

**EVALUATING  
ACADEMIC READINESS  
FOR APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING**  
Revised for  
**ACCESS TO APPRENTICESHIP**

**COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS  
RESTATEMENT AND PARAPHRASING**

**AN ACADEMIC SKILLS MANUAL  
for**

**The Construction Trades (Structures)**

This trade group includes the following trades:  
Drywall & Acoustical Applicator, General Carpenter,  
Mason (Brick & Stone and Restoration), Reinforcing Rod Worker, Roofer,  
Terrazzo, Tile & Marble Mechanic

*Workplace Support Services Branch  
Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities*

*Revised 2011*

In preparing these Academic Skills Manuals we have used passages, diagrams and questions similar to those an apprentice might find in a text, guide or trade manual.

**This trade related material is not intended to instruct you in your trade. It is used only to demonstrate how understanding an academic skill will help you find and use the information you need.**

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# COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS

## RESTATEMENT AND PARAPHRASING

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*An academic skill required for the study of the  
Construction Trades (Structures)*

### INTRODUCTION

**Restatement or paraphrasing**, means saying something in your own words. We do this to be sure that we get the correct meaning from information. This important skill allows you to clearly communicate ideas about construction theory, fabrication, or blueprint reading to co-workers, other tradespersons and customers. Technical writing activities related to *paraphrasing or restatement* include writing brief reports, submitting job proposals and estimates, reporting on potential worksite hazards, and completing work-related documentation.

In this skills manual, we will look at some examples of restatement. We will do this to:

- ◆ Understand and explain technical information,
- ◆ Restate information in graphic and written material, and,
- ◆ Recognize signals that indicate restatement.

### PART I

#### UNDERSTANDING TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Try to explain an idea **in your own words** and **out loud**. You will discover what you know and what you don't know. When you use your own words, you find out where you can repeat ideas clearly and where you stumble because you can't find the right words.

#### Let me get this right

If you have difficulty expressing an idea **out loud**, you know something is unclear. Stop. Reread the sections that stumped you, and then try again. When you paraphrase an idea or written instruction, you are forced to be clear about what you have read or heard. This can be a slow process, but if you can restate the idea, you probably understand it.

We will use information from the construction trade to show you what we mean. Read **Passage 1** below to understand the information. Proceed methodically and read with attention. Use the following suggestions:

- read slowly,
- read out loud,
- ask questions,
- look up unfamiliar words or terms, and
- take notes, **using your own words**.

When you have finished, test your understanding: Could you explain this to someone who knows nothing about the topic/principle? Would they understand it?

**Answer the questions that follow the passage. Answers are at the end of this skills manual.**

**Passage 1**  
**Special Framing Problems**

In modern residential construction, the design may include a section of floor that overhangs a lower floor or basement level. When the floor joists run perpendicular to the walls, the framing is comparatively easy. It is only necessary to use longer joists. If, however, the floor joists run parallel to the wall, the construction must be framed with cantilevered joists as illustrated in Figure 1-1. (Figure 1-1 is omitted.)

The exact spacing and length of the members will depend on the weight of the outside wall. Usually, cantilevered joists should extend inward at least twice as far as they stick out over the supporting wall. Note that since the load at the inside double-header is upward, the ledger strip must be positioned at the top.

Entrance halls, bathrooms and other areas are often finished with tile or stone that is installed on a concrete base. To provide room for this base, the floor frame must be lowered. When the area is not large, this can be done by doubling the joists of a smaller dimension. (See Figure 1-2 [omitted here]). Additional support can be secured by reducing the spacing. When an area is large, steel or wood girders and posts should be added.

**Questions**

1. What does “*when joists run perpendicular to the walls*” mean?  
  

**T      F**
2. Cantilevered joists should have double the length projecting outward from the supporting wall as extending inward from the supporting wall.  
  

**T      F**
3. You can increase joist support if you use smaller ones, but double them up and decrease the spacing between them.  
  

