Ideas with
IMPACT

idea packet

A Way With Words

A Way With Words
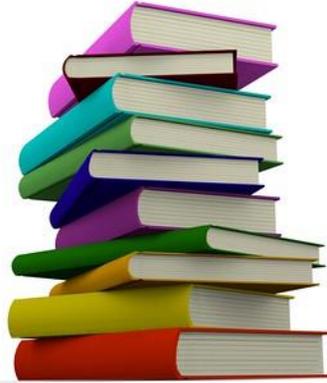
Paraphrasing With Purpose, an Abstract

And a Lesson

By

John F. Adams

Robert Morgan Educational Center

18180 SW 122 Ave

Miami, FL 33173

305-2539920 ext 2250

305-2591495 (fax)

"Teachers…all they are ever affecting is the memory. Nothing can be forced into anyone's mind except by brainwashing, which is the very opponent of general teaching."

Mortimer Adler, Practitioner of Education

Table of Contents

Vocabulary as an integral part of curriculum, beyond the simple use of synonyms and antonyms with an eye to assessment, has always been a "stepchild" in my classroom. Taking vocabulary to a realm beyond the realm of rote regurgitation of synonyms and antonyms, since I have been as remiss as anyone in remaining in the latter realm, is my goal. Finding synonyms is certainly part of it; it helps build confidence and proves to the student that (s)he is capable of learning "big" words (those that appear on standardized tests and more frequently in texts and classroom activities the higher up, from 9th to 12 grades, a student goes). However, applying paraphrasing (which is really just another way of saying "summarizing") is an upper-level cognitive skill that is essential in any language arts class. Indeed, it is essential for success in education, period. By focusing on vocabulary (whether it be a phrase, sentence, or, series of sentences in a text) and paraphrasing together, it is possible to enhance both vocabulary development and comprehension.

- **Original: Any day at Italy must include an end by at Tuscany to sample her wines, which are exquisite.**

Assuming the key word were "end by":

- **Any day at Italy must include a wine-tasting event at Tuscany to sample her wines, which are exquisite. (adequate)**

- **Be specific to include a Tuscan wine-tasting event whenever visiting Italy.   (True)**

  The "true" paraphrase outperforms the acceptable paraphrase, to be sure.

In order to write true paraphrases, students must quickly grasp the gist of a given text (whether it is a short excerpt of exposition or a longer scene of a play, or short story, or piece of non-fiction), going beyond just looking at one word in the sentence. A "true" paraphrase involves more than simply changing one word or phrase to a synonym or definition, although a simple paraphrase, which does just that and only that, is acceptable, if not meritorious, in itself. True paraphrasing involves focusing first on that one word or phrase and then seeing it within a larger context. The specific objective of this abstract and the IMPACT session it describes is to make clear the difference between an adequate or "acceptable" paraphrase and a "true" paraphrase. The larger purpose is to promote, as always, a larger understanding of the whole text (whether fiction or non-fiction) and to use this whole text as a springboard for the curriculum itself (best practices in discussion, cooperative learning, writing, and evaluation tools such as tests). As a result of this "springboard," students will be able to:

*   understand why an author uses particular words in context, especially if they have historical and social import

*   seeing the entire gist of exposition, narrative, or, in the case of non-fiction, claims and evidence supporting those claims

*   summarize longer and longer pieces of text with an eye to applying what they know to what they can write about when it comes to the particular text they are analyzing

In terms of Florida state standards, the following apply:

READING

LAFS.1112.RL.1.1   Analysis of what text says

LAFS 1112.RL.2.4   Determining contextual meaning of words and phrases group 2

lAFS1112.RL.4.10   Comprehension of literature

Note: these same standards would apply in the adaptation of the overall activity to a non-fiction text.

