
FULLY SOLVED & ANNOTATED

FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Competitive Examination for Recruitment to Posts in BPS-17 Under the Federal Government — 2005

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) · Narration & Grammar · Idioms · Word Pairs

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

Question 1 — Précis Writing

20 + 5 Marks

Make a précis of the given passage (on psychoses and neuroses, after Carl Jung) and suggest a suitable heading.

Original Passage (Summary of Theme)

The passage explains that psychoses and neuroses result from man's failure to keep a balance between the opposing polarities of life, causing the ego to become one-sided — either through a full collapse into the unconscious, or through the dominance of a single mental function. For Jung, this imbalance, not deviation from cultural norms, is the true mark of emotional disorder.

Suggested Heading: "Psychoses and Neuroses: A Failure to Balance Life's Polarities"

(Alternative: "Jung on the Roots of Emotional Disorder")

MODEL PRÉCIS (≈ 115 WORDS)

Psychoses and neuroses arise from man's failure to maintain balance between the opposing polarities of life, causing the ego to become one-sided. In psychosis, the ego collapses entirely into the unconscious, regressing to primitive behaviour; in milder neurotic disorders, one mental function — thinking, feeling, intuition, or sensation — dominates at the expense of the others, producing a lopsided personality. Whatever their severity, both disorders represent an alienation of the self from genuine self-actualization, not merely a deviation from cultural norms. Since acceptable behaviour varies across cultures, emotional disorder cannot be judged by conformity to culture. For Jung, mental health depends not on cultural adjustment, but on maintaining a proper balance among the personal polarities of the psyche.

Examiner's Tip

Note that this year's Q1 carries 5 extra marks specifically for the heading (20 for précis + 5 for heading). Always give a short, self-contained title that captures the passage's central idea — avoid vague or overly broad headings.

Question 2 — Comprehension

20 Marks

Read the autobiographical excerpt about the writer's father and his fascination with instructive instruments, and answer the questions in your own words.

a. Why did the writer's father spend time studying the skies? (3)

ANSWER

He had a country boy's natural, accurate knowledge of weather and skies, and enjoyed observing them each morning. Studying the sky let him predict the weather reliably and, more importantly, protect his children from dangers such as lightning during severe storms.

b. Why does the writer think there was no need of a barometer? (3)

ANSWER

Because her father already possessed an innate, country-bred skill for reading the weather through observation and instinct alone; his personal judgement made him such a reliable "weather prophet" that a mechanical instrument like the barometer added little practical value.

c. What does the bright horizon mean for the writer's father? (3)

ANSWER

He taught his children that the brightest point along the horizon indicates the location of the nearest river, since reflected light suggests open water. Thus, if lost, finding the brightest horizon meant finding a river, and following it would lead to human habitation.

d. How did her father influence the writer in her later years? (3)

ANSWER

His constant attentiveness to weather and its underlying moods instilled in the writer a lasting sensitivity to atmosphere. This later became central to her fiction, as she instinctively wove turbulent weather together with her characters' inner emotional disturbances to create dramatic effect.

e. Explain the underlined words/phrases in the passage. (8)

VOCABULARY EXPLAINED

Fascinate — to attract and hold interest powerfully.

Ingenious — clever, inventive, resourceful.

Eventualities — possible future events or outcomes.

Scoffing — mocking or expressing contempt for something.

Meteorological sensibility — a heightened personal awareness of, and responsiveness to, weather and atmosphere.

Hovering disturbance — a looming, unsettled tension felt in the air, whether literal (weather) or emotional.

Weather prophet — someone skilled at informally predicting the weather through observation.

Commotion — noisy disturbance, agitation, or confusion.

Question 3 — Comprehensive Note

20 Marks

Write a comprehensive note (250–300 words) on ONE of the following. Topic selected: "**Each man is the architect of his own destiny.**"

Model Note (≈ 280 words)

This proverb asserts that human beings are, in large measure, the makers of their own fortunes. Just as an architect conceives, designs, and builds a structure according to his own vision, so too does every individual shape the course of his life through the choices, efforts, and attitudes he adopts. Destiny, in this view, is not an external force imposed upon man, but the cumulative result of his own decisions.

