



FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Competitive Examination for Recruitment to Posts in BPS-17
Under the Federal Government — 2002

ENGLISH (Précis & Composition)

Time Allowed: 3 Hours | Maximum Marks: 100

FULLY SOLVED & EXPLAINED EDITION

Instruction: Make a précis of the given passage in about one-third of its length and give a suitable heading.

The official name of our species is Homo sapiens, but many anthropologists prefer to think of man as Homo faber — the toolmaker. These two definitions can, I think, be reconciled in a third: if man is a knower and an efficient doer, it is only because he is also a talker. In order to be Faber and Sapiens, Homo must first be loquax — the speaking one. Without language we would be merely hairless chimpanzees, or indeed something much worse. Possessed of a high IQ but no language, we would resemble the Yahoos of Gulliver's Travels: creatures too clever to be guided by instinct, too self-centred to live in a state of animal grace, and therefore condemned forever, frustrated and malignant, between contented apehood and aspiring humanity. It was language that made possible the accumulation of knowledge and the broadcasting of information; it was language that permitted the expression of religious insight, the formulation of ethical ideals, and the codification of laws. It was language, in a word, that turned us into human beings and gave birth to civilization.

 **Suggested Heading: "Language: The Maker of Man and Civilization"**

MODEL PRÉCIS (≈ 68 words)

Man is officially Homo sapiens, though some prefer Homo faber, the toolmaker; but both depend on man first being Homo loquax, the speaker. Without language, humans would be mere clever, self-centred creatures, incapable of true knowledge or civilised life — as depicted by Swift's Yahoos. Language alone made possible accumulated knowledge, religious and ethical expression, law, and thus genuine humanity and civilization.

Examiner's Tip: Where a passage builds toward a single central idea (here, "language created civilization"), make sure your précis ends on that same climactic point rather than trailing off on a minor detail.

Q2. Comprehension

20 Marks

Instruction: Read the passage and answer the questions in your own words.

There is, indeed, something inexpressibly pleasing in the annual renovation of the world and the new display of the treasures of nature. The darkness and cold of winter, with the naked deformity of every object on which we turn our eyes, make us rejoice at the succeeding season, both for what we have escaped and for what we may enjoy. Every budding flower, which a warm situation brings early to our view, is considered by us a messenger sent to notify the approach of more joyous days. The spring affords to a mind free from the disturbance of cares or passions almost everything that our present state makes us capable of enjoying. The variegated verdure of the fields and woods, the succession of grateful odours, the voice of pleasure pouring out its notes on every side, with the gladness apparently felt by every animal from the growth of its food and the clemency of the weather, throw over the whole earth an air of gaiety, significantly expressed by the smile of nature. (Samuel Johnson)

(a) Give the meanings of the following expressions in your own words: (10)

Annual renovation of the world — nature's yearly renewal and revival

Naked deformity — the bare, lifeless ugliness of winter

Variegated verdure — the varied, colourful greenery of fields and woods

Clemency of the weather — the mildness and gentleness of the climate

Smile of nature — the cheerful, welcoming appearance of the natural world

(b) How does an early budding flower become a messenger of happy days? (3)

Its early bloom, brought on by mild weather, signals that the gloom of winter is ending and that pleasant, joyful spring days are approaching — so, like a messenger, it announces good times ahead.

(c) Who, according to the writer, can make the best of the spring season? (3)

Only a mind free from the disturbance of worldly cares and passions can truly enjoy and benefit from everything that spring offers.

(d) Why are all animals glad at the approach of spring? (3)

Because spring brings abundant food, mild and pleasant weather, and a general renewal of life — all of which fill every creature with the natural joy of easier, more comfortable living.

(e) Suggest a title for the passage. (1)

"The Smile of Nature: The Joy of Spring"

Q3. Comprehensive Note (Essay)

20 Marks

Instruction: Write a comprehensive note (250–300 words) on ONE of the given topics.

Topic Selected: "Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see the shade."

This well-known saying, attributed to Helen Keller, captures a simple but powerful truth about the power of perspective. It suggests that our attitude toward life — whether we choose to focus on hope and possibility or on despair and difficulty — largely determines what we actually experience. The sunshine and the shade both exist simultaneously; what differs is which way we choose to turn our faces.

This is not a call to deny hardship, but an argument for where we place our attention. Two people facing the identical setback — the loss of a job, an illness, a failed venture — may respond very differently. One dwells on what has been lost and is consumed by bitterness; the other looks toward what remains possible and begins rebuilding. The circumstances are the same, but the outcomes diverge sharply because of where each person's gaze rests.

History offers many examples of individuals who turned toward the sunshine despite immense adversity. Helen Keller herself, deaf and blind from infancy, became a celebrated author and advocate rather than surrendering to her limitations. Countless entrepreneurs have built successful ventures after earlier failures, choosing to see opportunity rather than dwelling on past defeat. Their achievements were not due to an absence of shade in their lives, but to a deliberate decision to face the light instead.

Psychologically, this optimistic orientation is not naive escapism; it is a practical strategy. Hope fuels the energy and creativity needed to solve problems, while despair tends to paralyse action. Choosing to face the sunshine does not make shadows disappear — but it does determine whether we spend our lives working toward better days or trapped in the darkness behind us. In the end, life's greatest freedom may be this: the freedom to choose which way we face.

Instruction: Change the Voice (Active $\rightleftharpoons$ Passive) of the following sentences.