**T      F**
4. Joists that run parallel to the wall –
  - a) run at right angles to the wall.
  - b) run perpendicular to the wall.
  - c) run in the same direction as the wall.

***Paraphrasing step-by-step***

As you read and figure out what each step of Passage 1 means, mentally check it off; or use a pencil to do so. If you don’t understand any part of the directions or don’t see how it fits with the others, spend more time and effort on it. As you recognize how each piece fits into the job, you begin to develop a sense of the whole picture.

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### Paragraph one

In Passage 1, you may have had a few questions about with the first two sentences in paragraph one.

- What does *overhangs a lower floor* mean? If you aren't sure or have forgotten, look up *overhang* and find a diagram.
- What does *perpendicular* mean? The dictionary gives several meanings: the one related to your trade is *at right angles to a given line or plane or surface. One line is perpendicular to another when it makes a square corner with the other. This is also given in short form as an "L" angle.*

These definitions give you the meaning of the words, but more importantly, when you put these meanings for the terms back into the sentences, you can understand more clearly what is being said about floor joists.

**Example:** In other words, you can paraphrase a confusing sentence.

*"When the floor joists run perpendicular to the walls, the framing is comparatively easy"*

It means

*When floor joists run at right angles to the walls, framing is easier.*

### Paragraph two

Experiment with different words to restate what you are reading. You could break paragraph two into points with slightly different wording. You might come up with something like this:

The weight of the outside wall determines:

- exact spacing, and,
- the length of the members.

If you are framing with cantilevered joists:

- the joists should be twice as long on the inward side as on the overhang, and,
- you should measure the lengths from the supporting wall.

The load on the inside double header is upward. This means:

- you should place the ledger strip at the top.

**Note:** *You will learn the definitions of trade terms such as stops, clamping ability, clamping capacity, sheet stock etc., as you move through your training. Knowing those terms will help you restate ideas clearly.*

### Paragraph three

Paraphrase paragraph three one step at a time. Make sure you understand, and can explain ***in your own words***, exactly what this information means.

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Think of how would you explain paragraph three to a new employee. You would have to know and describe:

- when floor frames are lowered,
- by *how much* are they lowered,
- what is considered a *not large area*,
- what spacing would you use,
- whether the spacing has to be exact, and,
- when you would have to add steel or wood girders.

### **I still don't get it**

When you read something and say, "I don't get it," you need to solve the problem. What *exactly* don't you get? It's critical to move beyond feeling that you don't understand the material. Usually there's something that you do understand, so, which parts do you get?

Separate what you know from what you don't know, and then find explanations for the confusing parts. It's important to *ask yourself questions and find answers* to all aspects of the information. When you change written ideas into your own words, it will help you to develop a mental picture of the ideas and an understanding of the meaning

When you can restate what you've read – in your own words – and can write it out, you know that you have understood the material. Using your own words will help you remember information. If you can explain it clearly to someone else, you have got it.

### **Examples of Restatement**

You will find two samples of restatement below, in **Passage 2** and **Passage 3**. The two passages were written by different people to explain the concept of magnetism. Read them to compare the details.

First, read each passage following these directions:

- ◆ read slowly,
- ◆ ask yourself questions,
- ◆ look up unfamiliar words or terms, and,
- ◆ take notes, or explain to yourself what the passage says *using your own words*.

Second, **compare** the information in the two passages. Look for similarities and differences.

#### **Passage 2**

Every material is composed of minute particles called *molecules*. In any magnetic material, each molecule is a magnet with a north and south pole.

#### **Passage 3**

The molecular theory of magnetism states basically that all substances are made up of an infinite number of molecular magnets.

When you read **Passage 3** to compare it with **Passage 2**, did you see that each covers the theory of magnetism? Each uses different expression, different types of sentences and different

vocabulary, but *the information is essentially the same*. Below you can see some examples from the passages where the same ideas are expressed differently:

<b>Passage 2</b>		<b>Passage 3</b>
every material	=	all substances
is composed of	=	are made up of
each molecule is a magnet with a north and south pole	=	molecular magnets

You may find that one passage or one group of words is clearer or easier than the other passage. The important point is that they each express the same theory.