LISTENING/SPEAKING

LAFS.111.2SL.1.1   Preparation and presentation of work in groups

LAFS.1112.SL.2.4   Presentation of evidence showing comprehension of both vocabulary and context

LAFS1112.SL.2.5   Strategic use of digital media (Promethean Board or other)

VOCABULARY

LAFS1112.1112.L.2.3   Understanding how language functions in different contexts

LAFS1112.L.3.4   Determining meaning of unknown words

HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES

LAFS1112.RH.1.3   Understanding actions or events in light of explanations given within the context of key vocabulary words

To begin, the IMPACT facilitator will broach the word "paraphrase" and allow for five to ten minutes of discussion of the word itself and possible applications in academic institutions. He will then distribute copies of "Black Men and Public Space", to be skimmed over by all participants (not read, as is normally done by high school students, in its entirety). Comments may be made, or a question or two asked, but no more than ten minutes is to be allotted for this. We will return to the reading later.

Then the warm-up activity will follow. The audience will observe and discuss.

The facilitator had the option of demonstrating with the assistance of a student or by means of two student models both an "adequate" and a "true" paraphrase of an excerpt from Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* (page 461, *Collections, 11th Grade).* He chose two students.

In a depiction of two students from an 11th-grade class at Robert Morgan Educational Center, Miami, Florida, 2018-19, we can appreciate an explanation of both an adequate and a true paraphrase.

The key word is **pretense.** The original sentence from the text is, "It were all pretense, uncle."
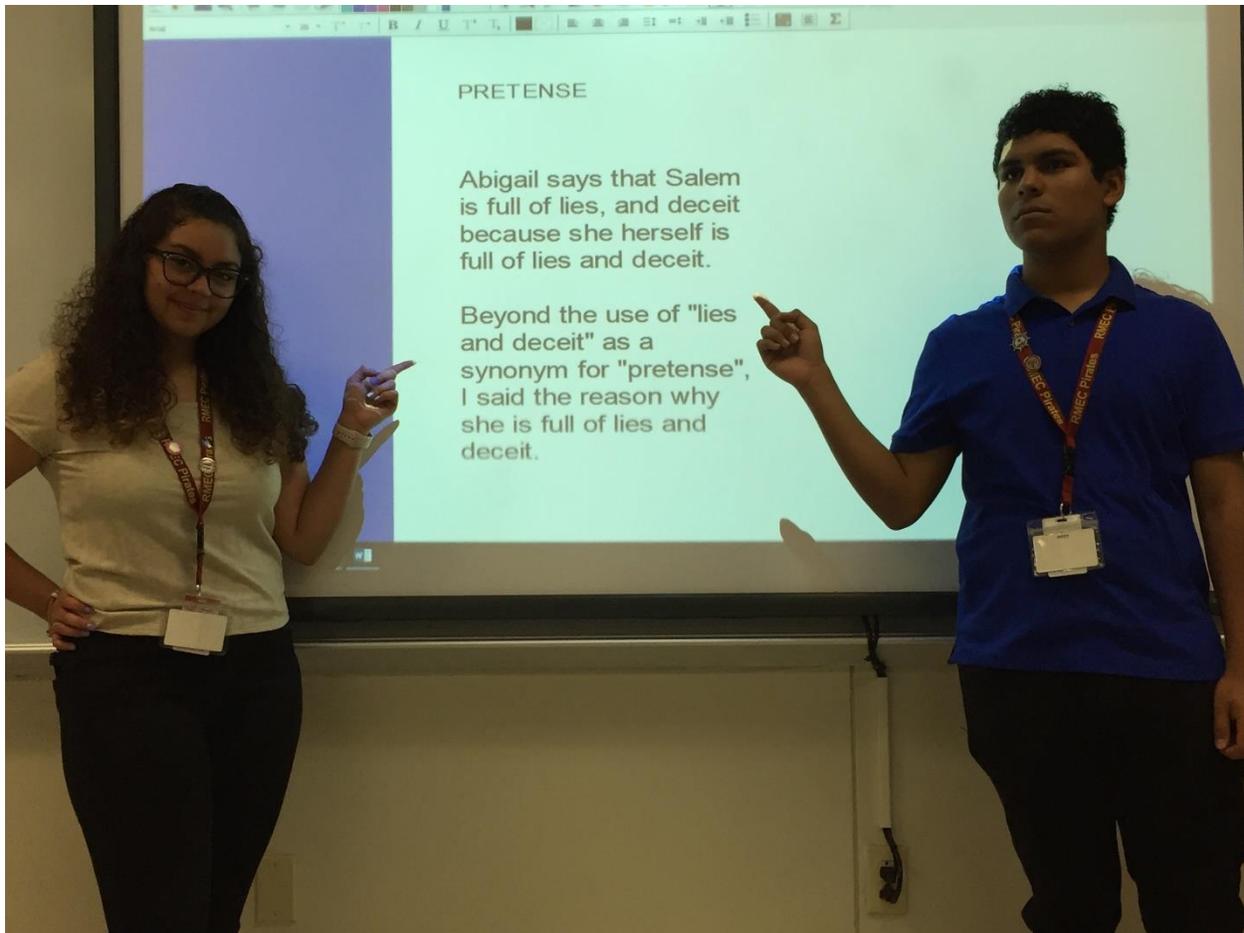
This is a true paraphrase. One of the two students went above and beyond the following:

