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BSc Degree

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English –II (Advanced English)
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Precis Writing - II

Welcome to this unit of the writing module, and we are going to talk a little more about how to write a good precis. We have already seen that a good precis demands that all that has been said by way of content must also be there in the rewritten version in the precis. It also demands that the rewritten version should have no more than one-third of the words in the original passage. A challenge here is, how we do that, how we manage language such that we do the precis in about one-third of the original size. Let us look at it.

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- Précis-writing demands good proficiency in the language.
 - On the whole, one must have a good sense of language.



As I said earlier, if you are proficient in the language, it should not be difficult at all. Actually, you have to use your own sense of language to understand what is being said and that then say that in a very economical manner. Next.

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1. a. You must read the given passage carefully, and make a list of all the important points.

In our time, we have had revealed to us a new and wider meaning for Jefferson's principle of the sovereignty of the present- generation. The sovereign present has become the imperial present, dominating our knowledge and our concerns, reaching out with menacing power over vast areas of our Consciousness.



So, number 1, you must read the no matter what, there is no substitute for hard work patient
1. So, read the given passage, the passage that you have to make a precis of must be read very carefully. So, here for instance, here is a paragraph, and we have read it. Let us make the important points that come out of it. Go to the next.

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Following are the important points here.

- 1.b.
 - i. New meaning of Jefferson's principle- Sovereignty of the present generation.
 - ii. Effect of the new meaning-Solely concerned with the present.
 - iii. Its menacing power.



These are the points. Number 1: Sovereignty of the present generation, number 2: the present generation has become solely concerned with the present and then the menacing power of this concern. Next.

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- The given passage has 49 words, so its précis should have no more than 17 words. This can be done using the following principles:

2. a. Remove redundant words.



The given passage has about 49 words that paragraph, and we have to rewrite that paragraph in about 16, 17, ideally in about 16 words. It could be 17, could be 15, but no more, no less. So, what do we do? We remove redundant words. Next.

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- b. Use one word for many words.
- c. Re-write sentences, if necessary, to save words.
- d. Re-write in indirect speech, changing all pronouns into third-person but without changing their number and gender. So 'we' may become 'they', 'you' and 'I' may become 'he', 'she', 'it' or 'they' depending upon number and gender.



We use one word for many words; you can do that. 'At the present time' can be replaced by presently. We will give you examples. Then rewrite in indirect speech, changing all pronouns into third person seeking tense agreement etcetera, etcetera, you change a lot of pronouns

except I mean, everything has to come into the third person, not first, not second, except that you cannot change the gender and the number.

So, for example, we can become 'they' 'you' and 'I', you, you can, we can become 'they', you and I can become 'he', 'she' or 'it' or 'they' depending upon number and gender. Next.

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e. All illustrations and examples, or long lists of names and particulars need not be there in the précis.

f. But, sentences must be connected, if necessary, with discourse markers like- also, besides, but hence, henceforth, otherwise, if, so, therefore, thus, etc. keeping their numbers under control.



All illustrations and examples are long lists of names, and particulars need not be there in the same way in the précis. You can get fewer examples, you can make the list shorter, and you can achieve the target of saying the same thing in one-third of the original words. But there is a constraint, these sentences; rewritten sentences must not hang aloof, away from one another like sentences next to unconnected bullet points.

No, they must make a coherent paragraph using lots of cohesive devices so that one sentence follows from another and one sentence leads to another. They are connected, not random jerky reading. Therefore, it is quite likely that the rewritten passage may have words of not all I say, but they may or wherever necessary words like also, besides, but, hence, henceforth, otherwise, if, so, therefore, thus many others, according to need according to context.

But as far as possible, try to control their numbers. This should not be there for their own sake; these discourse markers these connectors should be there only when they would make the passage easier to read; that is the principle. Go on.

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g. Except a single digit number, other numbers are given best in numerals rather than in words.

So, for instance say 36 rather than thirty-six. One hundred thousand written in numerals, 100,000 can be one word; but in words, it is three words.