### **Didn't I just read this?**

If information sometimes seems familiar to you, it may be because you've read it before. But, what you've read before didn't use the exact wording of what you're reading now. Continue to read and compare **Passages 2 and 3** for examples of restatement.

#### **Passage 2**

In non-magnetized material, molecules lie in a haphazard manner. When a material has been magnetized, the molecules lie in an orderly fashion.

#### **Passage 3**

Molecular magnets can be arranged in two ways: *organized or disorganized*. If the molecular magnets are *disorganized*, the material is considered to be unmagnetized. When the molecular magnets are *organized*, the material is considered to be magnetized.

How do they compare? We'll look at examples of vocabulary from these passages which restate the same information:

<b>Passage 2</b>		<b>Passage 3</b>
non-magnetized	=	unmagnetized
haphazard manner	=	disorganized
orderly fashion	=	organized

These two passages are restatements of each other. Each passage gives you accurate information but in a different way. In your reading, you might prefer one textbook or manual to another because the way it expresses ideas is easier for you to understand.

## **PART II**

### **GRAPHICS AND TEXT**

In Part II, we'll look at how *graphics* and *text* are used together as examples of restatement.

### **Graphics**

When we use the term *graphics*, we mean the types of illustrations that you find in manuals and textbooks: diagrams, graphs, photographs and chart. They present a restatement in a visual way: they give you information in a new and different way.

## Using graphics

Graphics relay information you need for your trade. To use graphics effectively, you need to convert the information into actions – either the mental action of understanding information or the physical action of following directions. To do either, restate the information so that you understand it. If you find terms or symbols that are not clear, stop and find out what they mean.

## Text

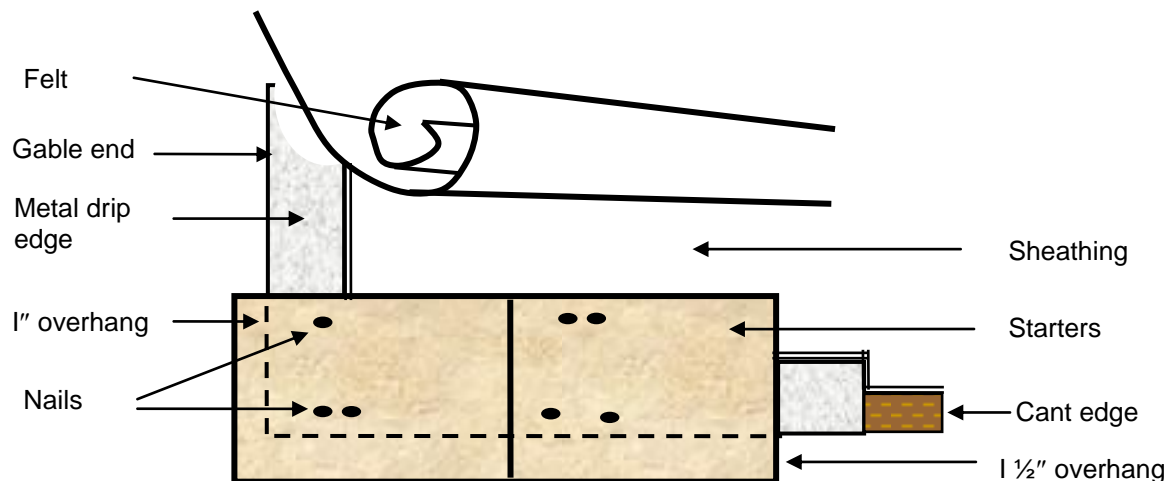
When we use the term *text*, we mean everything that is in print form. This includes the writing that goes with a diagram, graph, photograph or chart. The text uses words to describe or explain something, while a graphic uses a picture.

We'll use the text and graphic figure below (**Figure 1**) to demonstrate restatement.