"It was all lies and deceit, uncle." (this is an acceptable paraphrase)

The latter does give an adequate synonym for "pretense," and it even changes the word "were" (archaic) to "was (modern). Something more than just a synonym for the vocabulary item was given, beyond changing "were" to "was," but the larger picture of the intolerance and mendacity of the Puritans of Salem is not included.

At this point, the group is divided into groups of four persons. *
On day one (or, as it were, the second two-thirds of the IMPACT break-
out session, approximately 30-35 minutes), each group is given one
excerpt from a piece of non-fiction (in this case, the article "Black Men
and Public Space" by Brent Staples). Each excerpt contains one key
vocabulary item. On the two sides of a piece of construction paper, in
bold print (at least 36 font), the team writes the word and the paraphrase.
As shown in the demonstration (detailed above), two members of each
group come to present two different paraphrasing versions (one
adequate, the other true).

The audience will vote on each of the two versions (not knowing
which one is adequate and which one is true). The facilitator will ask for
a show of hands for each (everyone must vote, except the four members
of the team in front) and record the results. The group receiving the
largest number of votes for their true paraphrase wins; this group will be
rewarded with the task of writing a short paragraph using each one of the
vocabulary items used in this activity, availing themselves of the
paraphrasing from all groups, which was recorded on construction paper.
This paragraph will also be written on construction paper. The purpose
of writing the paraphrases and complete summary on construction paper
is twofold: it provides a very clear distinction between the words in
limited context and the words in a larger context; it provides a visual
display of each group's work, to be posted in the classroom.

* Groups of two as appropriate

All words, original text, and page numbers from the article to be used are shown below and a copy of both the entire article and this list is to be provided for each student.

"Black Men and Public Space"

Word	Page # Sentence
affluent	**209 I came upon her late one evening on a deserted street in Hyde Park, a relatively affluent neighborhood in an otherwise mean, impoverished section of Chicago.**
wayfarers	**209 Suffering a bout of insomnia, however, I was stalking sleep, not defenseless wayfarers.**
indistinguishable	**209 Her flight made me feel like an accomplice in tyranny. It also made it clear that I was indistinguishable from the muggers who occasionally seeped into the area from the surrounding ghetto."**
elicit	**210 At dark, shadowy intersections, I could cross in front of a car stopped at a traffic light and elicit the**

	thunk, thunk, thunk, thunk of the driver-black, white, male, or female-hammering down the door locks.
avid	210 I moved to New York nearly two years ago and I have remained an avid night walker.
warrenlike	210 After dark, the warrenlike streets of Brooklyn where I live, I often see women who fear the worst from me.
perpetrators	210 Women are particularly vulnerable to street violence, and young black males are drastically overrepresented among the perpetrators of that violence.
solace	210 Yet these truths are no solace against the kind of alienation that comes of being ever the suspect, a fearsome entity with who pedestrians avoid making eye contact.

