Explicitly teaching the paraphrasing strategy along with synonyms to Grade Five/Six students will improve their reading comprehension of fiction texts.

Lesson One- Modelled Paraphrasing
1. Brain storm definition of the word ‘synonym’ and come to agreed class definition. Place definition on display.

*Synonym- a word that means the same as another word*

2. Work through generating synonyms with five different words. E.g.
   a) many – countless, numerous, plenty, a lot, multitude, profuse,
   b) happy- cheerful, content, glad, merry, overjoyed, jubilant, delighted, elated
   c) sad- dejected, depressed, blue, cheerless, dismal, down, gloomy, melancholy
   d) big- enormous, gigantic, huge, immense, large, massive, vast, sizeable
   e) small- little, mini, minute, petite, puny, slight, tiny, undersized, wee

   Ask students to say and then record all synonyms generated. Display in the classroom.

3. Introduce the term ‘paraphrasing’. Discuss meaning. Write definition. Display.

4. Work through, by modelling, several sentences reminding students that the aim is to change as many words as possible without changing the meaning. All examples are in large print on the interactive whiteboard. Tell students that we will work through one sentence at a time.

E.G. 1. *Text*

As more people came to live in the area many trees and bushes were cut down. As a result, the number of birds grew less and less. The remaining few are protected.

Readability Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level 5.2

e.g. 1a. As more people came to live in the area many trees and bushes were cut down.

**Paraphrase:** A lot of plants had to be removed when increasing numbers of families moved into the neighbourhood.

e.g. 1b As a result, the number of birds grew less and less.

**Paraphrase:** The amount of birds lessened because of this.

e.g. 1c The remaining few are protected.

**Paraphrase:** The law looks after the birds that are left.

E.G. 2. *Text*

Peter watched the plane until it went out of sight. No matter how hard Katie looked at where Peter was pointing, she couldn’t see it.

e.g. 2a. Peter watched the plane until it went out of sight.

**Paraphrase:** Peter looked at the aircraft till it disappeared.

e.g. 2b No matter how hard Katie looked at where Peter was pointing, she couldn’t see it.

**Paraphrase:** Even though Katie looked intensely where Peter was pointing, she didn’t see the aeroplane.
Conclusion; Ask students to complete the sentence starter-We are learning more synonyms and to paraphrase because…

**Synonyms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>many – countless, numerous, plenty, a lot, multitude, profuse,</th>
<th>happy – cheerful, content, glad, merry, overjoyed, jubilant, delighted, elated</th>
<th>sad – dejected, depressed, blue, cheerless, dismal, down, gloomy, melancholy</th>
<th>big – enormous, gigantic, huge, immense, large, massive, vast, sizeable</th>
<th>small – little, mini, minute, petite, puny, slight, tiny, undersized, wee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


Lesson Two-Modelled Paraphrasing

1. Pose question to students: What is a synonym? Refer students to class definition.
2. Work through generating synonyms with five different words. Ask students to say and then record all synonyms generated. Display synonyms in classroom.

E.G. Synonyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beautiful-attractive</th>
<th>Boy-lad</th>
<th>Girl-lass</th>
<th>Dog-canine</th>
<th>Cat-feline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>attractive</td>
<td>fellow</td>
<td>daughter</td>
<td>hound</td>
<td>mouser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fair</td>
<td>fellow</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>mongrel</td>
<td>moggy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good-looking</td>
<td>junior</td>
<td>child</td>
<td>man’s best</td>
<td>pussy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lovely</td>
<td>schoolboy</td>
<td>wench</td>
<td>friend</td>
<td>poosh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stunning</td>
<td>youngster</td>
<td>schoolgirl</td>
<td>puppy</td>
<td>pussycat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appealing</td>
<td>youth</td>
<td></td>
<td>mutt</td>
<td>tabby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>radiant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gorgeous</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exquisite</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Pose questions to students. What is paraphrasing? Why do you think it is useful to paraphrase when reading?

4. Work through, by modelling, several examples reminding students that the aim is to change as many words as possible without changing the meaning. Tell students that we will work through one sentence at a time.

E.G. 1. Text

Not everyone loves balloons. Some people who care greatly about the planet say that balloons turn into ugly litter that doesn’t decay easily. Animals can die if they eat the remains of balloons.