### Passage 4 Applying Shingles

Before applying mineral fibre shingles, make sure that the roof deck is in good condition. Lumber should be well seasoned, dry and the thickness should be uniform. Nail heads need to be driven down: high spots or rough edges must be removed. For the first course of shingles, install a wood cant strip along the eaves, flush with the lower edge to give the proper pitch. Install metal drip edges.

To apply the starter course, roll back the underlayment felt. Turn the starter shingles upside down so the overhang which is exposed to view matches the roof surface. Nail the shingles into place. See Figure 1.



**Figure 1:** Installation of standard rectangular shingles.  
For the starter course, turn shingles upside down.  
Unroll felt before starting the next (first) course.

**The text** provides you with the general preparation steps for installing mineral shingles. You learn that you need to check roof deck condition, to choose the right lumber, to drive in nail heads, to remove high and rough spots, and to install the wood cant strip and metal drip edges. Next, you get the first steps for installing the starter course for these shingles, and you are given a reason for turning the starter shingles over.

**The diagram** shows these first steps with the starter shingles upside down and the felt underlay rolled back. It shows and labels items mentioned in the text: metal drip edge and cant strip. We also see items not mentioned: sheathing and gable end, the overhang of the starter shingles measured at 1" and 1½ ", and the nailing pattern.

The text and diagram give you important information in different formats. **Together**, they provide a more complete picture than each would alone.

### **What am I looking at?**

If you know the purpose of a diagram, it may change the way you look at it. You may glance over at a diagram to get a general idea of what it illustrates.

**Example:** In Figure 1 you can *see* how much overhang to use.

You can study each part of the diagram and mentally convert the items pictured in the diagram to the stages described in the text. Going back and forth between the diagram and the text increases your ability to picture the whole process or concept. You move between the text and graphic:

- ◆ to understand each on its own,
- ◆ to understand them together,
- ◆ to remember the information, and/or
- ◆ to get answers to questions that you may have.

### **Examine everything**

1. The text will direct you to a graphic: the number of the graphic may be in parentheses like this (*Figure 2-10*). When the text directs you to look at the graphic, it may also tell you what it will show you.

**Example:** *Figure 2 shows part before and after damage.*

2. When you come to a diagram, stop. Read the title or heading and the description at the bottom. *The title and description tell you what the diagram contains.* Some diagrams contain directions or details not found in the text.
3. Next, see how it restates the text. Then look for information that is not in the text.

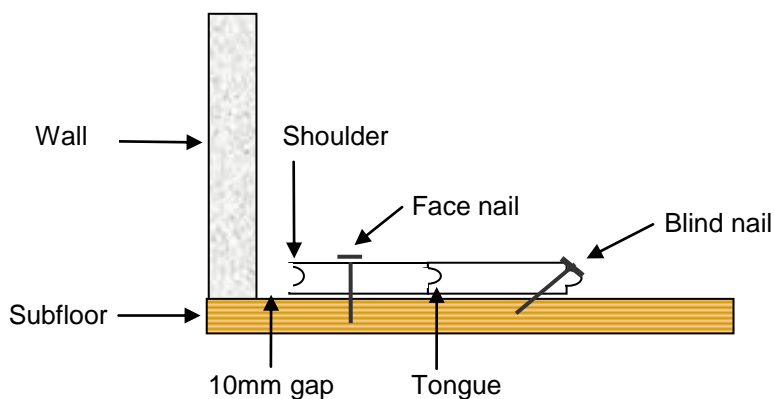
**Passage 5** below is about installing wood flooring. Read the text and study the diagram to see how they work together to give you a clearer idea of the procedure. Think of each as a restatement of the other. Notice how they complement each other. Think of how each could help you explain or describe something to someone else – your boss or a client.

## Passage 5 Nailing

The right number and size of nail reduces squeaking noises in wood strip flooring.

To start installation, lay the first strip along one of the sidewalls. To be sure that the flooring is straight, set the first course of pieces with a chalk line. Place the grooved edge next to the wall and leave at least 10mm for the wood to expand. This space will be covered by baseboard and baseshoe later.

