



Paraphrase

Paraphrase is a game intended for people ages 12 and up where players describe nouns so that the other players can guess them. You can make the game yourself and play it in order to practice paraphrasing strategies. Using the same deck of cards, Paraphrase can be played two different ways: one way requiring players to paraphrase nouns using circumlocution techniques, and the other using approximation techniques.

For more on this game and the use of games to practice paraphrasing skills, read the Iowa Reading Research Center blog post “Learning English with Your Children and Teens: Practice Paraphrasing with a New Game” by Kate Will.

How to Make Paraphrase

To create the noun cards, think of as many English nouns as you can. Write one noun on each noun card. To generate ideas, ask yourself these questions:

- Where are your favorite places to go?
- Who are some people you see each day?
- Who are some famous people you would like to meet?
- Who are your favorite characters from books or movies?
- What are your favorite foods, sports, books, movies, or TV shows?

You can make as many noun cards as you want by printing multiple copies of the card template sheet (compatible with perforated cardstock paper or the paper of your choice) below or using index cards or small scraps of paper. The more cards you have available to use during the game, the longer you will be able to play.

How to Play the Circumlocution Version (Three or More Players)

1. Place the noun cards facedown between the players.
2. Have the first player draw a card from the top of the deck and read it silently.
3. The first player describes the noun written on the card without using the noun itself in the description.
4. The other players attempt to guess the word. The first player to guess the noun receives a point, along with the player who successfully described the noun.





5. Players continue taking turns describing and guessing nouns until all the cards have been drawn. The player with the most points wins the game.

How to Play the Approximation Version (Four or More Players)

1. Divide players equally into two teams.
2. Place the noun cards facedown between the two teams.
3. Have each team select one player to be the leader for the first round.
4. Decide which team will go first and play as Team 1.
5. The leader from Team 1 draws a card from the top of the deck and reads it silently.
6. The Team 1 leader gives a one-word clue to their teammates on Team 1.
 - The clue should be a word that is related to the noun on the card. For example, if the noun on the card was “taxi,” some possible clues could be “cab” or “car” because these words have the same approximate meaning as “taxi”.
7. Based on the clue, the other team members attempt to guess the noun on the card. Team 1 is only allowed one guess.
 - If their guess is correct, Team 1 wins the point. Proceed to step 11.
 - If their guess is incorrect, Team 2 has the opportunity to steal the point. Continue to Step 8.
8. The leader for Team 1 hands over the noun card to the leader for Team 2, who gives another one-word clue to their teammates on Team 2.
9. The other players on Team 2 attempt to guess the noun. If they are correct, their team wins the point. If they are incorrect, Team 1 takes another turn.
10. Turns alternate between the two teams until one of the teams manages to guess the noun and earn the point.
11. A new leader is selected from each team, and the second round begins with Team 2.

Game Modifications



For Beginners

Beginners may draw three cards at a time and select the card they wish to describe, returning the other two to the deck. This will prevent players from having to struggle and become discouraged by words that they do not know.

For Advanced Players

Set a timer to limit the time advanced players have to describe the word on the card. This will encourage advanced players to describe each word as efficiently as possible.

Paraphrase Noun Cards

 PARAPHRASE  NOUN:	 PARAPHRASE  NOUN:	 PARAPHRASE  NOUN:
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