lethality	**210 It is not altogether clear to me how I reached the ripe old age of twenty-two without being conscious of the lethality of nighttime pedestrians attributed to me.**
bravado	**210 All gone down in episodes of bravado played out in the streets.**
perilous	**211 Fearsomeness mistakenly attributed to me in public places often has a perilous flavor.**
ad hoc posse	**211 I was mistaken for a burglar. The office manager called security and, with an ad hoc posse, pursued me through the labyrinthine halls, nearly to my editor's door.**
cursory	**211 I took a cursory look around, nodded, and bade her good night.**
skittish	**211 If I happened to be entering a building behind some people who appear skittish, I may walk by, letting them clear the lobby before I return, so**

	as not to seem to be following them.
steely	**212 Even steely New Yorkers hunching toward nighttime destinations seem to relax, and occasionally they even join in the rune.**

Days 2,3 in class with 11th graders, as shown in Lesson Plan (pages 16,17)

Activity and/or discussion during IMPACT workshop, time permitting:

The same procedure outlined above (page 8) is to be followed for *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller. The demonstration shown on page 7 above was used for part of Miller's introduction; the words to be used for paraphrasing in *The Crucible* come from the play itself, Acts I and II. By combining non-fiction (first) and fiction in this way, students will be able to see that paraphrasing may be done with both, and sequencing will allow that not too much time be spent on either one. The play itself is the digitalized version of the play and is available online and within the Houghton-Mifflin textbook *Collections.* However, in this session copies of the pages from which the words and text are taken are herewith provided to each participant. Separately, the words and texts along with the pages from which the words come are shown below and are also to be distributed to workshop members.

Note: dialogue is placed inside quotations marks; exposition is not.

***The Crucible,* Acts I and II**

Word	Page # Sentence
dissemble	462 Abigail Williams, seventeen, enters-a strikingly beautiful girl with an endless capacity for dissembling
conjure	463 "We never conjured spirits."

abominations	463 "Abominations are done in the forest."
sniveling	464 "It is a bitter woman, a lying, cold, sniveling woman…!"
intimations	466 "I have spoke nothing, but my heart has clamored intimations."
formidable	466 "It is a formidable sin to conjure up the dead."
the stocks	469 "Ah, you're wicked yet, aren't y'! …you'll be clapped in the stocks before you're twenty!"
Quakers	474 "What? Are we Quakers? We are not Quakers here yet, Mr. Proctor. And you may tell that to your followers!"

ameliorate	490 "He sentenced her. He must." (*to ameliorate it*). "But not Sarah Good. For Sarah Good confessed, y'see."
indignant	491 *(with an indignant edge)* "She tried to kill me many times, Goody Proctor."
official	492 "I'll official you!"

	495 "But it's hard to think so pious a woman be secretly a Devil's bitch after seventy year of such good prayer."
convenanted	**496 "There be no mark of blame upon my life, Mr. Hale. I am a convenanted Christian woman."**
adultery	**496 "Adultery, John."**
naught	**498 "The devil is alive in Salem, and we dare not quail to follow wherever the accusing finger points!"**

Complete Lesson Plan and Assessments for "Black Men and Public Spaces", paraphrasing and comprehension