Make sure the first strip is perfectly aligned. Then face nail as illustrated in Figure 2. The head of the face nail must be sunk below the face of the wood and the hole then filled. Succeeding strips are blind nailed with the nail penetrating the flooring where the tongue joins the shoulder. The nail is driven at an angle of 45° to 50°. Use a nail set to finish driving in the nail to avoid damage to the edges of the strips. Each strip should fit tightly against the preceding strip. Use a piece of scrap flooring to drive strips to avoid . . .



**Figure 2:** Starter and succeeding strip of strip flooring.  
Use different lengths to distribute joints throughout floor

### What does it say?

**The text** explains the concept in a clear, detailed way and prepares you to apply it on the job. It has a lot of directions in it which may become confusing. So it refers us to Figure 2 which should show us what is being said in the text.

**The graphic** relays the same information in a picture form. You can see a cross-section (or cutaway) of a floor section and the set-up for starting to nail a strip floor. Note that the diagram shows the way the face nail and blind nail penetrate the subfloor. It is important to *see* this in the diagram because you can't see the nails by looking at a strip floor you are working on.

You can see more by using the graphic with the text. This can help you put the procedure into your own words. You could explain to a customer, *“This is how the floor is laid out and this is how we prevent squeaks. Here, I’ll show you how it works.”*

### Graphics restate the text

We’ve looked at the text and the diagram to see what each adds to the whole picture, and how each restates the other. Graphics and text combine to complete the information required.

**Graphics** can peel back the layers so you can see it all. They are related directly to the writing.

- They are labelled clearly and usually placed beside the text.
  - The text and **Figures 1 and 2** are typical examples of this.
- It is important that you understand what you read and see as you proceed through the trade material.
  - Be sure to match the text with the graphic and read the information that goes with it.

The text tells you when to go to the diagram and what to look for. Find the information and understand what it is saying. *The diagram and text work with each other to make information clearer or to explain a procedure or a principle.*

Remember to test your understanding by restating the information to someone who hasn't read the text or seen the graphics. You may need to try an explanation more than once to get the right words in the right order. If you understand what you have read and what you have seen, though, you'll get it right.

### Tables

You will use tables for a variety of purposes.

**Table 1:**  
**Metric Sizes for Dimension Lumber and Boards**

<b>Metric (mm) nomenclature</b>	<b>Dry</b>	<b>Green</b>
38 x 38	38.10 x 38.10	39.69 x 39.69
64 x 64	63.50 x 63.50	65.09 x 65.09
89 x 89	88.90 x 88.90	90.49 x 90.49
etc.		

Tables like this one will show you such things as measurements, maximum spans, depths of foundations and other guides that you will need. Like other examples of restatement, tables convert information so that you get the right understanding and results.

### **PART III** **SIGNALS OF RESTATEMENT**

In Part III, we will look at examples of words and symbols that act as signals to restatement or paraphrasing. Successful readers pay attention to these signals.

*Note: The words and symbols in this section are not always or only used for this purpose. Make sure you know what they are signaling.*

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### **Signals Indicating Restatement**

Technical and trade materials contain new vocabulary, new concepts and complicated ideas. Explanations that restate the information are built right into the text, often as examples or definitions

There are many written clues that signal that a similar word or a definition is going to follow. Here are a few to watch for.

#### **Some word and phrase signals**

1. The words **that is** can be used in several ways to let you know that something will be rephrased. These include:

- a) a colon followed by *that is*, (... : that is, ...)

This unstable soil is considered a Type 3 soil: *that is*, loose, soft, and low in internal strength.

- b) a pair of commas around *that is* (... , *that is*, ...).

Start with one or two “soft” turns, *that is*, with the fingers of your free hand on the screw. Engage one or two threads making sure the screw is . .

2. **In other words** is a signal that what you have just read will be explained in another way. Compare the two ways of saying the same thing; make sure you understand both.

