

# Precis- Writing



**A DETAILED SUMMARY**

# What is the difference between a summary and a précis?

- A summary or a condensed presentation of the substance of a body of material.
- A précis is also a summary but it is necessary to give the précis a title and also it should also be  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the total words in the original passage.



- a Summary is telling the main events while a precis is telling every detail. Précis is an originally French noun, properly spelled with an acute accent, meaning a concise summary.
- Precise is an English adjective meaning "clearly expressed, brief and to the point."
- Summary is a short-clear-high pointer.
- Precis is a little detailed out version of summary.

# Precis-Writing



- A precis is the gist or main theme of a passage expressed in as few words as possible.
- It should be lucid, succinct, and full (i.e. including all essential points).

# Uses of Precis-Writing



1. Precis writing is a very fine exercise in reading. It is an excellent training in concentration of attention and teaches to read with the mind.
2. It teaches how to express one's thoughts clearly, concisely and effectively.
3. In any position of life the ability to grasp quickly and accurately what is read, or heard, and to reproduce it clearly and concisely, is of the utmost value.

# Method of Procedure (Reading Step)



- First read the passage through carefully and find
- Its subject, and
- What is said about the subject. Ask,
- What is it I am reading?
- What does the author mean?
- What is his subject?
- What is he saying about it?
- Can I put in a few words the pith of what he says?



- Think of the some word, phrase or short sentence that will sum up briefly the main subject of the passage.
- Sometimes this is supplied by what we may call a key-sentence.
- This key-sentence may be found at the beginning or at the end of the passage.



- Further reading ensures the understanding of details of the passage as well as its main purport.
- It is useful to jot down the conclusions in brief notes.
- Write down the subject, the title, and the details which you consider essential or important. (This is better plan than underlining sentences and phrases in the original).



# Method of Procedure (Writing Step)



- Count the number of words in the passage and divide by three.

# Important Points-



- The following points must be kept in mind:
  1. The Precis should be all in your words.
  2. It must be a connected whole.
  3. It must be complete and self-contained.
  4. It is only the gist, main purport, or general meaning of the passage which you have to express.
  5. The precis must be in simple, direct grammatical and idiomatic English.

# The Art of Compression



- In condensing, aim at remodeling, than at mere omission.
- We may omit mere repetitions, illustrations and examples.
- But we change figures of speech into literal expressions, compress wordy sentences, and alter phrases to words.

# Indirect Speech:



- As a rule, a precis should be written in indirect speech, after a “verb of saying” in the past tense.
- For Example:
- Whether we look at the intrinsic value of our literature, or at the particular situation of this country, we shall see the strongest reason to think that of all foreign tongues the English tongue is that which would be the most useful to our native subjects. (\_\_\_Lord Macaulay)

## Condense in indirect form:



- Lord Macaulay said that England's noble literature and the universality of her language made English the foreign language most useful India.



- The change from direct to indirect speech calls for attention to the following points:-
  1. Correct sequence of tenses after the 'verb of saying' in the past tense.
  2. Clear differentiation of the various persons mentioned in the passage.
  3. Correct use of adverbs and other words indicating time.
  4. Proper choice of 'verb of saying', to indicate questions, commands, warnings, threats or exhortations.

# To Sum Up



1. First carefully read the passage. Apprehend clearly its main theme or general meaning.
2. Examine the passage in detail, to make sure of the meaning of each sentence, phrase and word.
3. Supply a short title which will express the subject.
4. Select and note down the important points essential to the expression of the main theme.
5. Note the length of number of words prescribed for the précis, and write out a first draft.



6. In doing this remember that you are to express the gist of the passage in your own words, and not in quotations from the passage; that you should condense by remodeling than by mere omission; and that your précis must be self-contained and a connected whole. Add nothing; make no comment; correct no facts.
7. Revise your draft. Compare it carefully with the original to see that you have included all the important points. If it is too long, still further compress it by omitting unnecessary words and phrases or by remodeling sentences.





Correct all mistakes in spelling, grammar and idiom, and see that it is properly punctuated. Let the language be simple and direct.

8. Write out neatly the fair copy under the heading you have selected.

[illegible]