



WRITER'S CHECKLIST

Precis Writing

<http://www.english-for-students.com/Precis-Writing.html>

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What is Précis Writing?

According the Academic Resource Center at Webster University Précis Writing is defined as follows:

Précis, from the Old French and literally meaning “cut short” (dictionary.com), summarizes an article or other work. The précis explains the **main point, logical support, and structure of the original work**, but in **condensed form**. The précis is **objective**, unlike a critical analysis, which evaluates the argument and use of evidence within an article. Thus, the précis **does not offer [personal opinions]** about a text.....¹ (emphasis added)

Precis writing is one-third the size of the original.²

Checklist

According to english-for-students.com³, there are key elements to precis writing that can be used as a checklist. These elements support the idea that a precis writing “develops one's capacity to discriminate between the essential and the non-essential.” Here is their information distilled into checklist:

Done?	Step
	1. Once your precis is written, go back and delete any information that is not essential.
	2. Do not use abbreviations or contractions. Rewrite any you find.
	3. Make sure your descriptions of big ideas are concise and brief, without sacrificing clarity.
	4. See if you have identified the key points of the reading. If you are writing about history, use the past tense.
	5. Make sure your order of concepts and ideas matches the order found in the original writing.
	6. Make sure the proportions given to each concept match the proportions found in the original writing. For example: In the original writing, if Big Idea A takes 2 paragraphs, Big Idea B takes 1 paragraph, and Big Idea C takes one paragraph, then in your precis, Big Idea 1 should have twice as much space/text as Big Idea 2 and 3.
	7. Make sure the relationships between Big Ideas in your precis match the relationships found in the original writing.
	8. Check to see if your precis is approximately one-third the length of the original text. If it is larger, repeat the steps in this checklist to see if you can remove any non-essential material.

¹ Sweeney, Teresa and Hooker, Fran. “Perfecting a Précis”, www.webster.edu, Academic Resource Center. Accessed 12/2016.

² <http://www.englishgrammar.org/preciswriting/>. Accessed 12/2016.

³ <http://www.english-for-students.com/Precis-Writing.html>. Accessed 1/2017.