

SOFT SKILLS AND APTITUDE



Business Communication & Presentation Skills

MODULE NUMBER: 04

Précis Writing and Report Writing



Précis Writing and Report Writing



OBJECTIVES

- 1 To identify the qualities of a good précis
- 2 To apply the techniques of good précis writing
- 3 To list the various types of reports
- 4 To demonstrate report writing



Table of Contents



Précis Writing

- Techniques
- Qualities of a good précis



Report Writing

- Types of reports
- Components of a good report
- Short reports

1. Précis writing is a task that tests and hones reading and writing skills of a person. In the business world reams of text in the form of emails, circulars, SOPs, reports, proposals, etc., are generated on a daily basis. The ability to summarise such long and voluminous texts and condense their meaning, without losing any vital facts, is essential. This skill is honed in précis writing.
2. Report writing is an important skill for students and corporates alike. Reports are generated on a daily basis and the content is assimilated and the report acted upon suitably. There are various types of reports, each serving a particular purpose.



Précis Writing

Précis writing is an exercise where a given text is read and then its contents written in a compressed form.

The total length of a précis is roughly one-third that of the original content.

A précis gives the gist of the text and covers all the important ideas expressed in the text.

In practicing précis writing, a student is required to focus on the reading material and then summarise it in their own words. This improves both the reading and writing skills of a student, as well as their ability to focus on the task at hand. It also helps them to choose the right words to express their ideas and write in a simple and concise manner.



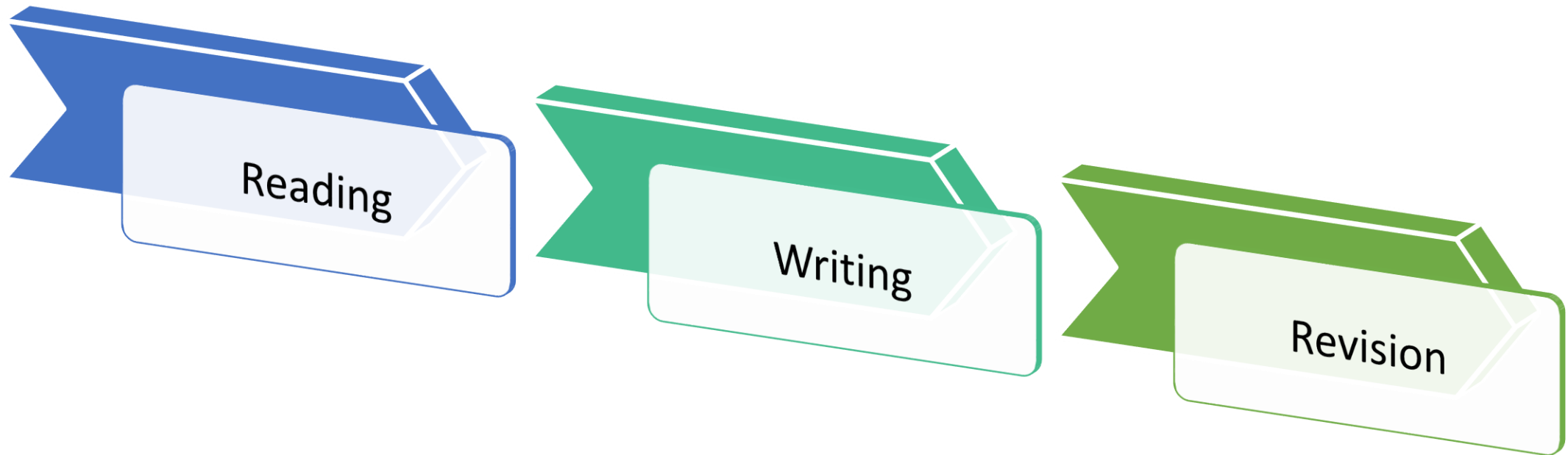
Rules of Précis Writing

- Write concisely – use fewer words to convey your message.
- Summarise the text while retaining the words the writer has used
- Retain all the essential thoughts and ideas conveyed in the text
- Write in reported speech, in the third person and in the past tense
- Give the précis a suitable title



