**Precis Writing**

A Precis is a brief summary of an original passage. It is written in a precise, clear and coherent manner. In other words, it is a condensed restatement of the central idea of a passage in an integrated form.

**The following rules may be kept in mind while writing an effective Precis:**

Give a suitable heading.

Use one-third of the words of the given passage or as directed.

Use single words for phrases and long expressions like ‘Athiest for one who does not believe in the existence of God’.

Include all important points logically.

Use third person pronoun to write the Precis.

Avoid rhetorical expressions.

Avoid using words of the original passage as far as possible.

Cut out the number of words by using active voice and coordinating conjunctions.

Use indirect form of narration.

Restate the passage in your own words but don’t include your opinion.

Mention the number of words used in the Precis in the end.

**Sample Precis**

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 discover 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 lines burst, explosions are caused and fires are started. Underground railways are wrecked. Buildings collapsed, bridge 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 past1755: Lisbon, the capital of Portugal – the city destroyed entirely 450 killed. 1970: Peru: 50,000 killed. In the year 1968, an earthquake struck Alaska. As this is a relatively under populated 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 tremor, 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.

 The Precis for the above Passage may be as follows:

**Earthquake – The Great Destroyer**

Earthquake is the mankind’s deadly enemy. It strikes all without a 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 a warning. A modern city when struck is reduced to a nibble. A quake strikes plains, seas and mountains causing all round destruction. The 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 the quake so that the precaution can be taken to save man and property from destruction.

Total no. of words in the Passage- 330

Words used in the Precis- 115

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In every country people imagine that they are the best and the cleverest and the others are not good as they are. The English think that they and their country are the best: the French are very proud of France and everything French. The Germans and the Italians think no less of their countries and many Indians imagine that India in many ways is the greatest country in the world. This is wrong. Everybody wants to think well of himself and his country. But really there is no person who has some good and bad qualities. In the same way, there is no country which is not partly good and partly bad. We must take the good wherever we find it and try to remove the bad wherever it may be. We are, of course, most concerned with our own country, India. Unhappily, it is in a bad way today. Most of our people are poor and unhappy. They have no joy in their lives. We have to find out how we can make them happier. We have to see what is good in our ways and customs try to keep it, and whatever is bad we have to throw away. If we find anything good in other countries, we should certainly take it.

 The Precis for the above passage may be as follows:

**Patriotism**

People of every country – Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, Italians and many Indians think too highly of themselves and consider their country the best and the greatest. No country can be absolutely good, just as no man can be thoroughly good. We have to eliminate poverty and misery from our country. We have to keep what is good in us and discard what is bad. We should accept whatever good we may find in other countries.

Total no. of words in the Passage- 214

Words used in the Precis- 74

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It is very easy to acquire bad habits, such as eating too much food, or drinking too much wine of any kind, or smoking cigarettes or taking tobacco. The more we do a thing, the more we tend to like doing it: and if we do not continue to do it, we feel unhappy. Such tendency should be fought against all odds.

Things which may be very good when only done from time to time tend to become very harmful when done too often and too much. This applies to even such good things as work or rest. Some people form a bad habit of working too much, and others of idling too much. The wise man always remembers that this is true about himself, and checks any bad habit. He says to himself, ‘I am now becoming idle,’ and then adds, ‘I will get myself out of this bad habitat once.’

The Precis for the above passage may be as follows:

**Bad Habits**

Bad habits such as over-eating, drinking and smoking, are very easy to acquire. One should fight against the force of habit. Even good things can be harmful when done to excess. The wise man always remembers this truth about himself and checks any bad habits at once.

Total no. of words in the Passage- 152

Words used in the Precis- 48

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