

Précis Writing



A précis is a clear concise, orderly summary of the contents of a piece of writing.

The Précis



How do you pronounce this
strange word- *précis*?

■ Pray-see

I used to *pray to see*,
until I got my
glasses...now I can see
everything just fine!



A précis is a :

- A short summary-
 - usually about 1/3 the length of the original passage. It contains no opinions and **MUST** go in order from the original.

It maintains the author's

- *Purpose*
- *Tone*
- *Organizational structure*



Uses of Précis :-

- ❑ It is useful in grasping the ideas of a **passage, extract, chapter or book.**
- ❑ It aids **concentration** when reading a passage that has to be summarized.
- ❑ It improves **writing skills** and teaches the **quality of expressing much in few words.**

Remember :

A Précis is concise, clear and must make a connected whole.

Guidelines :-

Before writing the Précis , we must follow these guidelines:

- ❑ Read the passage a number of times so as to gain an **understanding of the passage.**
- ❑ Select a **suitable title or heading** for the passage.
- ❑ The title must **reflect** the theme of the passage.
- ❑ Irrelevant and incidental points such as **examples, illustrations or comments** by the author may be omitted.
- ❑ Using the **essential points**, an **outline of the passage** may be formed.

Guidelines followed during the process of writing a good Précis :-

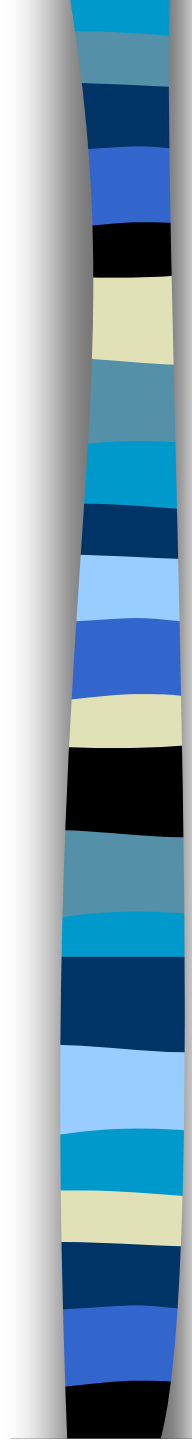
- ❑ A **rough draft** is written using the outline formed.
- ❑ The essential points must appear in a **logical sequence**.
- ❑ Avoid using words and sentences from the original passage.
- ❑ Avoid words like 'In my opinion', 'I believe that' , etc.
- ❑ The Précis must be written in **simple and unambiguous language**.

- ❑ The précis must be written in the **past tense, indirect speech and third person.**
- ❑ Compare the draft to the original passage and check that all the essential points have been covered.
- ❑ Ensure that the length of the précis is **one third of the original passage.**
- ❑ Check for **spelling mistakes, grammar and errors in punctuation.**
- ❑ Write the final draft and include a **title or heading.**



Important Features of a Good Precis

- ✓ **Length of the Precis:** Do not write a lengthy precis. In most cases, the number of words must be almost one-third of the word count of the passage or comprehension.
- ✓ **It should be convenient to read:** Make sure that the precis you write does not have too complex a vocabulary or is too complicated to understand.
- ✓ **Cover all the essential points:** While reading the passage, make a note of the important points and ensure that no point is skipped.



❖ **Must be coherent:** The important terms with respect to the passage must be included in the precis as well.

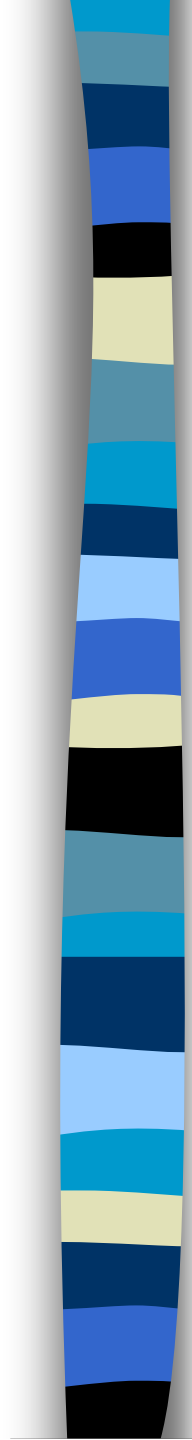
❖ **Use an appropriate Title:** The precis needs to have a title. So, the candidates must ensure that the title is in sync with the comprehension.

