to friends. Examples: hoops, snag, chill out, chicken out, guy, dude

B Neutral

Most English words fit here and can be used in lots of situations. Examples: classic, use, stand, obvious, often, trip, car, slowly

C Formal

Reserved for official or serious situations. Examples: indisposed, procedural, profess, hauteur

Students often make a big mistake by using informal words in serious situations, and the other way around, both in written and spoken language. This can sound strange or even silly.

For example:

> *"I was wondering if you could help me find 'the john'." This sounds odd because 'john' is an informal American word, while 'I was wondering if...' is more formal.*

■ PRACTICE

Use an English dictionary to identify the register of these words:

1. Shocked, Aghast, Flabbergasted:
2. Delectable, Delicious, Scrumptious:
3. Daft, Silly, Folly:

Example sentences paraphrased/rephrased using synonymous expressions

	ORIGINAL		PARAPHRASE
01	The CBI believes that cities are **like** products.	→	The CBI believes that cities are **similar to** products.
02	Surveys take place **every year**.	→	**Surveys are conducted annually**.
03	People who are **looking for** a job	→	Those who are **seeking** a job
04	No one was really aware of the **significance** of this building.	→	Nobody really recognized the **importance** of this building.
05	Some people's opinions **quickly altered**.	→	Some people quickly changed their minds.
06	Installing the program is **relatively straightforward**.	→	It's **fairly easy** to install the program.
07	**At present**, it looks like local farmers will **have to sacrifice** their land rights if their country's leaders are determined to develop the citadel as a **tourist attraction**.	→	**Currently**, it looks like local farmers will be **forced to give up** their land rights if their country's authorities are determined to develop the citadel as a tourist attraction.
08	He **dismissed** all my objections.	→	He simply **brushed** all my objections **aside**.
09	**Sloppy** accounting was **to blame for** the shortfall in revenue.	→	**Careless** accounting was **responsible for** the shortfall in revenue.
10	I don't think I could ever **get to like** hip-hop.	→	I don't think hip-hop could ever **grow on** me.
11	Over the past weeks, the price of petrol has **ballooned**.	→	The price of petrol has **soared** in recent weeks.
12	Jane can't **tolerate** her boyfriend's behavior anymore.	→	Jane can no longer **put up with** her boyfriend's behavior.
13	We have decided not to **go to** the meeting.	→	We have decided not to attend the meeting.
14	**A lot of** people **face** financial problems.	→	**Many** are **confronted by** financial problems.