Precis’ and Paraphrase Writing **DUE DATE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**IB Aims:** To develop the students’ powers of expression, both in oral and written communication; to develop in students an understanding of the techniques involved in literary criticism.

**Objectives:** To practice two essential writing skills—precis’ writing and paraphrasing.

**PRECIS’ WRITING (40 points)**

Precis writing is the process of shortening another’s writing while maintaining tone and form. It is different than a summary in that it is more formal and prescribed.

There are four steps to follow while writing a précis:

1. In one coherent sentence, give the following:
   1. author(s)’ name (s), title of the work, and date published. The date should be placed in parenthesis.
   2. a verb such as assert, argue, deny, refute, prove, disprove, etc
   3. a clause that asserts the thesis of the work.
   4. **Ex:** In Miles Dunn’s “Madame Bovary Sucks” (1993), Dunn asserts that the text is wholly pedantic because of its painfully punctilious descriptions.
2. In one coherent sentence, explain how the author develops and supports the thesis.
   1. Ex: Dunn supports his claim using textual evidence from thorough descriptions of the arrival to Yonville, the county expo, the ball, and the Parisian affair with Leon in contrast to the dialogue of characters.
3. In one coherent sentence, assert the author(s)’ purpose. You can begin with “in order to.”
   1. Ex: Dunn uses these examples in order to illustrate that the gross attention to detail that undercuts the plot and undermines characterization in the novel.
4. In one coherent sentence, give a description of the intended audience and/or the relationship the author establishes with the audience.
   1. Ex: Given the copious analysis of the text, the author is writing to a post-secondary academic, possibly one taking English, who has studied the novel in detail.

**PARAPHRASING (60 points)**

In addition to your individual précis, you will work as a group to complete an academic paraphrase of the assigned chunk of your given article. On the due date, your group will turn in one whole paraphrased article with all of your group members. The idea is that the paraphrased parts should be seamless and sound as if they come from the same author, as you are expected to maintain the academic tone, diction, and structure of an academic article.

Paraphrasing is the process of changing another’s writing into your own words without adding, changing, or omitting anything in the original quotation. There are four principles to follow while paraphrasing:

1. Your paraphrase must contain all the ideas contained in the original quotation.
2. Your paraphrase must not contain any ideas of your own, awkward euphemisms, unwarranted clichés, or informal diction.
3. Your paraphrase should illustrate an understanding of the connotation of words.
4. Your paraphrase must be easier to understand than the original.

**DIRECTIONS FOR DUE DATE:**

1. Put an MLA heading on your paper. Be sure to place your last names in the corner.
2. Put the title—Précis Writing and Paraphrasing: *The Title of Your Article*—in the center.
3. Place each rhetorical précis statement in alphabetical order under the centered subheading of Rhetorical Précis: Your Last Name.
4. After you have placed each individual rhetorical précis, you must then piece together your paraphrase of the article in the same order of the article.
5. The last page must be a *Works Cited* with the article citation. It must also be paginated in the same fashion as your document.
6. Your entire document must be done in MLA.

**Individual Rhetorical Précis Rubric**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Content** | **The Good (8-10)** | **The Bad (7-5)** | **The Ugly (4-0)** | **Your Verdict** |
| **Rhetorical Précis**  **Sentence 1** | A clear, thorough, professional, and well-asserted thesis that contains all required elements. | A terse thesis that only partially asserts the premise of the article. There may be missing elements. | A sophomoric thesis that either misidentifies the argument or is lacking required elements. |  |
| **Rhetorical Précis**  **Sentence 2** | A clear and detailed sentence that fully supports the thesis. The author has clearly read and understood the article. | A decent attempt at identifying the evidence the author uses to support his or her thesis. | A cursory explanation that can be found in the abstract. There is little evidence of having read the article. |  |
| **Rhetorical Précis**  **Sentence 3** | A clear understanding of the purpose of the article and how its evidence supports the thesis. | An adequate understanding of the purpose of the article and how its evidence supports the thesis. | You know nothing, John Snow. |  |
| **Rhetorical Précis**  **Sentence 4** | A cohesive sentence that demonstrates an understanding of purpose and audience that is well-supported by evidence. | A general understanding of the audience and purpose. It is just passable. | The sentence misidentifies the intended audience or lacks evidence to illustrate its purpose. |  |
| **Total Points** | | | |  |

**Group Paraphrase Précis Rubric**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Content** | **The Good (8-10)** | **The Bad (7-5)** | **The Ugly (4-0)** | **Your Verdict** |
| **Accuracy of Information** | The paraphrase demonstrates an excellent understanding of the article’s content. | The paraphrase shows that almost all key elements were understood. | There are places where it is obvious that the student did not understand the article and did not seek help to understand. |  |
| **Content Clarity** | A clear and harmonious paraphrase that illustrates an understanding of language and content. | A decent attempt at deconstructing and paraphrasing the content. There may be a place where the flow is disrupted. | The flow of the individual chunk is disharmonious and shows a dependence on the thesaurus. It reads like Google Translate. |  |
| **Diction and Register** | A clear understanding of the connotations of individual words. The academic register is maintained throughout. | An adequate understanding of word connotations. There may be a misused word or two, but the whole is good. | Again, the paraphrase sounds like Google Translate. There is no understanding of diction and register. |  |
| **Sentence Structure and Grammar** | The structure of the original document is maintained and all grammar is correct. | The structure and grammar is mostly maintained in the document. | Grammar is ignored and there are gross mistakes. |  |
| **Original Thought v. Written Thought** | All of the work, except direct quotes, was paraphrased. | Most of the work is paraphrased. Some words and phrases are copied from the original text. | Only a few words or phrases were paraphrased. |  |
| **Cohesiveness** | The whole document reads as if it was written by one person. It flows with little disruption. | Most of the document is harmonious and flows with little interruption. | I can tell that you did not work together. |  |
| **Total Points** | | | |  |