❖ **Details in precis must match the details in the passage:** No other information apart from the one given in the passage must be included in the precis and all the important information mentioned in the passage must certainly be included.



Dos for Precis Writing

- ❑ Begin with the basic idea of the passage to make the precis convenient to read.
- ❑ Give a clear idea pertaining to what the reader is about to read.
- ❑ While reading the passage, make a note of all the important points and include them in the precis.

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- ❑ Follow the main idea of the passage with the facts/points of improvement/ methods,, etc. as mentioned in the comprehension.
 - ❑ Include all the important keywords and terms which are used in the passage.
 - ❑ Keep a track of the tenses you use. Data related to historical events of the past must be described in the past tense only.
 - ❑ There must be a relation between the data you are writing in the precis. It should have some common links.



Don'ts for Precis Writing

- ❑ The length of the precis must be shorter than the length of the passage.
- ❑ Do not overcomplicate the precis and use easy vocabulary.
- ❑ Do not make assumptions or add information in the precis as per your own imagination.



Do not give your own opinion or criticism over the comprehension.

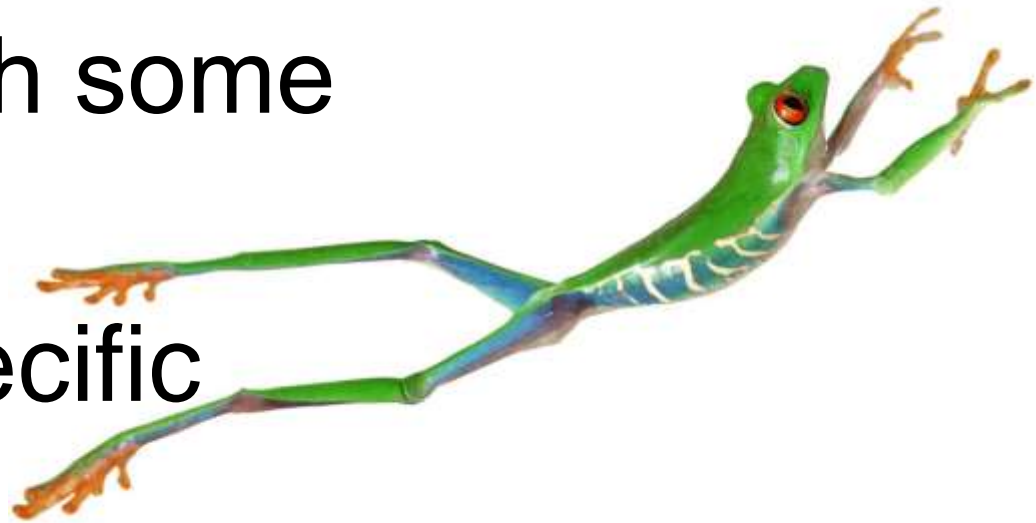
Avoid using abbreviations.

Do not enter statements in the question format in the precis.

Don't focus on any one point for very long. Keep the information as precise as possible.

Now for a giant leap...

Let's go through some
examples...
and be more specific



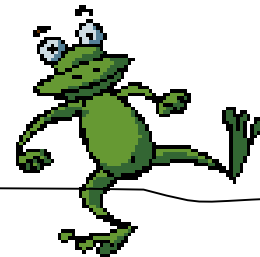


First Four Sentences

- 1) the who and the what
- 2) the how
- 3) the why
- 4) the “to whom” – the intended audience

Sentence 1

- Your first sentence in the précis should have:
 - the name of author,
 - the genre & title of the work,
 - date in parentheses,
 - an active verb (such as "assert" "argue" "suggest" "imply" "claim") and
 - a *THAT* clause which contains the thesis statement of the work.
- This sentence is the **who** & the **what** of the original work.