Day - Plan	Assessment
1- Reading of essay "Black Men and Public Spaces" (to be done in abbreviated form at IMPACT workshop)	KWL Chart and 10 comprehension questions (not to be done at IMPACT workshop)
2- Paraphrasing Activity (to be done at IMPACT workshop)	Poster (paraphrases) (to be done at IMPACT workshop)
3- Review of all vocabulary in context (not to be done at IMPACT workshop)	N/A – practice test created by teacher (not to be done at IMPACT workshop)
4- Test – Vocabulary (not to be done at IMPACT workshop)	* Words in context (multiple choice) - 50% * Comprehension questions with key words - 50% (not to be done at IMPACT workshop)
5- Test – Comprehension (not to be done at IMPACT workshop)	Information questions and sentence completions (not to be done at IMPACT workshop)

Complete Lesson Plan for *The Crucible*, Acts I and II, paraphrasing and comprehension

Day(s) - Plan	Assessment
1,2- Reading of Acts I and II, by characters, *The Crucible* (not to be done at IMPACT workshop)	KWL chart and 10 questions (not to be done at IMPACT workshop)
3- Discussion and/or Paraphrasing Activity (to be done at IMPACT workshop, time permitting	Discussion and/or Poster Paraphrasing Activity (to be done at IMPACT workshop, time permitting)
4- Review of all vocabulary in context (not to be done at IMPACT workshop)	N/A- practice test created by teacher; Kahoot game (Acts I, II) (not to be done at IMPACT workshop)
5- Test – Vocabulary (not to be done at IMPACT workshop)	* Words in context (multiple choice) - 50% * Comprehension questions with key words - 50% (not to be done at IMPACT workshop)
6- Test- Comprehension (not to be done at IMPACT workshop)	Information questions and sentence completions (not to be done at IMPACT workshop)

In summary, the process of introducing paraphrasing and (on the part of students) using paraphrasing productively does not end with the successful completion of the assignment. The word "springboard" was used earlier; it is an appropriate metaphor for the concept of going above and beyond a text itself. Students will learn (or solidify in their minds) vocabulary as well as a basic comprehension of the given text. However, they will "spring" from here into the realm of application, by participating in mini-skits, writing activities, games, or discussions as organized by the facilitator.

The modest attempt described herein to explain one small nugget of a lesson plan is motivated by a desire to both emphasize that at times, educators need to get down to the "nuts and bolts" of planning and teaching. Students need to, primarily, become better readers and writers, and pacing guides are made to suggest boundaries by way of both resources and best practices to insure this. However, within the broad expanses of these resources and best practices, each educator must allow for activities that move the student to focus on very specific details, such as vocabulary, grammar, and affixes. This is why words like "close reading" resound in our community. Such activities constitute a limited but very essential part of the overall curriculum that we all follow.

Finally, the guidelines to be followed in the IMPACT workshop are only that: each teacher must decide how much time to spend on the introduction and the activities.

Materials (to be provided by IMPACT facilitator)

Large two-sided poster board for displaying on the desk or table graphics and captions related to *The Crucible* and "Black Men in Public Spaces."

Copies of the complete article "Black Men in Public Spaces."

Copies of relevant pages from Acts I and I of *The Crucible*

Copies of the two-column lists of words, text, and page numbers from both the article and the play.

Copies of this 20-page abstract

Magic Markers and Colored Pencils

Construction Paper

Promethean or Smart Board, if available

Resources

Chuong, Henry, *Paraphrasing Strategies.* Bantam Books, New York, 2018.

Kissner, Emily. *Summarizing, Paraphrasing, and Retelling.* Heinemen, New York, 2017.

Miller, Arthur, *The Crucible,* from *Collections, Grade 11.* Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Orlando, 2017.

"Paraphrasing," from *Owl.Purdue.* 2016.

Shandlow, Matthew, "A Survey of Autonomous Text Simplified." *International Journal of Advanced Computer Science and Applications*, 2014.

Staples, Brett, "Black Men and Public Space." *The Seagull Reader, Essays* (ed. by Joseph Kelly). W.W. Norton & Company, New York, 2002.

"Writing in Your Own Words." *The Open U,* July 27, 2012.