

Course Code: HSC102B

Course Title: Business Communication and Presentation Skills

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Lecture 13

Precis Writing

At the end of this Lecture students will be able to:

- Summarize the given text in a brief, clear and concise manner
- Develop effective written documents
- Demonstrate the art of condensation

Meaning of Precis Writing

- Restatement in shortened form
- Abridged form of the text
- Summarize document to extract maximum amount of information—convey in minimum number of words
- It is a coherent narrative written in a brief, clear style and definite tone so as to omit nothing important.
- Precis writing teaches one how to express one's thoughts clearly, concisely and effectively



Qualities of a Good Precis

A precis should be:-

1. brief, clear and concise
2. a well-connected whole
3. complete and self-contained
4. a true and faithful picture of the ideas contained in the original passage
5. written in indirect speech, third person, and past tense
6. simple, direct, grammatical and idiomatic English

Steps to Precis Writing

- Identify the reader and purpose (for your own use / others)
- Skim through for an overview
- Read again to identify main and supporting ideas
- Underline key concepts and ideas
- Write down a title that sums up the theme
- Write summary in points
- Connect the points for precise writing
- Review and edit

Essentials of Precis Writing

- Completeness : Must have the essential contents—do not omit important ideas
- Compactness : Sense of unity—should give a comprehensive idea—total perception
- Conciseness: Brevity—economy of words--avoid repetitions, omit ornamental phrases—not at the cost of clarity
- Clarity: Clear expressions—avoid circumlocution and ambiguity
- Coherence: Smooth flow—logical order—well-connected whole—main idea to run through

Tips for Precis Writing

- Try to replace clauses by phrases and phrases by words
- Make use of one-word substitutions
- Avoid all unnecessary repetitions
- Link various sentences
- Omit examples, comparisons, contrasts, minor details, digressions, figures of speech
- Understand the theme of the passage
- Precis writing need not have the same number of paragraphs as the main text

Tips for Precis Writing (Contd...)

- Precis writing is not merely the reproduction of important sentences
- Brevity is good but not at the cost of clarity
- Use own style ; avoid copying from the text
- Write in third person and indirect speech
- Use discretion for statistical information
- Do not introduce personal views or ideas
- Do not criticize or change the original theme

Precis Writing ...Examples

Original Version

1.The analysis was thoroughly and wholly complete(7)

2.The rain continued without intermission throughout the night and did not cease for a moment until after the day had dawned (21)

1.Objects, on our first acquaintance with them, have that singleness and integrity of impression that it seems as if nothing could destroy or obliterate them , so firmly are they stamped and riveted on the brain.(34)

2. When I began to write my first report it occurred to me that one method by which I could make it more effective would be to include a series of diagrams (31)

Precis Writing ...Examples(Contd..)

Condensed version

1.The analysis was complete(4)

2.The rain continued till dawn (5)

1.Our first impressions of objects are the most lasting.(9)

2. When I started writing my first report I realized that I could make it more effective by including diagrams.
(19)

Precis Writing ...Examples(Contd..)

Original Version

If no satisfactory results are obtained, another study will be carried out, but this time the data obtained from the first trial will be included. (23)

After the robot was installed, a series of problems were faced by the company (14)

The secretary's proposal was adopted with the full agreement of all the members.(13)

It is not fair or just in the interest of the consuming public that any commercial concern should acquire the sole power of trading in some particular article to the exclusion of its rivals. (35)

As material civilization advances and the supply of available good and services increases, man's needs correspondingly multiply. (17)

Precis Writing ...Examples(Contd..)

Condensed version

If you do not get satisfactory results carry out another study including the data of the first trial.(18)

After installation the company faced a series of problems with the robot (10)

The members unanimously adopted the secretary's proposal.(7)

Monopolising a particular trade by any commercial concern is unfair to the consuming public.(14)

With the advancement of material civilization the human needs have multiplied. (11)

Summary

- Precis is just a straight forward statement of the bare facts without any unnecessary words, trimmings
- Essentials of Precis writing are Completeness, Compactness, Clarity, Conciseness and coherence
- Precis writing aids in quick understanding of the main text
- It is always advisable to write a precis in one's own style

References

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