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FULLY SOLVED & ANNOTATED

FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

# Competitive Examination for Recruitment to Posts in BPS-17 Under the Federal Government — 2004

Solved Past Paper with Model Answers

## ENGLISH — Précis & Composition

Time Allowed: 3 Hours | Maximum Marks: 100

Includes: Précis Writing · Comprehension · Essay Note ·  
Vocabulary (Synonyms & Antonyms) · Grammar · Idioms · Word Pairs

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A complete reference edition prepared with detailed model answers, explanations, and highlighted key points for focused exam preparation.

## Question 1 — Précis Writing

20 Marks

*Make a précis of the given passage and suggest a suitable heading.*

### Original Passage (Summary of Theme)

The passage argues that lasting relationships cannot be built on superficial "personality" techniques alone; they must rest on genuine character, self-mastery, and independence — since private victory always precedes public victory.

**Suggested Heading: "Character Ethic: The True Foundation of Human Relationships"**

(Alternative: "Private Victory Precedes Public Victory")

### MODEL PRÉCIS (~ 110 WORDS)

A fundamental shift is required in how we approach relationships: superficial personality techniques cannot replace genuine character. Since private victory always precedes public victory, self-mastery and self-discipline form the basis of real self-respect, true independence, and, ultimately, healthy interdependence. Attempts at human relations built without inner independence may succeed briefly but collapse under pressure, because relationships depend not on what we say or do, but on what we fundamentally are. When words and actions spring from mere technique rather than inner character, others sense the insincerity. Genuine techniques flow naturally from an independent, principle-centred character; hence, relationship-building must begin within oneself.

### Examiner's Tip

A good précis should be roughly one-third of the original passage's length, written in your own words, in reported (indirect) speech where applicable, without quotations, examples, or repetition — and it must always carry a suitable, self-contained title.

## Question 2 — Comprehension

20 Marks

Read the passage on human time-consciousness (adapted from Aldous Huxley, referencing Shelley) and answer the following questions in your own words.

### 1. What is the difference between our life and the life of an animal? (3)

#### ANSWER

Human beings are conscious of their life across time — they remember the past and anticipate the future — whereas animals, according to the passage, live entirely in the present moment, free of hopes or regrets.

### 2. What is the result of human anxiety? (3)

#### ANSWER

Human anxiety produces melancholy and foreboding. It makes people fearful of imagined future disasters (such as war), which in turn spoils their peace of mind and their ability to enjoy the present.

### 3. How does the writer compare man to the butterflies and squirrels? (3)

#### ANSWER

The writer suggests that, unlike squirrels and butterflies, which simply live in and enjoy the present without worrying about tomorrow, human beings are burdened by time-consciousness and cannot let the future "look after itself."

### 4. How does anxiety about the future disturb our daily life? (3)

#### ANSWER

It prevents people from fully enjoying simple, ordinary pleasures — a morning breakfast, a walk to work, an afternoon of sunshine, or a peaceful evening at home — because regret over the past and fear of the future intrude upon these contented moments.

### 5. How can we make our life tolerable? (3)

#### ANSWER

Life becomes tolerable only when we occasionally break free from our obsession with time and manage to enjoy brief, fleeting moments untouched by yearning for the past or apprehension about the future.

### 6. Explain the underlined words/phrases in the passage. (5)

#### VOCABULARY EXPLAINED

**Pine for** — to long or yearn for something with sadness.

**Disinterestedly** — without personal or selfish motive; impartially.

**Prostrate ourselves** — to lie flat on the ground, here in protest or despair.

**Foreboding** — a strong feeling that something bad is about to happen.

**Contrive** — to bring something about deliberately, often through effort or scheming.

### Question 3 — Comprehensive Note

20 Marks

Write a comprehensive note (250–300 words) on ONE of the following. Topic selected: "**One may smile and smile, and be a villain.**"

#### Model Note (≈ 280 words)

This famous line from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* captures one of the darkest truths of human nature: that outward charm and a pleasant countenance can conceal the deepest treachery. Hamlet utters these words upon realising that his own uncle, Claudius, wearing a smile of warmth and cordiality, is in fact the murderer of his father. The statement thus becomes a timeless warning against judging character by appearance alone.

A smile is conventionally associated with goodwill, honesty, and friendliness. Society is conditioned to trust those who appear agreeable, and this very trust becomes the villain's most effective disguise. History and everyday life alike are full of such figures — political tyrants who charm the masses while plotting oppression, friends who flatter while nursing envy, and businessmen who smile across the table while planning deceit. Their villainy is more dangerous precisely because it hides behind sociability rather than open hostility; an enemy who scowls can be guarded against, but one who smiles disarms suspicion entirely.

This idea also carries a psychological dimension: it reflects the gap between the persona a person projects and the true self concealed within. Genuine virtue is not measured by external manners or charisma but by the consistency between one's words, actions, and inner character — a theme echoed throughout classical and modern literature alike.

The practical lesson is one of discernment: outward behaviour, however pleasing, should never be mistaken for proof of integrity. Trust must be earned through consistency of conduct over time, not granted merely on the strength of a smile. In an age of polished public images and curated appearances, Hamlet's insight remains strikingly relevant — reminding us that true character reveals itself not in smiles, but in deeds tested by time and temptation.

### Question 4(a) — Synonyms

5 Marks

Choose the word that is nearly similar in meaning to the word in capital letters.

1. ARCHIPELAGO → Cluster of islands

2. PIAZZA → Public Square

3. BAKLAVA → Dessert

4. IONIC → Greek architecture

5. CICERONE → Guide

### Question 4(b) — Antonyms

5 Marks

Pick the word most nearly opposite in meaning to the capitalized word.

