**Précis Exercise**

Precis writing is another name for summarizing. Writing a précis means to shorten a given passage to about one third of the original. So, a lot of things have to be omitted, but none of the important points or things can be omitted. It contains the gist or the main theme of the passage expressed in your own words.

Precis writing needs unwavering attention and full concentration. One can follow the following method in order to become a good précis writer.

1. Read the passage thoroughly, and give it a title. The title you choose will indicate whether you have been able to understand the passage or not. If your title does not deal with the main idea of the passage, you have not understood the passage properly.

2. Give a second reading, underlining the main ideas of the passage.

3. Make a draft of the précis, using only the underlined sentences.

4. Omit illustrations, examples, details and repetition.

5. Arrange these points logically; generally the order of the original is retained.

6. Write in your own words. A précis which borrows phrases and language from the original usually crosses the word limit. Borrow only the ideas, and express them in your own language.

7. If the summary is too long, rewrite it to bring it within the limit of near about one third of the original.

8. The précis should be in the same tense, in third person and in indirect speech.

9. One word substitution of longer terms is very helpful.
Sample précis:

Trees give shade for the benefit of others, and while they themselves stand in the sun and endure the scorching heat, they produce the fruit of which others profit. The character of good men is like that of trees. What is the use of this perishable body if no use is made of it for the benefit of mankind? Sandalwood, the more it is rubbed, the more scent does it yield. Sugarcane, the more it is peeled and cut up into pieces, the more juice does it produce. The men who are noble at heart do not lose their qualities even in losing their lives. What matters whether men praise them or not? What difference does it make whether they die at this moment or whether lives are prolonged? Happen what may, those who tread in the right path will not set foot in any other. Life itself is unprofitable to a man who does not live for others. To live for the mere sake of living one’s life is to live the life of dog and crows. Those who lay down their lives for the sake of others will assuredly dwell forever in a world of bliss.

Title- Good men live for others.

Outline: The character of good men is like that of trees. What is the use of this perishable body if no use is made of it for the benefit of mankind? The men who are noble at heart do not lose their qualities even in losing their lives. Those who tread in the right path will not set foot in any other. To live for the mere sake of living one’s life is to live the life of dogs or crows. Those who lay down their lives for the sake of others will assuredly dwell forever in a world of bliss.

Precis

Good men live for others

The character of good men is like that of trees. They live for others and do not lose their qualities even in losing their lives. They always follow the right path. Praise is immaterial to them. To live for one’s own sake is to lead the life of beasts. Only those who lay down their lives for others will live forever in a world of bliss.