

The Ultimate Strategy to Attempt Precis Writing (CSS Level)

Precis writing is not about shortening a passage — it is about **understanding, filtering, and reconstructing meaning with precision**. Most candidates fail not because they lack English skills, but because they lack a **clear method**.

This strategy is designed to help you approach any precis passage like a professional.

Step 1: First Reading — Understand, Don't Rush

Read the passage **slowly and carefully**.

Your goal is NOT to shorten yet. Your goal is:

- To understand the **central idea**
- To identify the **tone** (argumentative, descriptive, analytical)
- To see how ideas are connected

Ask yourself:

“What is the author REALLY trying to say?”

Step 2: Identify the Core Idea

Every passage has ONE controlling idea.

- Ignore examples, stories, and repetitions
- Focus on the **main argument or message**

If you had to explain the passage in ONE sentence — what would it be?

That is your **core idea**.

Step 3: Break the Passage into Logical Parts

Divide the passage into:

- Introduction (main idea introduced)
- Body (supporting arguments)
- Conclusion (final insight or message)

This helps you avoid:

- Missing important points
 - Writing in a disorganized way
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Step 4: Highlight Key Points Only

Extract only:

- Main arguments
- Essential facts
- Logical connections

Avoid:

- Examples
- Anecdotes
- Repetition
- Decorative language

Rule: If removed, does the meaning suffer?

- Yes → Keep it
 - No → Remove it
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Step 5: Apply the 1/3 Rule

Precis must be **one-third of the original passage**.

- Count original words
- Divided by 3
- Stay close to the limit (± 5 words)

Too long = penalty

Too short = loss of meaning

Step 6: Write in Your Own Words

This is CRITICAL.

- Do NOT copy phrases
- Use **simple, clear, and formal language**
- Maintain the original meaning

Think like this:

“Rewrite the idea, not the words.”

Step 7: Maintain Logical Flow

Your precis should feel like a **complete, smooth paragraph**, not notes.

Use connectors like:

- Therefore
- However
- Thus
- Consequently

The reader should NOT feel anything is missing.

Step 8: Choose a Perfect Title

A good title:

- Reflects the central idea
- Is short and precise
- Is not too vague or too detailed

Example:

- Weak: “About Discipline”
 - Strong: “The Role of Discipline in Success”
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Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Copying sentences from the passage
 - Including examples and stories
 - Ignoring word limit
 - Writing personal opinions
 - Losing the main idea
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Examiner's Expectations

A high-scoring precis:

- Clearly captures the **central idea**
 - It is **coherent and well-structured**
 - Uses **original wording**
 - Stay within **word limit**
 - Feels like a **complete piece of writing**
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Final Golden Rule

“Clarity over complexity, precision over length.”

You are not trying to impress with difficult words —

You are trying to prove that you **understand deeply and express clearly.**

Practice Advice

- Practice regularly with past papers
 - Compare your precis with model answers
 - Focus on improving your **thinking process**, not just writing
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Master this method, and precis will stop being the “monster” —

It will become your **strongest scoring area.**