Readability Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level 5.2

1a Not everyone loves balloons.

Paraphrase: Not all people like balloons.

1b Some people who care greatly about the planet say that balloons turn into ugly litter that doesn’t decay easily.

Paraphrase: Environmentalists claim that balloons become rubbish that doesn’t decompose.

1c Animals can die if they eat the remains of balloons.

Paraphrase: Balloon rubbish can be fatal to wildlife.

E.G. 2 Text

Miranda saw many animals on the farm. She was allowed to climb into the pen with the calves. Donald held her up to pat the horse’s nose. She was a bit scared when she saw the large pig, but thought the piglets were cute.

2a Miranda saw many animals on the farm.

Paraphrase: Miranda observed a lot of creatures on the ranch.
2b. *She was allowed to climb into the pen with the calves.*
**Paraphrase:** She was given permission to enter the enclosure with the baby cows.

2c. *She was a bit scared when she saw the large pig, but thought the piglets were cute.*
**Paraphrase:** She was frightened by the size of the sow but considered the baby pigs adorable.

Conclusion- How does learning more synonyms help with paraphrasing? Discuss.
**Lesson Three-Modelled Paraphrasing**

1. Pose question to students: What is a synonym? Refer students to class definition.

2. Work through generating synonyms with five different words.

**E.G. Synonyms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>House-</th>
<th>Nice-</th>
<th>Jump-</th>
<th>Dress-</th>
<th>Horrible-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>abode</td>
<td>agreeable</td>
<td>bounce</td>
<td>costume</td>
<td>abhorrent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>building</td>
<td>amiable</td>
<td>bound</td>
<td>ensemble</td>
<td>appalling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dwelling</td>
<td>attractive</td>
<td>caper</td>
<td>frock</td>
<td>awful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>household</td>
<td>charming</td>
<td>hop</td>
<td>gown</td>
<td>dreadful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>structure</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>hurdle</td>
<td>garment</td>
<td>fearful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>home</td>
<td>kind</td>
<td>leap</td>
<td>outfit</td>
<td>horrid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>residence</td>
<td>polite</td>
<td>skip</td>
<td>clothes</td>
<td>ghastly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>homestead</td>
<td>pleasant</td>
<td>spring</td>
<td>clothing</td>
<td>grim/repulsive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>vault</td>
<td>apparel</td>
<td>grisly/revolting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>gruesome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>hideous/loathsome</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ask students to say and then record all synonyms generated. Display in the class.

3. Work through, by modelling, several sentences reminding students that the aim is to change as many words as possible without changing the meaning. Inform students that we now going to use what we are learning about synonyms to paraphrase. Why are we learning to paraphrase?

**E.G. 1. Text**

*If you keep ducks you will need to provide them with water. Water is important to ducks for drinking and finding food in. From the water they will eat things such as water plants and frogs. They don’t spend all their time in the water though. Ducks will also patrol your garden and eat the slugs, snails and worms. This makes them very useful, as these creatures are pests.*

Readability Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level 5.2

1.a If you keep ducks you will need to provide them with water.

**Paraphrase:** Kept ducks need water.

2.b. Water is important to ducks for drinking and finding food in.

**Paraphrase:** Ducks must have water for drinking and for seeking food.

2.c. From the water they will eat things such as water plants and frogs.

**Paraphrase:** Ducks eat water plants and frogs from the water.

2.d. They don’t spend all their time in the water though.

**Paraphrase:** Not all of the duck’s day is spent in a pond.

2.e. Ducks will also patrol your garden and eat the slugs, snails and worms.

**Paraphrase:** They like to hunt for mini beasts on your grounds.

2.f. This makes them very useful, as these creatures are pests.

**Paraphrase:** Ducks are helpful because some mini-beasts are a nuisance.

Re-read paraphrased paragraph. Compare the two paragraphs. Ask students if the meaning has been retained. What have we learned about synonyms and paraphrasing?
Lesson Four- Paraphrasing in Small Groups

Focus Questions: What is paraphrasing?
   How might paraphrasing help with reading comprehension?

