

Précis Instructions

Overview

A précis is a brief summary of something you have read. It can be a book, an article, or a passage. In this case, you will be summarizing a book that you have chosen & read. The précis is a type of formal summary that is often used in college. It is a great exercise in summarization & word choice. In addition, similar summaries are used in the military & in business.

What your précis should include:

- The complete bibliographic information about your source, formatted in MLA, APA, or Turabian format.
- Is it a primary or secondary source?
- What is the author's overall theme or thesis?
- What are the author's key points?
- Assess possible limitations to the information.
- The précis is written from your point of view. It is your opinion and is written in the 1st person. Don't quote long passages from the text. You may include short quotes, but only if absolutely necessary.

Format

- 1 page, single-spaced, typed. Do not go over 1 page, but your text should come within a line or two of the bottom of the page.
- Use an easily read font of size 12.
- Indent each paragraph.
- Use 1-inch margins on all sides.
- Your précis should have a heading that includes only your name and the date.
- Skip one line below your heading and type the complete bibliographic information for your source.
- Skip one line below your bibliographic information and begin your first paragraph.
- Arrange your précis to move from broad to narrow information.
 - Begin with overall theme and methods.
 - Following the first paragraph, begin to look at specific ideas and information.
- Use good writing techniques. Be sure to include a brief introduction and conclusion.
- This is formal writing, so don't use slang, don't abbreviate, use good spelling and grammar, and don't use any kind of texting shorthand.

Sample

George Blair

May 1, 2009

Benson, Susan Porter. *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores 1890-1940*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986.

This is a well-written book that covers the history of the relationships between managers, the sales staff, and the customers in American department stores. Porter uses a wide variety of sources to document the evolution of this relationship, including first person remembrances, store records, advertisements,