Numbers, it is better to use numerals when you have a double-digit or a longer number. Single-digit, it does not matter, whether you write six or you write the numeral 6 it is only one word, but when you write 36, then in numeral it is only one word, but in words, it is two words. 100000 can be three words when written in words, but the numerals it is still one word that is how it is counted in standard texts. Next.

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3.a. Redundant words:

Redundant	Normal
In our time	Presently
Have had revealed to us	Seen
New and wider meaning	New meaning
Dominating our knowledge and concern	Dominating us
Reaching out with menacing power over vast areas of	Threatening



Here are some examples. On the left hand, I have taken examples from the original text and on the right-hand other words, which can replace the long phrases, expressions removing redundancy. So, for example, 'in our time', we can write presently, 'have had revealed to us'

we can say seen. We have had revealed to us can become we have seen. New and wider meaning, new meanings okay, you lose nothing, dominating our, knowledge and concern.

Simply saying dominating us would mean everything within us, our knowledge, our concern, our clothes, our entire body and our entire mind, dominating us will mean that. So, reaching out with menacing power over vast areas of, and this is all right for rhetoric, but in precis, we can replace this long-expression with a word like threatening. And there are another expression, intimidating, frightening, you can even see those things, and they mean nearly the same thing and you get rid of maybe about 8, 7 or 8 words 4 plus 2 plus 3, 9 words actually with one word.

So, these are the devices; these are the techniques, which helps you get rid of two-thirds of the original words and yet say the same thing in a very coherent manner. There are other ways. Go next.

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b. Use one word for many words.

Given in the passage	New word
In our time	Presently
have had revealed to us a new and wider meaning	Have seen a new meaning



Use one word for many words. In our time can be replaced with presently. Have had revealed to us, as I said, we can say have seen a new meaning. Go on.

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c and d: Re-write sentences if necessary and re-write in indirect speech.

1st Draft:

In the present times, they have found a new meaning for Jefferson's sovereignty principle of the present-generation. The sovereign present has become the imperial present, dominating and threatening our areas of consciousness. (32 words)



Look at other paragraphs, and I am sure you will be able to find examples that can, examples of 2 or more words that can be replaced with one word or maybe one or two words. In c and d, we have tried to read following the principle of c and d. C and d is one word for many words, removing redundant words, we have rewritten that paragraph, and here it is.

In the present times, they have found a new meaning for Jefferson's sovereignty principle of the present generation. The sovereign present has become the imperial present dominating and threatening our areas of consciousness. But let us do another draft. Let us see how we get rid of more words. Next.

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2nd Draft:

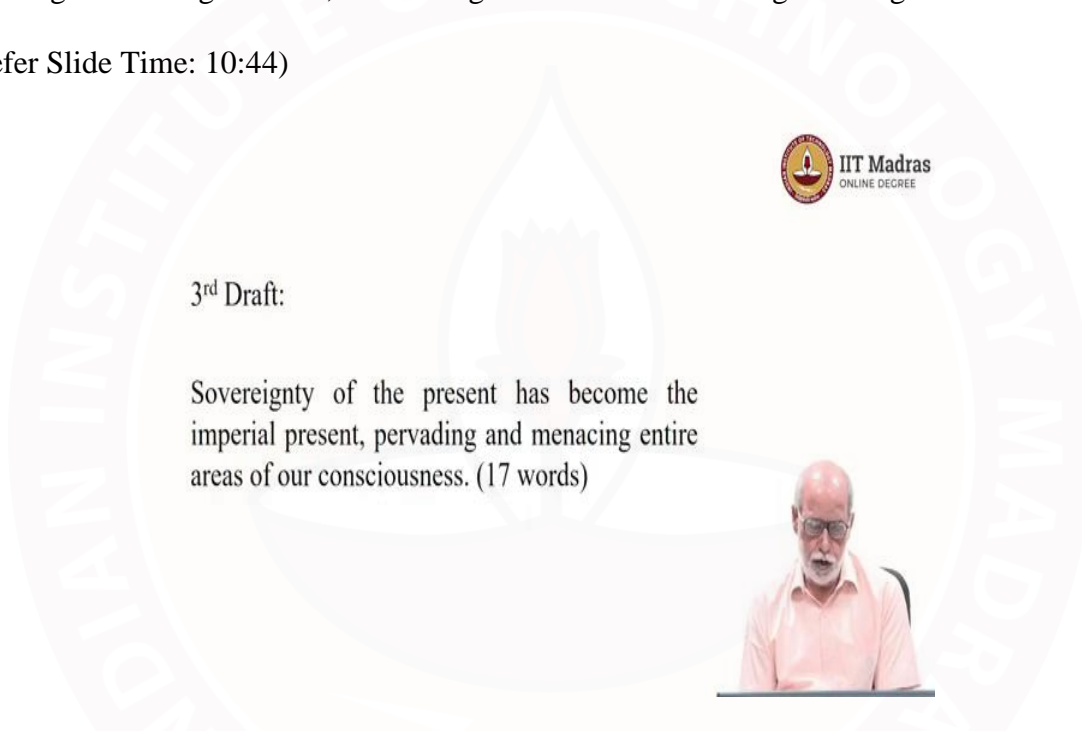
Jefferson's sovereignty principle for the present generation has seen a new meaning. This has become the imperial present, dominating and threatening our areas of consciousness. (25 words)



