



FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Competitive Examination for Recruitment to Posts in BPS-17
Under the Federal Government — 2003

ENGLISH (Précis & Composition)

Time Allowed: 3 Hours | Maximum Marks: 100

FULLY SOLVED & EXPLAINED EDITION

Instruction: Make a précis of the given passage and give a suitable heading.

If, then, a practical end must be assigned to a University course, I say it is that of training good members of society. Its aim is the art of social life, and its end is fitness for the world. It neither confines its views to particular professions, nor creates heroes or inspires genius. Works of genius fall under no art; heroic minds come under no rule; a University is not the birthplace of poets or immortal authors, of founders of schools, leaders of colonies, or conquerors of nations. It does not promise a generation of Aristotles or Newtons, Napoleons or Washingtons, Raphaels or Shakespeares — though it has, before now, contained such miracles of nature within its precincts. Nor is it content merely with forming the critic or the experimentalist, the economist or the engineer, though it includes these too within its scope. But a University training is the great ordinary means to a great ordinary end: it aims at raising the intellectual tone of society, cultivating the public mind, purifying the national taste, and supplying true principles to popular aspirations. It gives a man a clear, conscious view of his own opinions and judgments, truth in developing them, eloquence in expressing them, and force in urging them. It teaches him to see things as they are, to go right to the point, to disentangle a skein of thought, to detect what is sophistical, and to discard what is irrelevant. It prepares him to fill any post with credit, and to master any subject with facility. (John H. Newman)

⇒ **Suggested Heading: "The True Aim of University Education"**

MODEL PRÉCIS (≈ 74 words)

Newman argues that a university's practical purpose is not to manufacture genius or heroes — these arise independently of any system — but to train competent members of society through the art of social life. By raising society's intellectual tone and refining public taste, university education equips a man with clear judgment, eloquence, and reasoned expression. It trains him to think clearly, separate truth from sophistry, discard irrelevance, and thereby perform capably in any role.

Examiner's Tip: Newman's passage builds through negation ("it is not... it does not...") before stating its positive claim. In précis, compress the negatives briefly and give full weight to the concluding positive definition — that is the passage's real point.

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

My father was back at work within days of his return home. He had a spell in the shipyard, where the last of the great Belfast liners, the Canberra, was under construction, and then moved to an electronics firm in the east of the city. (These were the days when computers were the size of small houses and were built by sheet-metal workers.) Soon after he started this job, one of his colleagues was sacked for taking time off to get married. The workforce went on strike to get the colleague reinstated. The dispute, dubbed the "Honeymoon Strike," made the Belfast papers. My mother told me that she and my father, with four young sons, were hit so hard by that strike that for years afterwards they were, financially speaking, running to stand still. My father then was thirty-seven — the age I am today. My father and I are father and son, which is to say we are close without knowing very much about one another. We talk about events rather than emotions, and keep certain of our hopes, fears, and doubts from each other. Whatever his private feelings, he found himself, along with a million and a half of his fellow citizens, living through what was, in all but name, a civil war. As a grown man, I often try to imagine what it must be like to arrive, as my father once did, at the scene of a bomb blast near your brother's workplace, and to see what you suppose — from the colour of the hair — to be your brother lying in the road, only to discover that you are cradling the remains of a woman. (Glenn Patterson)

(a) From your reading of the passage, what do you infer about the nature of the "Troubles" the writer mentions?

The "Troubles" appear to have been a prolonged and violent sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland — effectively an undeclared civil war that exposed ordinary civilians to random bomb blasts and death, forcing families like the writer's to eventually leave Belfast for safety.

(b) What, according to the writer, were the working conditions in the electronics firm where his father worked?

The industry was still in its early, unsophisticated stage — computers at the time were enormous, the size of small houses, and were assembled largely by hand by sheet-metal workers rather than through advanced manufacturing methods.

(c) Why was his father's colleague sacked?

He was dismissed for taking time off work in order to get married.

(d) How does the writer show that, as father and son, they do not know much about each other?

He explains that they discuss events rather than feelings, withhold their private hopes, fears, and doubts from one another, and that he has never even asked his father whether he regrets or reflects on choices he might have made differently in life.

(e) Explain the underlined words/phrases in the passage:

Made the Belfast papers — became newsworthy; was reported in local newspapers

Had a spell — worked for a period of time

Dubbed — nicknamed; informally called

Was sacked — was dismissed/fired from the job

Hit hard — severely and adversely affected, especially financially

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

Topic Selected: "Goodwill is earned by many acts; it can be lost by one."

Trust and goodwill, whether between individuals, institutions, or nations, are built slowly and asymmetrically: they accumulate over years of consistent, honest conduct, yet can collapse in a single moment of betrayal or failure. This asymmetry is not a flaw in human judgment but a rational response to risk — a long history of good behaviour suggests reliability, while even one serious lapse raises the possibility that the earlier reliability was never genuine.

Consider a business that spends decades building a reputation for quality and honest dealing. Every satisfied customer, every promise kept, adds a small increment of goodwill. Yet a single scandal — a safety failure concealed, a promise broken publicly — can undo that reputation almost overnight, because the incident forces observers to reinterpret the entire past record with suspicion. The same logic governs personal relationships: years of loyalty can be undone by one act of dishonesty, because betrayal doesn't merely cause a single injury — it retroactively casts doubt on everything that came before.