Techniques of Good Précis Writing

Précis writing requires three techniques:

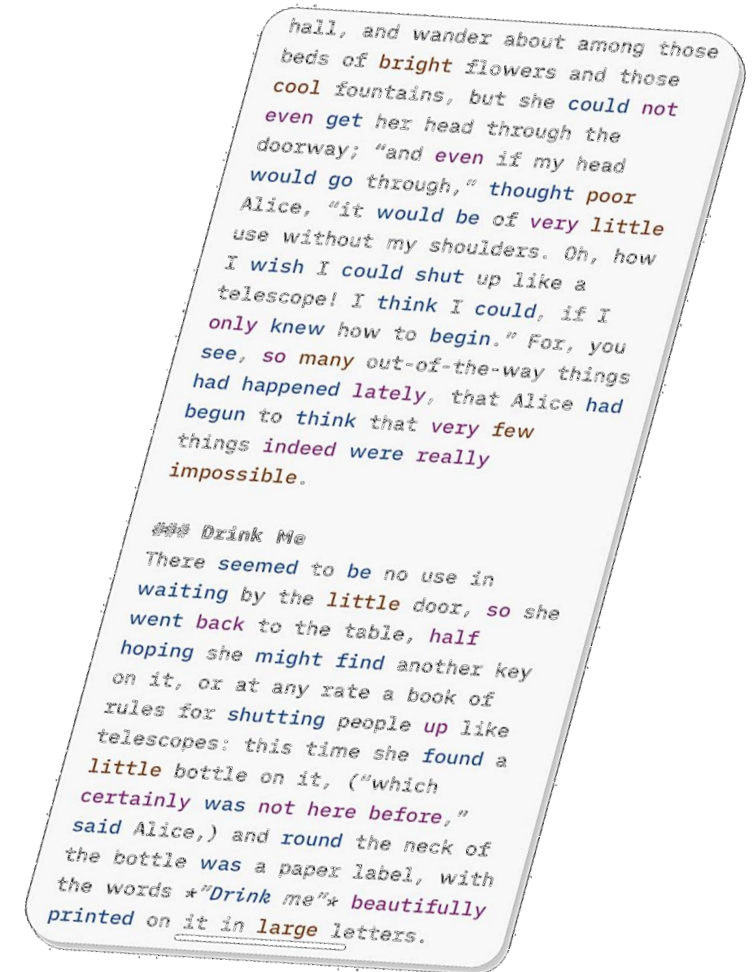


Sample Précis

Sample Passage 1:

It is physically impossible for a well-educated, intellectual, or brave man to make money the chief object of his thoughts just as it is for him to make his dinner the principal object of them. All healthy people like their dinners, but their dinner is not the main object of their lives. So all healthy minded people like making money ought to like it and enjoy the sensation of winning it; it is something better than money.

A good soldier, for instance, mainly wishes to do his fighting well. He is glad of his pay—very properly so and justly grumbles when you keep him ten years without it—till, his main mission of life is to win battles, not to be paid for winning them. So of clergymen. The clergyman's object is essentially baptize and preach not to be paid for preaching. So of doctors. They like fees no doubt—ought to like them; yet if they are brave and well-educated the entire object to their lives is not fees. They on the whole, desire to cure the sick; and if they are good doctors and the choice were fairly to them, would rather cure their patient and lose their fee than kill him and get it. And so with all the other brave and rightly trained men: their work is first, their fee second—very important always; but still second. (232 words)



Final Draft:

The Object of Mammon

Money-making is a common attraction in life. But it cannot be the principal aim of well educated, cultured and brave man. A brave soldier prizes honour and victory more than his pay. A good clergyman is more interested in the moral welfare of his people than his returns. A doctor (good) values the care of his patient far more than his fees. Thus with all the well-educated, intellectual persons, their work is first, money next. (79 words)



Sample Passage 2:

English education and English language have done immense goods to India, inspite of their glaring drawbacks. The notions of democracy and self-government are the born of English education. Those who fought and died for mother India's freedom were nursed in the cradle of English thought and culture. The West has made contribution to the East. The history of Europe has fired the hearts of our leaders. Our struggle for freedom has been inspired by the struggles for freedom in England, America and France. If our leaders were ignorant of English and if they had not studied this language, how could they have been inspired by these heroic struggles for freedom in other lands? English, therefore, did us great good in the past and if properly studied will do immense good in future.