See here is the second draft. From 32, we come down to 25. We have removed some more word. Go back to the earlier draft, please. Look at the earlier draft. In the present times, they found a new meaning for Jefferson's sovereignty principle, etcetera, etcetera. The sovereign president has become the imperial present, and we still have 32 words.

But here, we made it short. Jefferson sovereignty principle for the present generation has seen a new meaning; we made it shorter, using one word for many words, removing redundant words. This has become the imperial present dominating and threatening our areas of consciousness, but it is still 25 words, and we have to bring it down to 16, which means we have to get rid of eight words, another eight words without losing meaning.

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3rd Draft:

Sovereignty of the present has become the imperial present, pervading and menacing entire areas of our consciousness. (17 words)

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Let us see, how we do it. And here we are. Sovereignty of the present has become the imperial present for reading and managing entire areas of our consciousness, this is nearly as many as we would like to have, and it uses only one-third of the original words, and we have not lost anything of the meaning. We are still saying that the present generation is so obsessed with the present that they have allowed their entire consciousness to be dominated by the present. Nothing that has gone beyond matters to them, nothing that is likely to come matters to them. Next.

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e & f: Illustrations and discourse markers

We have seen how aeronautics and electronics gave to spatial dimensions a disorienting new irrelevance. Americans, unsure whether what they viewed on television was actually happening in Chicago, in Los Angeles, in New York, or in a nearby studio, were newly uncertain about the where of events. They would be no less confused about the when. Candid photography, the hand-held motion picture camera, the novel powers of kinescoping and videotaping—all these would affect the viewer's sense of time with a new ambiguity. Was what you watched actually happening while you watched? (92 words)



Let us see what we do with lots of illustrations. Look at this passage. To say that television can, for a television audience, it does not matter whether you are in here or there, but in the original passage, we have forced its three cities have been named Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York. We can cut it down to two words here and there. Similarly, you have seen how aeronautics and electronics. We have seen how electronic, we can just say we have seen how sciences have done, so one word in place of three words. Look at the next.

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Final Draft:

We have seen how science has rendered distances meaningless. For television audience, it does not matter whether an event happened here or there. The new technology gave them the illusion of ever present. (32 words)



Here is the final draft within the required number of words. We have seen how science has rendered distance is meaningless. For television audience, it did not matter whether an event.

We have seen how science has rendered distances; distance or distance is meaningless for television audience; it does not matter whether an event happened here or there. The new technology gave them the illusion of ever-present. We could also have said gave them the same illusion.

Now, so thus through two or three drafts and following some principles of language, that same thing can be said in fewer words, just as in many more words. We can rewrite the sentence such that we say the same things and we say that in fewer words. We can always create a good précis.

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ACTIVITY

Make an analysis of the rest of the essay in the same manner.

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Do this activity as we have been saying; perfection will come to you. Not by only listening to your teacher, your advisor, your reviewer, your friend or your family. Perfection would come to us, to you to anyone else only through our own hard work. Do it and good luck.