1. Working in mixed ability small groups students brainstorm and record synonyms for the following words:
   - picture: image, depiction, portrait, photograph, photo, print, sketch
   - throw: fling, toss, chuck, hurl, bowl, pitch, heave, lob, cast

2. Discuss acceptable answers and write on whiteboard.

3. Discuss unacceptable answers.

4. Display text to be paraphrased. Students and teacher read text aloud together.
   Working in pairs ask students to use their synonym knowledge to paraphrase the following sentence:

   Text: E.G. 1
   An animal bit him on the hand when he reached through a fence at the zoo.
   Readability Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level 5.2
   **Paraphrase:** When the boy put his hand inside the railing at the wildlife sanctuary it was bitten by a creature.

   5. Write up some of the responses and discuss.

   6. Working in pairs ask students to use their synonym knowledge to paraphrase the following sentence:

   Text: E.G. 2
   The town had waited for the weather to improve before they could have their fund raising day.
   Readability Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level 5.2
   **Paraphrase:** The fund raising day was held after the city waited for better weather.

   7. Write up some of the responses and discuss.

   8. In conclusion ask students what they found easy and what they found challenging when they tried to paraphrase.
Lesson Five- Paraphrasing in Small Groups

Focus Questions: How might paraphrasing help with reading comprehension?

1. Working in mixed ability small groups students brain storm and record synonyms for the following words:
   - Pen-ball point, biro, fountain pen, marker, felt tip, highlighter, writing implement
   - Bed-divan, bedstead, couch, double bed, single bed, twin bed, bunk bed, cot, camp bed
2. Discuss acceptable answers and write on whiteboard.
3. Discuss unacceptable answers.
4. Display text to be paraphrased. Students and teacher read text aloud together. Working in pairs ask students to use their synonym knowledge to paraphrase the following:

   Text: E.G. 1
   The empty boxes were stacked by our gates ready to be collected. If there had been a strong wind they would have been blown away.
   Readability Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level 5.2
   Paraphrase: The vacant containers were piled beside the doors to be picked up. If the weather became blustery the containers would be swept away.

5. Write up some of the responses and discuss.

6. Working in pairs ask students to use their synonym knowledge to paraphrase the following:

   Text: E.G. 2
   Many thousands of pine trees had been planted on the rolling hills. They were also planted on the steeper slopes and in the gullies.
   Readability Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level 5.2
   Paraphrase: Tens of thousands of pines were planted on the hilly countryside. The trees were even on the sheer slopes and valleys.

7. Write up some of the responses and discuss.

8. Ask students what they found easy and what they found challenging when they tried to paraphrase.
Lesson Six- Paraphrasing in Small Groups

Focus question: What do you need to do to paraphrase? What processes go through your head?

1. Working in mixed ability small groups students brain storm and record synonyms for the following words:
   Horse- mount, stallion, mare, pony, steed, foal, charger
   Work- labour, employment, job, vocation, occupation, career

2. Discuss acceptable answers and write on whiteboard.
3. Discuss unacceptable answers.
4. Display text to be paraphrased. Students and teacher read text aloud together. Working in pairs ask students to use their synonym knowledge to paraphrase the following:

   Text: E.G. 1
   The eighteen –wheeled truck was building up speed. Eric always enjoyed doing this. For fifty kilometres the road was flat with long straights-only six easy bends over the whole distance. Here he could make up for the time he’d lost. On the first straight Eric passed one truck and two cars going the other way. Apart from that the road was empty the whole way although every now and then there were the lights of farmhouses. Eric felt that there was no-one else in the world. He liked the feeling.
   Readability Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level 5.2

   Paraphrase:
   The many-wheeled lorry built up speed. Eric loved it. Most of the fifty-kilometre road was flat and straight except for six simple turns. Eric could make up lost time on the flat and straight part of the road. He passed three other vehicles going in the opposite direction. Those were the only vehicles he saw on the clear road. Sometimes he saw the lights of homesteads. Eric enjoyed the feeling of there being no-one else on the Earth.

5. Write up some of the responses and discuss.
6. Read through paraphrased text and compare to original text. Has the meaning been retained?
7. Ask students what they found easy and what they found challenging when they tried to paraphrase a longer text. What did they do? How did they do it? Why did they make the synonym choices that they did?
Lesson Seven- Paraphrasing independently

Focus question: What do you have to remember to do to paraphrase?