English is spoken throughout the world. For international contact our commerce and trade, for the development of our practical ideas, for the scientific studies, English-is indispensable "English is very rich in literature," our own literature has been made richer by this foreign language. It will really be a fatal day if we altogether forget Shakespeare, Milton, Keats and Shaw. (192 words)

hall, and wander about among those beds of bright flowers and those cool fountains, but she could not even get her head through the doorway; "and even if my head would go through," thought poor Alice, "it would be of very little use without my shoulders. Oh, how I wish I could shut up like a telescope! I think I could, if I only knew how to begin." For, you see, so many out-of-the-way things had happened lately, that Alice had begun to think that very few things indeed were really impossible.

Drink Me

There seemed to be no use in waiting by the little door, so she went back to the table, half hoping she might find another key on it, or at any rate a book of rules for shutting people up like telescopes: this time she found a little bottle on it, ("which certainly was not here before," said Alice,) and round the neck of the bottle was a paper label, with the words "Drink me" beautifully printed on it in large letters.

Final Draft:

English and India

Notwithstanding its various defects English education has done great good to India. The ideas of democracy and self-government are its gifts. Nursed on English education the Indian leaders were inspired by the Western thought, culture and freedom struggles. They fought for and won their motherland's freedom. Being spoken thought-out the world English is necessary for international contact, trade, commerce and science. English is rich in literature; its master mind cannot be neglected. (75 words)



Sample Passage 3:

There is an enemy beneath our feet - an enemy more deadly for his complete impartiality. He recognizes no national boundaries, no political parties. Everyone in the world is threatened by him. The enemy is the earth itself. When an earthquake strikes, the world trembles. The power of a quake is greater than anything man himself can produce. But today scientists are directing a great deal of their effort into finding some way of combating earthquakes, and it is possible that at some time in the near future mankind will have discovered a means of protecting itself from earthquakes. An earthquake strikes without warning. When it does, its power is immense. If it strikes a modern city, the damage it causes is as great as if it has struck a primitive village. Gas mains burst, explosions are caused and fires are started. Underground railways are wrecked. Buildings collapse, bridges fall, dams burst, gaping crevices appear in busy streets. If the quake strikes at sea, huge tidal waves sweep inland. If it strikes in mountain regions, avalanches roar down into the valley. Consider the terrifying statistics from the past 1755: Lisbon, capital of Portugal - the city destroyed entirely and 450 killed. 1970: Peru: 50,000 killed. In 1968 an earthquake struck Alaska. As this is a relatively unpopulated part, only a few people were killed. But it is likely that this was one of the most powerful quakes ever to have hit the world. Geologists estimate that during the tremors, the whole of the state moved over 80 feet farther west into the Pacific Ocean. Imagine the power of something that can move an entire subcontinent! This is the problem that the scientists face. They are dealing with forces so immense that man cannot hope to resist them. All that can be done is to try to pinpoint just where the earthquake will strike and work from there. At least some precautionary measures can then be taken to save lives and some of the property. (330 Words)'

Final Draft:

Earthquake - The Great Destroyer

Earthquake is mankind's deadly enemy. Earthquakes strike all without distinction of nationality or political affiliation. The power of a quake is greater than that of any man-made weapon of destruction. An earthquake strikes mankind without warning. A modern city when struck is reduced to rubble. A quake strikes plains, seas and mountains causing all round destruction. A quake struck Lisbon in 1755 killing 450; Peru in 1970 killing 50,000; Alaska in 1968 moving it 80 feet into the Pacific Ocean. Scientists are trying to find out means to combat earthquakes, to predict the origin of a quake so that precaution can be taken to save man and property from destruction.(114 words)

Activity – Group activity



- The class is split into groups of 4 members each. Each group is given a short paragraph (300 words). They will then reduce it to a précis.
- Faculty is to provide the passages.

