

Précis:

1. General INTRO:

A précis is a kind of summary of an article or chapter, that when done well can help you as a university student. It's brevity is like a puzzle: it forces you to think through the article or chapter and decide what the most important and essential arguments and points were. A précis is helpful because it forces you to encounter the author and their interests by the means it forces you to translate the author's essence into your own words – It forces you to attend to the author's writing style and organizational structure. A précis forces you to do a good skim of the article and its organizational structure - and is thus a good way to prepare for a discussion. A précis then also gives you a brief summary that you can return to use to organize your studies. (It is not a bad idea to keep them in a notebook with an alphabetical index). You can then come back to look at your précis - when you are studying or an exam or writing a paper.

A précis is an exercise that forces you to think about the difference between your words and the authors, and to identify the difference between your thoughts and the authors. It thus also help you avoid plagiarism and boosts your writing skills by helping you see and analyze a published authors style. Some students use précis to index their starting notes on a article or chapter and go back and add important points or notes following the précis.

For these many reasons, I recommend that students always write précis for what ever they are asked to read and especially for any reading connected to their studies either as a discussion, exam or research paper.

2. Specific GOALS of the précis for this class

However for the purposes of this class you are only being asked to do three simple précis.

The **number one purpose** of the précis for this class is to demonstrate to your TA your engagement and expertise of the article you have chosen.

The **secondary goals of the précis** are study and writing skills - as listed above in the general intro.

The **third goal of the précis is to prepare you to contribute in a more involved way – with the discussion connected to the article** – and its tutorial. Once you have done a précis on an article – you are much more in a position of expertise on it. For that reason, it is expected that you would participate in a more involved way in the discussion connected to that article.

3. Specific TASK: Write a 100 word summary of the article or chapter, translating the authors points into your own words.

Step 1: Each précis should begin with the bibliographic listing for the article/chapter just as you might list it if you were to use it in a bibliography. You may use MLA, APA or Chicago style bibliography – but once you chose a style stick with it in your papers as well as this assignment. If all of your précis are done this way – then you always have the bibliographic reference material handy for when you are writing. This bibliographic material does not count as the 100 words.

Step 2: Your goal is to write a 100 word summary of the article or chapter, and to translate the authors words and points into your own words. (Your TA will give you guidelines for how many words past 100 they are willing to accept).

Tips:

- It is helpful to write a rough draft, followed by another, and then a final draft.
- Students are strongly encouraged to print out the articles they are writing précis from
- It may be helpful to do a highlighted reading first, and to then use the highlights for doing the précis. (some students like this method others do not)
- Certainly finding the main sentence of each paragraph and section in an article or chapter is a way to start the précis – though you will find that you will still need to sort through which are the most essential sentences and points – as

Step 3: The précis should be formally presented in typed/printed format: single, double or 1.5 spaced depending on your TA's preference for grading. Your TA may also have requirements for the spacing and style of the bibliographic info and body of précis. You should follow their guidelines.

Step 4: A very minimal amount of exact quoting or paraphrasing is allowable (generally a sentence or less) – and does give you the opportunity to create a citation/footnote-endnote on the précis which then gives you the format you can reference when you cite this article in any paper.

Step 5: Finally:

It is important to make sure identifiers: such as your name, student number, page numbers, tutorial number, course number and TA's name - are on your précis before you hand it in. Your TA will inform you if they have a specific format they wish you to follow for this.

As well, your TA will let you know if you are to hand this in as *print copy or digital copy or both*.

Evaluation Criteria:

1. Basic:
 - a. Is this précis 100 words?
 - b. Does this précis summarize the readings essential arguments and points
 - c. Does this précis translate the author's points into their own words
 - d. Does this précis follow the proper format including those connected to bibliographic title and citing, and including those recommended by TA.
2. Basic Plus: Does this précis do a good job of all of the above? Was it timely? Did student take responsibility for understanding the assignment or transfer this to someone else
3. Advanced:
 - a. Does this article demonstrate the student's expertise and engagement with this article?
 - b. Does this précis seem to be utilized to make a useful contribution to developing the students study skills and writing needs.
 - c. Did this article lead the student to contribute to the tutorial discussion connected to the article?
 - d. Did this contribution demonstrate expertise?
4. Excellent:
 - a. Did this discussion demonstrate leadership interests in others involvement in learning about the article