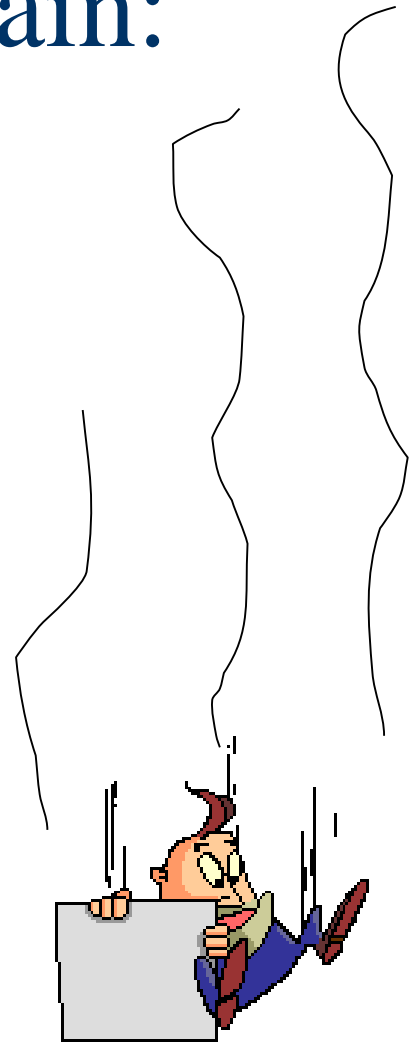
Example for Sentence 1

- **Phillipa Gregory's** novel, *The Other Boleyn Girl* (2001), implies **that** ambition possesses the power to corrupt and dispense true gratification, filling the heart solely with desire infused with greed and the ravenous hunger to reign.
- Notice the **who** and **what** is clearly defined in the first précis sentence.



Sentence 2: should contain:

- an explanation of **how** the author develops and/or supports the thesis,
- This is *usually* done in chronological order.



Example of Sentence 2

- Gregory develops this assertion through vivid description of life in the Tudor court and examination of cut-throat antics of a ruthless family-members of whom will execute to attain absolute power.





Sentence 3 should be:

A statement of the author's
apparent **purpose**, followed by an
"**in order**" phrase.

Example for Sentence 3

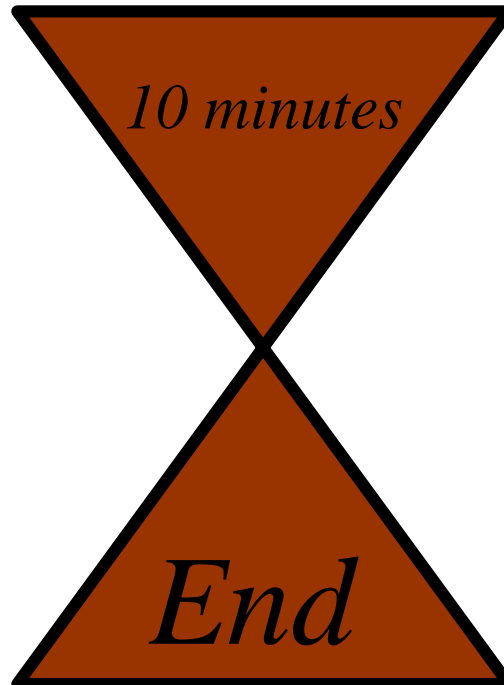
- Gregory's purpose of elaborating on ambition is to depict the outlandish lengths one will embark **in order to** fill a selfish void within one's greedy and desperate soul.



Sentence 4

■ Sentence 4:

A description of the intended audience and/or the relationship the author establishes with the **audience.**



Example for Sentence 4



- Gregory engages the average woman through the themes of scandal, conniving competition, and passionate lust, all of which evokes every woman's desire to be a queen.

Given below is a passage. We will write a précis based on this passage:

Title

What Do We Dream About?