Duration: 30 minutes

Activity – Individual activity



- The students will be given a passage each (300 words) to write a précis on.
- Faculty is to provide the passages.

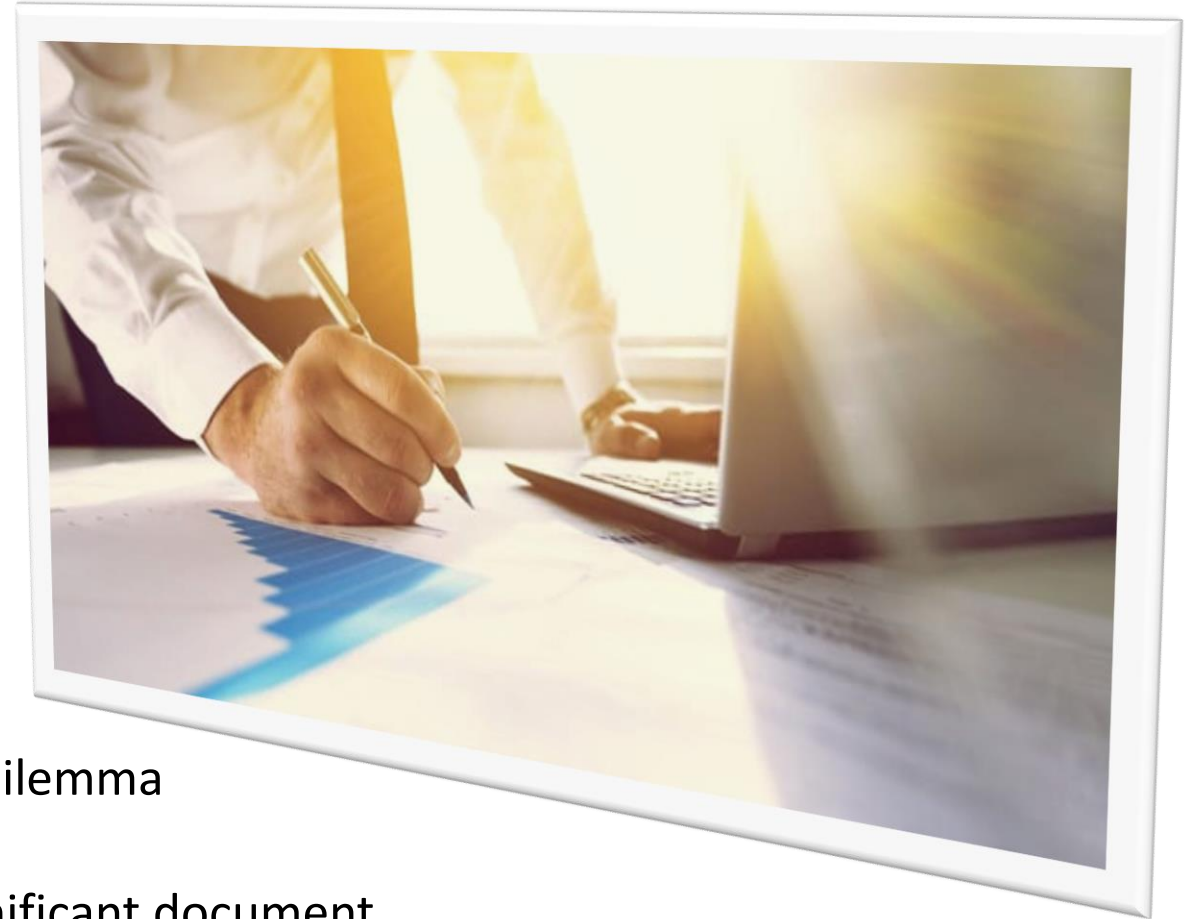
Duration: 30 minutes

Report Writing

A report is an official document containing information regarding an incident or something that has taken place which requires the reader to take action on.

