THE RHETORICAL PRÉCIS

A rhetorical précis is an analytical review and focussed summary of content and method of an original piece of work or text. It should tell you what the text says and does.

It is a helpful way to sum up the understanding you have of an article, paper, chapter or book and it helps when trying to conduct a review of work or literature. It is particularly useful for understanding how to connect work or research or information you want to include in an essay to existing bodies of work or literature.

Structuring a rhetorical precis involves writing out four sentences

The first sentence gives the Name of author, genre, and title of work, date in parentheses; a rhetorically active verb; and a THAT clause containing the major assertion or thesis in the text.

*The second sentence should explain* how the author develops and supports the thesis.

*The third sentence should be a* statement of the authors intention or purpose, followed by the reason for this intention i.e., an “in order to” phrase.

*The fourth sentence should* describe the intended audience and/or the relationship the author establishes with the audience.

**SENTENCE 1 (Who and What)**

**Who wrote the article, what is it called, when was it written, what is the key assertion/goal, In one sentence:**

* give the name of the author
* the title of the work and date in brackets/parenthesis
* describe the goal of the work you are summarising using verbs such as: *refutes, argues, asserts, claims, discovered, found, argues, proves, disputes etc.*
* state what the author is saying or expressing as you see it explaining what they are saying or asserting

Example: ***Mooney et al*** in their ***research article***, ***A shaker of salt and tea (1901);*** assert that ***you need a good cup of tea to start the day and a pinch of salt to enjoy a good steak alongside a good cup of tea***.

*{Author}* **of** *{Title, punctuated correctly}*, **in the/their** {*type and title of work, the date of work* inserted in parentheses}, {“asserts,” “argues,” “suggests,” “implies,” “claims, found, discovered,” etc} **that** {what is the discovery or assertion}

**SENTENCE 2 – How?**

Think about they kind of proof or evidence the author puts forward and how they structure and construct their arguments.

**In one sentence** explain howthe author develops and/or supports the claims or assertion

Example: the authors ***present case study insights based on views and perspectives gathered by observing 197 housewives with varied economic circumstances for two days during the steak festival week in Alcapaca.***

{the author/s} supports his/her/their {state the claim} by {how}

***SENTENCE 3* (Why?)**

Why has the research/study/work/article been done or why has the article been written. Most authors will state why they have done so but you may need to read the work to understand the why from your view.

**In one sentence** explain whythe author did the research/study/work/article i.e., what was the purpose of this work

Example: the author/s **explain and emphasise** views and perspectives that **give insight** into ***the day-to-day routine of housewives in*** the Alcapaca region during steak festival week ***highlighting their cultural practices***.

**The research/study was carried out {to/so that} {the reason the author articulates or gives for doing the research/study}**

***SENTENCE 4 (To Whom?)***

Who do you think the author is hoping will read or benefit or learn from their research/study/work/article. What is the key benefit to the reader?

**In one sentence** describe the intended audience and the relationship the author/s establish/es with the audience.

Example: the ***authoritative and informative*** approach of the article will enable ***researchers*** understand the ***cultural norms expected from tourists and food critics who visit the Alcapaca region to participate in the local immersion programs during Alcapaca steak festival week.***

The author writes in {an authoritative/informative/analytical/formal/descriptive} tone/way for {audience} to {overall benefit} (optional).

Your summary of how the usefulness of this article in your own words

**Your final precis:**

An outline of your citation method, the full citation for the work and your complete precis including any additional notes you want to add. Then save the file using the name of the article and author name or any convention that works for you.

**Citation method**

Harvard/APA/Chicago etc

**Full Citation**

**Complete summary (sentence 1, 2, 3 and 4)**

**Additional notes:**

Examples of words you can use in your precis

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who/What | How | Why | (To Whom) Tone of article |
| article book essaycolumn, review essay editorial speech story novel play film video | argues/argumentasserts/assertionsuggests/suggestionclaimsquestionsexplains/ explanationacknowledgesadvisesaffirmsagreesallegesanalysesarguesassertsattackscitesclaimscomparesconfirmsconsiderscontendscontradictscontrastsdefendsdefinesdemonstratesdeniesdepictsdescribesdisagreesdisputesemphasizesemploysestimatesevaluatesexplainsexploresexpresseshypothesizesillustratesimpliesinvestigatesjustifiesmaintainsmandatesproclaimsproposesprovesquestionsrationalizesrecognizesrecommendsrecountsrefusesrejectsrelatesreportsrepresentsspeculatesstatesstressessustainsvalidates | comparing contrastingtelling explaining illustratingdemonstrating defining describing listingacknowledging advising affirming agreeing alleginganalysing arguing asserting attacking citing claiming comparing confirming considering contending contradicting contrasting defending defining demonstrating denying depicting describing disagreeing disputing emphasizing employing estimating evaluating explaining exploring expressing hypothesizing illustrating implying investigating justifying maintaining mandating proclaiming proposing proving questioning rationalizing recognizing recommending recounting refusing rejecting relating reporting representing speculating stating stressing sustaining validating | formal informal sarcastic humorous contemptuousinformativeauthoritativeconcisecomprehensivecondescending contemptuous passionate serious light-hearted satiricalacerbicambivalentamusedanimatedappreciativeardentarrogantassertivecandidcautionarycolloquialcomplexconciliatorycondescendingcriticaldefensivedefiantderisivediplomaticdisparagingdispassionatedistressingencouragingenthusiasticfacetiousformalfrankhumoroushypercriticalimpartialimpassionedinformativeinspirationallaudatoryobjectiveobsequiousoptimisticpersuasivepessimisticphilosophicalsatiricalsarcasticsinceresubjective |