A subject of great debate has been the nature of dreams that people experience. Dreams can range from the mundane to the fantastic. They can create emotions like anxiety, joy, fear, anger, etc., in the dreamer. Dreamers often feel that they experience in their dreams is very real. It is common for people to have recurring dreams. Some people have recurring dreams of falling, flying or being chased. Nightmares are also common and often occur among children and adolescents. Nightmares may be the result of unresolved conflict or anxiety. Many theories have been put forth to explain why dreams occur one of the theories is that dreams are merely reproduction of incomplete thoughts or events experienced in the day. Another theory is that dreams are representations of our desires and fears. It has also been propagated that our dreams are populated with universal symbols that

may be recognizable across a myriad of cultures sometime dreams have been reported to certain **warnings** or messages about the immediate future. It has also been suggested that **dreams can be used for solving problems** and arriving at solution.

Many people keep dream journals. They record their dreams on daily basis. **Dream journals** may be maintained as a hobby or to gain a better understanding of dreams and consequently oneself. Carl Jung, the famous psychologist maintained a dream journal known as 'RED BOOK'.

Sample Passage (cont.) :

The outline of the passage is formed using the main points .
It is as follows :

Outline:

Range of emotions in dreams - recurring dreams - nightmares - dreams as incomplete thoughts - dreams as representations of desires and fears - dreams as warnings - dreams for solving problems - dream journals - Jung's the 'Red Book'

Sample of well-written Précis :

Nature of Dreams

When people dream , they experience **various emotions** such as anxiety, joy , fear, etc. Often dreamers believe their dream is real. Many people have **recurring dreams**. **Nightmares** are also commonly experienced. They may be due to unresolved problems. Dreams may **be extensions of one's thoughts, embodiments of one's fears and desires and predictions about the future**. Dreams may even be useful **in solving problems**. The famous psychologist, **Carl Jung** was known for keeping a **dream journal**.

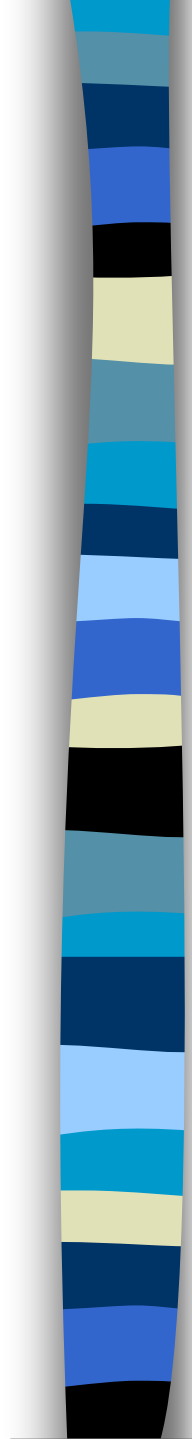
Conclusion :

- ❑ The title of the précis reflects the theme of the passage.
- ❑ The précis itself is one-third the length of the original passage.
- ❑ It is written in simple and unambiguous language.
- ❑ Thus, it is a **well written précis**.



Comprehension Passage:

Everybody knows what a “good” man means and how he should be. Our definition of a good man is the one who does not smoke, or drink or avoids the usage of bad language. A good man is ideally expected to converse in front of men as he would in front of women. He is also expected to attend the Church regularly and have correct opinions on all subjects. He has a wholesome horror of wrong-doing and realizes that it is our painful duty to reprimand sin.



He is not anticipated to have wrong thinkings and has the authority to protect the young. His duties are not just restricted to the professional front but also needs to spend quality time doing good deeds. He must be patriotic and a keen believer of military training, he should promote industry, must be sober and have virtue among wage earners and their children. He must be a role model for all and it is expected that he leads a way which the younger generation would willingly follow. Above all, of course, his “morals” in the narrow sense must be admirable.



Title: Attributes of a Good Man

The characteristics of a good man are known and he is expected to be religiously profound, must not smoke, drink or use bad language. His behaviour must be the same for all genders and he is expected to be a role model for the young ones. He must know his duties and avoid taking up the path of sin. He must be good not only in the professional space but also help people in need. He must be someone who can be admired and is praiseworthy.