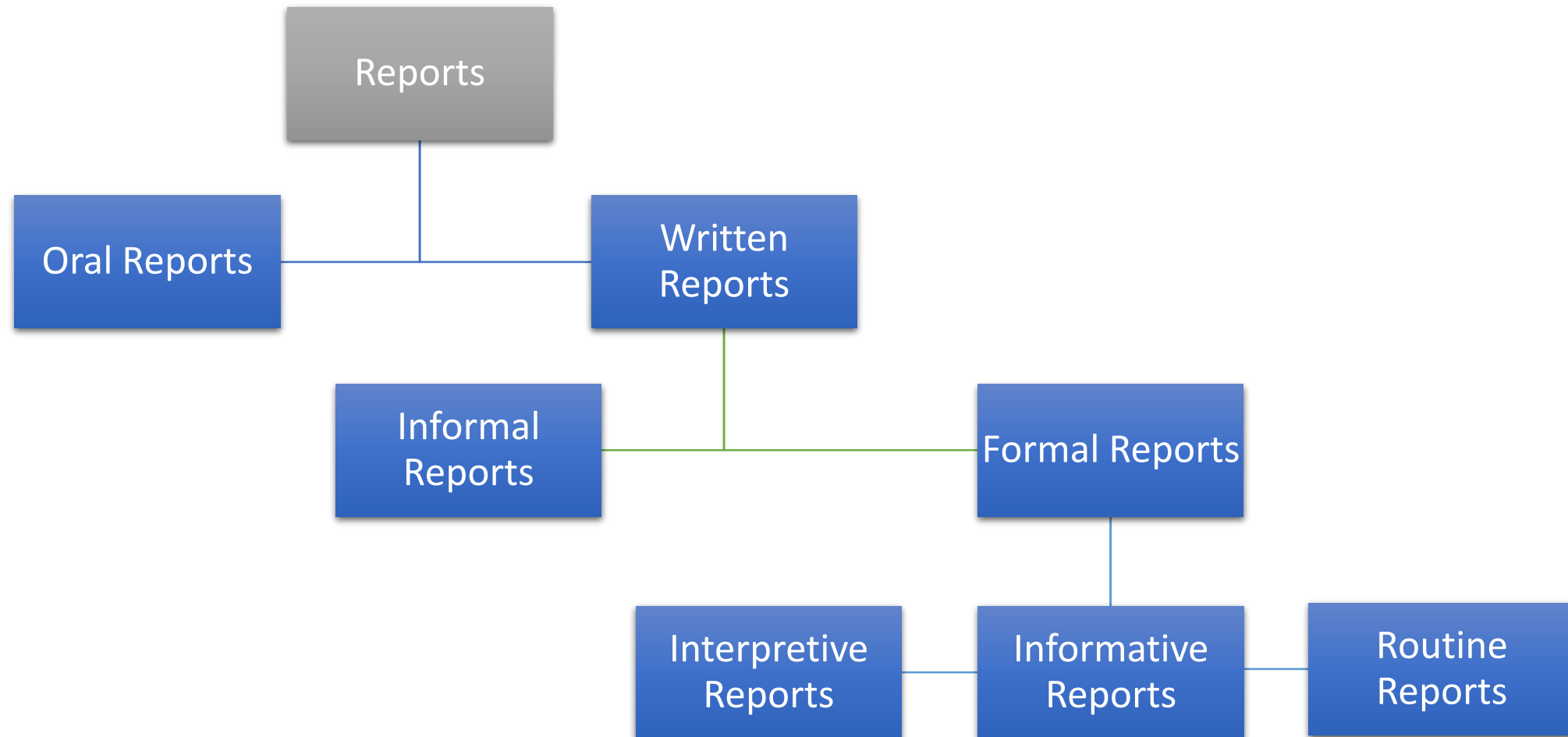
Reports are useful for the following purposes:

- Suggest new ideas
- Put across a point of view
- Present details of an investigation
- Influence a decision
- Analyse a situation
- Recommend an action
- Help people make a choice when faced with a dilemma



Keeping the above in mind, a report can be a very significant document.