1. Each student generates and records synonyms for the following words independently:
   Phone- telephone, handset, headset, receiver, touch-tone phone, mobile phone, mobile, cell phone, cellular phone
   Knife- blade, carving knife, breadknife, cook’s knife, dagger, penknife, flick knife, stiletto

2. Discuss acceptable answers and write on whiteboard.
3. Discuss unacceptable answers.
4. Display text to be paraphrased. Ask each student to use their synonym knowledge to paraphrase the following text silently by concentrating on a few sentences at a time.

Text:
One day in Italy a lion escaped from the circus where it lived. It ran towards a young boy. The boy was very scared of course and started running. The mother turned and saw what was happening. What she did next amazed everybody. She hit the lion again and again and hurt it badly. It had cuts to its head and skin and had to go to a vet for treatment.

Readability Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level 5.2

Text: E.G. 1
One day in Italy a lion escaped from the circus where it lived. It ran towards a young boy. The boy was very scared of course and started running.

Discuss acceptable answers.

Paraphrase:
Once a lion ran away from an Italian circus. The lion ran in the direction of a child. Naturally the child was terrified and began sprinting.

Text: E.G. 2
The mother turned and saw what was happening. What she did next amazed everybody.

Discuss acceptable answers.

Paraphrase:
His mum twisted around and saw what was occurring. She surprised everyone by what she did next.

Text: E.G. 3
She hit the lion again and again and hurt it badly. It had cuts to its head and skin and had to go to a vet for treatment.

Discuss acceptable answers.

Paraphrase:
The mother hit the lion repeatedly and seriously hurt it. The lion had cuts to its head and body and had to be taken to a doctor to be cared for.

5. Ask students to compare/contrast the text to the paraphrased text. Has the meaning been retained?
Lesson Eight- Paraphrasing Independently

Focus statement: Ask students to complete the sentence-To paraphrase well I need to...

1. Each student generates and records synonyms for the following words:
   - **Glass**: goblet, beaker, schooner, tumbler, wineglass
   - **Floor**: ground, bottom, base, flooring, floorboards

2. Discuss acceptable answers and write on whiteboard.
3. Discuss unacceptable answers.
4. Display text to be paraphrased. Ask each student to use their synonym knowledge to paraphrase the following:

   **Text:**
   Gran and Grandpa had taken three-year-old Ashley and her little brother Blake to the zoo. Gran looked at the guide. This was a map of the zoo with pictures showing where the animals were. The lions were at the back of the zoo so would be the last animal that they got to. Some of the monkeys were swinging on ropes. Others were playing chasing games through the trees. The older grey monkeys sat or lay dozing in the sun. They reached the lions just on feeding time. Up on the warm rocks, they were relaxing in the sun. They rose to their feet when their food arrived, then raced down and leapt to the ground. Their roars echoed around the zoo.

   Readability Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level 5.2

   **Paraphrase:**
   The grandparents took three year old Ashley and her small brother Blake to the animal sanctuary. Grandmother glanced at the guide or map with drawings explaining where the wildlife was. They would visit the lion last because they were at the back of the park. A few of the monkeys swung on rigging. Some other monkeys chased each other in the trees. The grown-ups were either sitting or lazing in the sunshine. The family arrived at the lions just as they were about to be fed. The lions were sunbathing on warm boulders. As their food arrived, the lions got up and jumped to the floor. The lions’ roar could be heard around the zoo.

5. Compare different acceptable alternatives for the text.
6. Ask students to compare the text to the paraphrased text. Is the meaning retained?
7. How has paraphrasing the text helped us to understand or remember it more?
Lesson Nine- Paraphrasing Independently

Focus statement: Ask students to complete the sentence-To paraphrase well I need to…

1. Each student generates and records synonyms for the following words:
   - People: persons, folks, individuals, humans, humankind, human race
   - Tired: weary, exhausted, worn-out, drained, dead beat, sleepy, drowsy

2. Discuss acceptable answers and write on whiteboard.
3. Discuss unacceptable answers.
4. Display text to be paraphrased. Ask each student to use their synonym knowledge to paraphrase the following:

Text
We were walking home along the riverbank. Each day all sorts of people used the path. There were joggers and dog walkers. There were bike riders and skateboarders. There were people who just liked getting out in the sunshine. There was plenty of room for everyone. At this time of day though we were the only ones on the path. We had been to football practise. Now we were on our way home in the last of the daylight. We weren’t in a hurry. We were a bit tired after the practise. Kirk spotted something lying in the grass beside the path. It was a man’s wallet with a lot of money in it. We put it in Jimmy’s bag and kept on walking. We had almost reached the end of the path when we heard a voice calling from behind us. A very worried-looking man caught up to us. We recognised him from the photo and he was so pleased when we gave him his wallet that he insisted on giving us a fifty-dollar note as a reward.