Make sure that you do not cause an injury (cuts, eye injuries from flying fragments) because of a screwdriver and fastener that are mismatched, *in other words*, a screwdriver that is too big or too small for the screw or not matched to the screw head.

3. **Or** ... sometimes tells you there are two ways of saying the same thing. The words on each side of the “or” mean the same thing.

Trimmers support the headers which carry the tail *or short* joists.

An area that is low is accompanied by a high (*or pressure*) area next to it.

4. **Visualization:** In some cases, a writer asks you to *visualize* or *imagine* something. This kind of restatement asks you to convert words into a picture to understand them.

The section shows a part of the structure as if cut by a vertical plane. Imagine that you are looking at the part after it has been sawed in half, and you are looking at the cut edge.

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### Some punctuation signals

**Dashes** – A dash may be used to give you another name or a short explanation of something. The following examples use several devices, as well as the dash: *italics* and “such as.”

There are two basic types of fasteners – pins and studs. *Pins* are designed to match one material to another such as wood to concrete.

*Buffing* – little overlap of grinding marks – is used to remove paint and smooth the filler.

**Parentheses** ( ) Words in parentheses restate or define terms and abbreviations specifically related to your trade.

Position all full-length joists with the crown (slight warpage called *crook*) turned up.

The open-end wrench fits both square head (four-cornered) or hex head (six-cornered) nuts.

Machine stress-rated lumber (MSR) must meet certain visual requirements.

**Colon:** The information that follows the colon (:) often explains a word or term.

A surcharge is an excessive load or weight that can affect trench stability: excavated soil piled next to the trench can exert pressure on the walls.

These examples provide you with a sampling of the kinds of signals and supports available to you to help you understand your trade material. There are many more. Restatement gives you a second chance to understand information, so watch for the clues.

### CONCLUSION

Restatement or paraphrasing is a method used to understand, explain and remember technical information. This is an essential technical reading and writing skill to develop and refine.

It will make information clear to you – and you can make it clear to others. When you identify information presented in a new or different form, you can move between written or graphic information understanding each, on its own, and together.

### Summary

1. **Use your own words to restate or paraphrase** technical information. *Talk* yourself through the material.
2. **Find out where** you get stopped. Go back over the difficult steps to master them.
3. **Paraphrase step-by-step** to master material. *Walk* your way through complex information by dividing the steps into smaller bits.
4. **Examine and understand each piece** like pieces in a jigsaw puzzle. As you make sense of each piece, you arrive at the big picture.

5. **Use graphics as restatement** of the text and vice versa. Read the titles and labels for complete information about the graphic: read the text for directions and interpretations of the graphic.
6. **Convert the words and ideas** into the mental action of understanding, or the physical action of performing a task.
7. **Watch for the signals:** use these built-in guides which restate, explain or define text or graphic material.

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## Answer Page

### **PART I**      **Passage 1**      **Special Framing Problems**

1. What does “*when joists run perpendicular to the walls*” mean?

The word *perpendicular* means *at right angles* or *at an ‘L’ angle*. The phrase can be restated as follows: when the joists, (the timber that runs from wall to wall and which the floor boards are attached to), are at right angles (or at an ‘L’ angle) to the wall.

2. *Cantilevered joists should have double the length projecting outward from the supporting wall as extending inward from the supporting wall.*

**F**      The opposite is true. The cantilevered joists should have double the length projecting *inward* from the supporting wall. Passage 1 states this as “*cantilevered joists should extend inward at least twice as far as they stick out over the supporting wall.*”

3. *You can increase joist support if you use smaller ones, but double them up and decrease the spacing between them.*

**T**      This is true for an area that is *not large*. Some words may be different (*decrease* the spacing = *reduce* the spacing), but the meaning is the same.

4. *Joists that run parallel to the wall*

c) run in the same direction as the wall

The word *parallel* means *to keep the same distance apart for the whole length*. Like railway tracks, each joist runs in the same direction and at the same distance apart throughout its length.

Make sure you include all the ideas from the original to the paraphrased material.