Types of Reports



Types of Formal Reports



Sales Reports

A sales report is a record of all calls made by the sales force and products sold during a stipulated time frame of a sales entity.

A sales report may incorporate the following data:

- Volume of sales of an item or group of items
- Data on how many accounts were serviced and how many new ones were created
- Description of costs incurred in promotion and sale of products



Annual Reports

An annual report showcases a company's activities and financial performance over the past year. They help shareholders get an insight into the company's financial trends and operations over the past 12 months. This information is useful to investors to understand the company's current status and what direction it needs to be steered in.



Sample annual report: <https://www.infosys.com/investors/reports-filings/annual-report/annual/Documents/infosys-AR-17.pdf>

Technical Reports

A technical report is a formal report designed to convey technical information in a clear and easily accessible format. It is divided into sections which allow different readers to access different levels of information.



Components of Report

Title Page	
Contents	
Executive Summary	
Introduction	
Main Body/Findings/Discussions	
Conclusions	
Recommendations	
References/Sources	
Appendices	

Report Writing Steps



Writing Short Reports

- 1 A short report is a formal document intended for a specific audience.
- 2 Its contents are often based on a meaningful subject.
- 3 Their purpose and structure are different from that of other reports.
- 4 More of them are used in business writing.
- 5 A short report is of one or two pages in length.

The components of a short report are:

- Summary (briefly overviews the research and provides very basic information about it).
- Background (shows the significance of the study and provides readers with the history of the project).
- Procedure (presents methods that have been used to conduct research).
- Discussion (reviews and analyzes findings, shows limitations of an investigation).
- Recommendation/Conclusions (summarizes key points and the main idea of the study. Either recommendation or conclusion is provided, not both).

Activity – Group activity



- The class is split into groups of 5 members each.
- Each group is to write a short report on a topic suggested by the faculty.

Duration: 60 minutes



Self Assessment Question

1. A précis is roughly _____ that of the original text.
- a. one-third
 - b. one-fifth
 - c. one-fourth
 - d. one-half

Answer : one-third



Self Assessment Question

2. One of the techniques of précis writing is _____.

- a. Summarising
- b. Paraphrasing
- c. Reading
- d. Proofreading

Answer: Reading



Self Assessment Question

3. One of the purposes of a report is:

- a. To convict a person
- b. To raise funds
- c. To extend a contract
- d. To recommend an action

Answer: To recommend an action



Self Assessment Question

4. Which of the following is not included in a sales report?
- a. Details of catchment area
 - b. Volume of sales of an item or group of items
 - c. Data on how many accounts were serviced and how many new ones were created
 - d. Description of costs incurred in promotion and sale of products

Answer: Details of catchment area



Self Assessment Question

5. This type of report helps shareholders to get an insight into the company's financial health.
- a. Sales report
 - b. Annual report
 - c. Technical report
 - d. Short report

Answer: Annual report



Document Links

Topics	URL
Précis-writing	https://www.englishgrammar.org/preciswriting/
Some Rules of Précis-Writing	https://preciswritingexamples.wordpress.com/
10+ Report Writing Examples	https://www.examples.com/education/report-writing.html
What Is Report Writing & Its Types?	https://contentmart.com/blog/2016/10/05/what-is-report-writing-its-types/



Video Links

Topics	URL
Précis writing	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GtncXlijH2I
Tips for Précis Writing	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_IMWAxSBUk
Writing a Powerful Business Report	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sq2SDdz1i8U
How To Write A Business Report	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fYRLiyT1Ttk



Handouts

Topics	URL
Guide to technical report writing	https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=guide-to-technical-report&site=356
Technical Report Writing Guidelines	http://www8.sunydutchess.edu/faculty/akins/documents/TechnicalReportWritingGuidelines.pdf
Sample Sales Report	http://www.iopt.com/documents/Sample-Person-Sales-Report.pdf
Infosys Annual report 2016-17	https://www.infosys.com/investors/reports-filings/annual-report/annual/Documents/infosys-AR-17.pdf
Sample technical report	https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319143752_Demonetization_and_Its_Impact_on_Indian_Economy

*Thank
You*