1. DESICCATE → Saturate

2. APOTHEOSIS → Demotion from glory

3. SPUNK → Timidity

4. CAVIL → Commend

5. RAUCOUS → Mellifluous

#### Quick Meanings

**Desiccate:** to dry out completely | **Apotheosis:** elevation to divine/glorious status | **Spunk:** courage, spirit | **Cavil:** to raise trivial objections | **Raucous:** harsh-sounding, disorderly.

### Question 5(a) — Change of Voice

5 Marks

*Change the voice of any FIVE of the following sentences. (All eight solved below for complete practice.)*

**1. International Humanitarian Law forbids actions leading to unnecessary death and suffering.**

→ **Actions leading to unnecessary death and suffering are forbidden by International Humanitarian Law.**

**2. Why should I antagonize you?**

→ **Why should you be antagonized by me?**

**3. Let Manchoo be told about the jokes of Mulla Nasiruddin.**

→ **Let someone tell Manchoo about the jokes of Mulla Nasiruddin.**

**4. Why have the roads not been constructed by the government in this part of the country?**

→ **Why has the government not constructed the roads in this part of the country?**

**5. Do not kill your ability by roaming in the streets.**

→ **Let not your ability be killed by roaming in the streets.**

**6. Your cousin is drawing a large sum of money from his account.**

→ **A large sum of money is being drawn from his account by your cousin.**

**7. The arrangements of holding the Art Exhibition could not be completed on time.**

→ **They could not complete the arrangements of holding the Art Exhibition on time.**

**8. Build your house when cement is cheap.**

→ **Let your house be built when cement is cheap.**

### Question 5(b) — Sentence Correction

5 Marks

Correct any FIVE of the following sentences. (All eight solved below for complete practice.)

1. **Passing through ten different cities, Karachi is the most active.**  
→ Karachi is the most active of the ten different cities it passes through.

2. **He was laid up for six weeks with two broken ribs.**  
→ Correct as given (no error).

3. **Someone showed the visitors in the room.**  
→ Someone showed the visitors into the room.

4. **Until you remain idle you will make no progress.**  
→ So long as you remain idle, you will make no progress.

5. **It is very wrong to be devoted to lying and cheating.**  
→ It is very wrong to be addicted to lying and cheating.

6. **He told me that he is waiting for me since a long time.**  
→ He told me that he had been waiting for me for a long time.

7. **The house stood up in the dull street because of its red door.**  
→ The house stood out in the dull street because of its red door.

8. **He brought the articles to the market which he wanted to sell.**  
→ He brought to the market the articles which he wanted to sell.

## Question 6(a) — Idioms

5 Marks

Use any FIVE of the following idioms in your own sentences to bring out their meaning. (All eight solved below.)

**1. To bring grist to the mill** — meaning: to bring profit or advantage

His freelance projects bring welcome grist to the mill during the slow season.

**2. Set one's cap at** — meaning: to try to attract someone romantically

Everyone noticed that she had set her cap at the new manager.

**3. To draw the long bow** — meaning: to exaggerate

He always draws the long bow when describing his adventures abroad.

**4. To send a person to Coventry** — meaning: to ostracize or boycott someone

After his betrayal, his colleagues decided to send him to Coventry.

**5. Beer and skittles** — meaning: easy, carefree enjoyment

Running a small business is not all beer and skittles.

**6. The acid test** — meaning: a decisive trial of true worth

The final interview will be the acid test of his suitability for the post.

**7. A skeleton in the cupboard** — meaning: a hidden, shameful secret

Every old family seems to have a skeleton in the cupboard.

**8. To discover a mare's nest** — meaning: to make an illusory or false discovery

The journalist's sensational scoop turned out to be a mare's nest.

## Question 6(b) — Word Pairs

10 Marks

Use FIVE of the following pairs of words in your own sentences so as to bring out their meanings. (All eight solved below.)

### 1. Auger / Augur

**Auger** (a tool for boring holes): The carpenter used an auger to drill a hole in the plank.

**Augur** (to predict, an omen): The dark clouds augur an approaching storm.

### 2. Fain / Feign

**Fain** (gladly, willingly): He would fain accept the generous offer.

**Feign** (to pretend): She decided to feign illness to avoid the meeting.

### 3. Emigrate / Immigrate

**Emigrate** (to leave one's own country): Many skilled workers emigrate from developing nations.

**Immigrate** (to enter another country to settle): Thousands of people immigrate to Canada every year.

### 4. Envy / Jealousy

**Envy** (desire for another's possessions or qualities): He felt envy at his friend's new car.

**Jealousy** (fear of losing something to a rival): Her jealousy grew whenever he spoke to other colleagues.

### 5. Invade / Attack

**Invade** (to enter forcefully as an enemy): Enemy forces invaded the neighbouring territory.

**Attack** (to assault): The soldiers attacked the fort at dawn.

### 6. Trifling / Trivial

**Trifling** (petty, of little worth): It was a trifling matter, not worth an argument.

**Trivial** (of little importance): The dispute was trivial and soon forgotten.

### 7. Simulation / Dissimulation

**Simulation** (imitation of real conditions): Pilots are trained using flight simulation.

**Dissimulation** (concealing one's true feelings): His calm expression hid a deep dissimulation of fear.

### 8. Venal / Venial

**Venal** (open to bribery, corrupt): The venal official readily accepted bribes.

**Venial** (a pardonable, minor fault): Being a few minutes late was a venial offence, easily forgiven.