Paraphrase

What is a Paraphrase?
A paraphrase is a restatement of an author’s idea in your own words in generally the same length as the author’s.

What is the Purpose / Value of a Paraphrase?
- Paraphrasing is useful when you’d like to represent the author’s idea, but don’t feel the original wording merits a direct quotation.
- Paraphrasing allows you to include details and specifics as you focus on an author’s idea in your own writing.

How do you paraphrase an author’s written idea?
- Read the author’s passage closely. Re-read the passage and be certain that you understand the writer’s meaning.
- Restate the author’s idea in your own words.
- You don’t need to follow the sentence structure of the original, nor do you need to include all the specifics or details in the original. Select and include what is important to the point you are making in your own writing.
- To clarify where your paraphrase begins and ends, and to avoid plagiarism, provide a lead-in and an end-sentence citation.

What is the difference between a summary and a paraphrase?
A summary condenses the original material; a paraphrase restates the source in generally the same length.
For example:
Source:
“My father, who is one of the few Indians who went to Catholic school on purpose, was an avid reader of westerns, spy thrillers, murder mysteries, gangster epics, basketball-player biographies, and anything else he could find. He bought his books by the pound at Dutch’s Pawn Shop, Goodwill, Salvation Army, and Value Village. When he had extra money, he bought new novels at supermarkets, convenience stores, and hospital gift shops. Our house was filled with books. They were stacked in crazy piles in the bathroom, bedrooms, and living room. In a fit of unemployment-inspired creative energy, my father built a set of bookshelves and soon filled them with a random assortment of books about the Kennedy assassination, Watergate, the Vietnam War, and the entire twenty-three-book series of the Apache westerns. My father loved books, and since I loved my father with an aching devotion, I decided to love books as well.”

Summary: Alexie remembers that his father filled their lives with books of all kinds, modeling for a devoted son the love of books (1401).

Source:
“My father loved books, and since I loved my father with an aching devotion, I decided to love books as well.”

Paraphrase: Alexie explains that he imitated his father’s love of reading because he deeply loved his father (1401).