#	Original	Changed Voice
1	The production of cash crops directly affects the economy of an agricultural country.	The economy of an agricultural country is directly affected by the production of cash crops.
2	The accelerated car sped past the traffic signal and crashed into a van and killed two men.	The traffic signal was sped past, and a van was crashed into, by the accelerated car, and two men were killed.
3	The students were asked to submit the assignment before the end of the day.	The teacher asked the students to submit the assignment before the end of the day.
4	The new budget was being discussed.	They were discussing the new budget.
5	The Manager has announced a bonus for all the workers.	A bonus has been announced for all the workers by the Manager.
6	The police chased the dacoit and finally arrested him.	The dacoit was chased and finally arrested by the police.
7	It was difficult to finish the work on time.	It was difficult for the work to be finished on time.
8	At last the speech ended and prizes were distributed.	At last the speech ended and the organisers distributed the prizes.
9	She manages her duties, without any help, despite her blindness.	Her duties are managed by her, without any help, despite her blindness.
10	I appreciate your efforts and hope you will continue in the same fashion.	Your efforts are appreciated, and it is hoped that you will continue in the same fashion.

Note: Sentences that are intransitive, or already contain non-passivisable elements (e.g. "the speech ended"), retain those parts unchanged — only the passivisable clause is converted.

Instruction: Change the following sentences from Direct Speech to Indirect Speech.

#	Direct Speech	Indirect Speech
1	"Hurrah! We won the match," said the captain of the team.	The captain of the team exclaimed joyfully that they had won the match.
2	"Please Sir, take pity on a poor beggar woman," the wretched old woman asked for alms.	The wretched old woman humbly requested the gentleman to take pity on a poor beggar woman like her and give her alms.
3	They say, "Is this the right time to arrive? Aren't you forgetting something?"	They ask whether that is the right time to arrive and whether he is not forgetting something.
4	He often says, "I am always willing to help the needy, if I am assured they are really in need."	He often says that he is always willing to help the needy if he is assured that they are really in need.
5	The master said, "How long will you take in preparing my meal?"	The master asked how long he would take in preparing his meal.
6	The boy said, "Alas! I could not pass my examination."	The boy exclaimed sadly that he had not been able to pass his examination.
7	"Come here quickly and work out this problem on the blackboard," said the teacher.	The teacher told him to go there quickly and work out that problem on the blackboard.
8	"What a lovely evening!" said Irum.	Irum exclaimed that it was a very lovely evening.
9	"What is the name of this beautiful building?" asked the visitor.	The visitor asked what the name of that beautiful building was.
10	He said, "Sit down over here and don't move until I allow you."	He told them to sit down there and not to move until he allowed them.

Q6. Sentence Correction

10 Marks

Instruction: Correct the following sentences.

#	Original	Correction	Rule Applied
1	I shall not come here unless you will not call me.	I shall not come here unless you call me.	"Unless" is already negative; a second negative is redundant
2	He does not have some devotion for the project you have given him.	He has no devotion for the project you have given him.	Negative sentences use "any/no", not "some"
3	I went to either of the four hill stations.	I went to one of the four hill stations.	"Either" is used only for a choice between two
4	Who did you meet on your way to school?	Whom did you meet on your way to school?	Object of the verb takes "whom" in formal usage
5	You must remember that you are junior than Hamid.	You must remember that you are junior to Hamid.	"Junior" takes "to", not "than"
6	Aslam, as well as, his four friends were planning to visit the museum.	Aslam, as well as his four friends, was planning to visit the museum.	"As well as" does not make the subject plural; verb agrees with "Aslam"
7	Where you went in the vacation?	Where did you go in the vacation?	Correct interrogative word order with auxiliary "did"
8	This is the youngest and most intelligent of my two sons.	This is the younger and more intelligent of my two sons.	Comparative (not superlative) form used when comparing only two
9	He is one of those who always succeed.	He is one of those who always succeed. (Already correct)	"who" agrees with plural "those", hence plural verb "succeed"
10	I congratulate you for your success.	I congratulate you on your success.	"Congratulate" takes the preposition "on"

Q7. Idiomatic Phrases with "Take"

10 Marks

Instruction: Make sentences with the given idiomatic phrases so that their meaning becomes clear.

- Take aback** — meaning: to shock or surprise. *Sentence:* I was quite taken aback by his rude reply.
- Take after** — meaning: to resemble a parent or relative. *Sentence:* She takes after her mother in both looks and temperament.
- Take for** — meaning: to mistake someone/something as. *Sentence:* I took him for his twin brother at first glance.
- Take ill** — meaning: to suddenly fall sick. *Sentence:* She was taken ill during the meeting and had to leave early.
- Take off** — meaning: (of an aircraft) to leave the ground; or to become suddenly successful. *Sentence:* The plane took off on time despite the heavy fog.
- Take over** — meaning: to assume control of something. *Sentence:* The new CEO will take over the company's operations next month.
- Take to** — meaning: to develop a liking for. *Sentence:* The children quickly took to their new teacher.
- Take to task** — meaning: to reprimand or criticise. *Sentence:* The manager took the clerk to task for his careless mistake.
- Take to one's heels** — meaning: to run away hastily. *Sentence:* Seeing the police approach, the thief took to his heels.
- Take with a grain (or pinch) of salt** — meaning: to view with scepticism. *Sentence:* You should take his extravagant promises with a pinch of salt.