This principle carries an important practical lesson. Because goodwill is fragile relative to how expensive it is to build, it deserves to be guarded far more carefully than it typically is. Institutions and individuals alike often behave as though a strong reputation is a permanent asset, immune to a single mistake — but the truth is closer to the opposite: the stronger the reputation, the further it can fall, and the more damage a single betrayal can do precisely because it defies expectation.

Ultimately, the lesson is not to live in fear of every misstep, but to recognise that consistency is the true currency of trust. Goodwill, once earned through many small, faithful acts, must be protected with the same seriousness with which it was built — because it can never be rebuilt as quickly as it can be lost.

Q4. Change of Voice

10 Marks

Instruction: Change the voice of the verb in the following sentences.

#	Original	Changed Voice
1	The assassins shot the leader in broad daylight.	The leader was shot by the assassins in broad daylight.
2	The President inaugurated the Motorway recently.	The Motorway was inaugurated by the President recently.
3	Will you negotiate the matter with the opposition?	Will the matter be negotiated with the opposition by you?
4	Why should I be suspected by you?	Why should you suspect me?
5	The establishment is pleased with your performance.	Your performance pleases the establishment.
6	The Parliament members gave a hard time to the Prime Minister.	The Prime Minister was given a hard time by the Parliament members.
7	The prisoners in Cuba are being treated cruelly by the so-called Human Rights custodians.	The so-called Human Rights custodians are treating the prisoners in Cuba cruelly.
8	The present Government is serving the people honestly.	The people are being served honestly by the present Government.
9	Who did this?	By whom was this done?
10	The Palestinians are avenging the death of their leaders.	The death of their leaders is being avenged by the Palestinians.

Q5. Direct to Reported Speech

10 Marks

Instruction: Change the following to reported speech.

#	Direct Speech	Reported Speech
1	"This is your house, isn't it?" asked Jemmie.	Jemmie asked whether that was his house.
2	"Where do you want to be dropped?" said the taxi driver.	The taxi driver asked where he wanted to be dropped.
3	"Call the first witness," said the judge.	The judge ordered that the first witness be called.
4	"Don't blame him for the accident," the boy's mother said.	The boy's mother told them not to blame him for the accident.
5	He said, "I banged on Cliff's door but he did not answer."	He said that he had banged on Cliff's door but he had not answered.
6	"Where is the boat? Hurry up, we are being chased," she cried.	She cried out, asking where the boat was and urging them to hurry as they were being chased.
7	"I have lost my way. Can you direct me to the Post Office, please?" said the old lady.	The old lady said that she had lost her way and politely asked if he could direct her to the Post Office.
8	He said to me, "What a pity you missed such an important meeting."	He exclaimed to me that it was a pity that I had missed such an important meeting.
9	"How wonderful! Why didn't you suggest this plan earlier?"	She exclaimed that it was wonderful, and asked why he had not suggested that plan earlier.
10	He said, "Let's wait till the road gets cleared."	He suggested that they wait till the road got cleared.

Q6. Sentence Correction

10 Marks

Instruction: Correct the following sentences.

#	Original	Correction	Rule Applied
1	The hostel provides boarding and lodging to students.	The hostel provides boarding and lodging for students.	"Provide" takes "for" before the beneficiary
2	My cousin-brother will come to meet me.	My cousin will come to meet me.	"Cousin-brother" is not standard English usage
3	He lives backside of my house.	He lives at the back of my house.	Correct prepositional phrase
4	You have read it. Isn't it?	You have read it, haven't you?	Question tag must match the auxiliary "have"
5	We discussed about this question.	We discussed this question.	"Discuss" is transitive; no preposition needed
6	I am studying in an University for an year.	I am studying in a university for a year.	Article depends on sound, not spelling: "university" and "year" begin with consonant sounds
7	Neither he nor I are at fault.	Neither he nor I am at fault.	Verb agrees with the subject nearer to it ("I")
8	The committee have issued a notice.	The committee has issued a notice.	Collective noun acting as a single unit takes a singular verb
9	One must boast of his great qualities.	One must boast of one's great qualities.	Pronoun must agree consistently with "one"
10	It is one of the best speeches that has ever been made in the General Assembly.	It is one of the best speeches that have ever been made in the General Assembly.	"That" refers to plural "speeches", so the verb must be plural

Instruction: Use the following idioms in your own sentences to bring out their meaning.

1. **Kick the bucket** — meaning: to die. *Sentence:* The old family dog finally kicked the bucket last winter.
2. **Bolt from the blue** — meaning: a sudden, unexpected event. *Sentence:* His resignation came as a complete bolt from the blue.
3. **Put your foot down** — meaning: to act firmly or assert authority. *Sentence:* Father finally put his foot down and forbade the late-night trip.
4. **Worth your salt** — meaning: competent and deserving of respect. *Sentence:* Any manager worth his salt would have handled the crisis better.
5. **Down the drain** — meaning: wasted; completely lost. *Sentence:* All our months of hard work went down the drain when the project was cancelled.
6. **All ears** — meaning: eager and ready to listen. *Sentence:* Go on, tell me what happened — I'm all ears.
7. **Swan song** — meaning: a final act or performance before retirement or death. *Sentence:* The farewell concert turned out to be the singer's swan song.
8. **Cheek by jowl** — meaning: very close together. *Sentence:* The market stalls stood cheek by jowl along the narrow street.
9. **In a nutshell** — meaning: briefly, in summary. *Sentence:* In a nutshell, the plan failed because of poor funding.
10. **Give me five** — meaning: an informal gesture of celebration or greeting (a high-five). *Sentence:* "We won!" he shouted. "Give me five!"