Paraphrase:
A group of friends were strolling beside the riverbank to get home. This path was used every day by a lot of different types of folks. Some of these people were joggers, pet owners walking their dog, bicycle riders, skateboarders and individuals enjoying the sun. There was lots of space for everyone but at the moment we were the only ones around. At dusk we were on our way home from football drills. Kirk saw an item in the vegetation near the trail. It was a man’s wallet filled with money. We placed the wallet in Jimmy’s bag and continued walking. Near the end of the trail we heard a voice calling at the back of us. An anxious person approached us. We knew it was the wallet’s owner because of the picture in the wallet. We handed him his wallet. He was so happy that he gave us a fifty-dollar note as a prize.

6. Compare different acceptable alternatives for the text.
7. Ask students to compare the text to the paraphrased text. Is the meaning retained?
8. How has paraphrasing the text helped us to understand it more?
Lesson Ten- Paraphrasing independently

Focus statement: Ask students to complete the sentence-To paraphrase well I need to…

1. Each student generates and records synonyms for the following words:
   Ship- boat, vessel, craft, yacht, liner, cruiser, dinghy, ferry
   Fearless- intrepid, brave, courageous, unafraid, daring, plucky, valiant

2. Discuss acceptable answers and write on whiteboard.

3. Discuss unacceptable answers.

4. Ask each student to use their synonym knowledge to paraphrase the following:

Text:
Huddled behind the rocks they were sheltered from the wind. The captain, who had been keeping a lookout, tapped Jack’s shoulder and pointed. The young soldier cautiously rose and peered over the rocks. At the entrance of the bay he could see the ship slowly approaching the shore. The captain had his telescope to his eye. ‘It’s the Mary Jane sure enough,’ he said. ‘And there he is. Look!’ He passed the telescope to Jack. The boy had heard of the infamous smuggler for nearly all his life. He knew straight away that the tall, one-armed man he could see standing at the ship’s rail must be Billy Cornfield. He could hardly believe that he was going to be part of Billy’s capture. He knew that this fearless smuggler would not give in without a fighting the soldiers.

He sank down into the shadow of the rocks again.
Ten long, silent minutes went by and the captain nudged Jack. He looked up to see the ship’s masts, barely moving against the sky. The smuggler’s ship seemed close enough to touch. His heart was pounding.
‘She’s close to the rocks,’ said the captain. ‘He’s a good seaman, Jack. Only Cornfield would risk bringing a ship of her size this far in.’
The captain signalled to the soldiers. Crouched in the shadow of the rocks, they readied their muskets.

Paraphrase:
Bunched together behind the boulders they were protected from the blustery weather. The leader who had been watching tapped Jack’s shoulder and pointed. The junior solder carefully looked over the rocks. At the opening of the cove he saw a vessel gradually coming towards the shore. The captain looked out of his telescope. ‘It is the Mary Jane,’ he said. ‘And look over where he is.’

The leader gave Jack the telescope. The young man knew of the legendary thief from his earliest days. He knew that the lofty, one-armed man he spied at the handrail was Billy Cornfield. Jack was amazed that he was going to help capture this daring thief who was known to not give in without fighting. Jack hid behind the boulders again.

Ten quiet slow minutes passed and then the captain pushed Jack. Jack looked up and saw the other ship’s masts hardly moving against the sky. He felt like he could touch Billy Cornfield’s ship. His heart was racing.
‘The ship is close to the rocks but he is a good seaman and only Cornfield would risk bringing in a large craft,’ said the captain.
The leader made a sign to the soldiers so they got their guns ready while they were hidden in the darkness of the rocks.

5. Compare different acceptable alternatives for the text.
6. Ask students to compare the text to the paraphrased text. Is the meaning retained?
7. How has paraphrasing the text helped us to understand it more?