History offers abundant illustrations of this truth. Men and women who rose from poverty or obscurity to greatness — inventors, reformers, entrepreneurs, and leaders — did not wait passively for favourable circumstances. They worked with determination, learned from failure, and persisted despite adversity, effectively constructing their own success brick by brick. Conversely, individuals who blame fate or external circumstances for their failures often overlook their own passivity or poor choices as the true architects of their misfortune.

This does not mean that external factors — birth, environment, chance — play no role in shaping a person's path. Circumstances certainly set the initial conditions, much as terrain and materials constrain an architect's design. Yet within these constraints, the individual retains considerable freedom: to work hard or remain idle, to persevere or give up, to cultivate virtue or vice. It is this freedom of will and action that ultimately determines the shape of one's destiny.

The practical value of this idea lies in the responsibility and hope it instils. If destiny were entirely predetermined, effort would be futile; but if it is self-constructed, then every individual holds the power to improve his circumstances through discipline, foresight, and hard work. This philosophy encourages self-reliance, ambition, and resilience — qualities essential not only for personal success but for the progress of society as a whole.

Question 4(A) — Synonyms

5 Marks

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

1. ANATHEMA →a) Curse
2. TORPOR →b) Lethargy
3. TOUCHSTONE →a) Criterion
4. SEQUESTER →d) Isolate
5. DENOUEMENT →c) Termination

Question 4(B) — Antonyms

5 Marks

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

1. DELETERIOUS →a) Nourishing
2. VALEDICTORY →c) Hopeful
3. SEDENTARY →c) Active
4. TURBID →b) Clear
5. PHLEGMATIC →b) Active

Quick Meanings

Anathema: a strongly denounced thing/curse | **Torpor:** sluggishness, dullness | **Touchstone:** a standard by which quality is judged | **Sequester:** to isolate or seclude | **Denouement:** the final resolution of a plot or situation | **Deleterious:** harmful | **Valedictory:** relating to a farewell | **Sedentary:** inactive, seated much of the time | **Turbid:** cloudy, muddy | **Phlegmatic:** calm, unemotional, sluggish in temperament.

Question 5(A) — Narration

5 Marks

Change the narration from direct to indirect, or indirect to direct speech (any five required — all eight solved below).

1. Our sociology professor said, "I expect you to be in class every day. Unexcused absences may affect your grades."
→ Our sociology professor said that he expected us to be in class every day and that unexcused absences might affect our grades.
2. My father often told me, "Every obstacle is a steppingstone to success. You should view problems in your life as opportunities to prove yourself."
→ My father often told me that every obstacle was a steppingstone to success and that I should view problems in my life as opportunities to prove myself.
3. When Tom asked Jack why he couldn't go to the game, Jack said he didn't have enough money for a ticket.
→ Tom asked Jack, "Why can't you go to the game?" Jack said, "I don't have enough money for a ticket."
4. When I asked the ticket seller if the concert was going to be rescheduled, she told me that she didn't know and said that she just worked there.
→ I asked the ticket seller, "Is the concert going to be rescheduled?" She said, "I don't know. I just work here."
5. Ali said, "I must go to Lahore next week to visit my ailing mother."
→ Ali said that he had to go to Lahore the following week to visit his ailing mother.
6. The policeman told the pedestrian, "You mustn't cross the road against the red light."
→ The policeman told the pedestrian that he must not cross the road against the red light.
7. Ahmed asked if what I said was really true.
→ Ahmed said, "Is what you said really true?"
8. Sarah wanted to know where they would be tomorrow around three o'clock.
→ Sarah said, "Where will you be tomorrow around three o'clock?"

Question 5(B) — Sentence Correction

5 Marks

Make corrections in any five of the following where necessary (all eight solved below).

1. What does a patient tell a doctor it is confidential?

→ **What a patient tells a doctor is confidential.**

2. It is a fact that I almost drowned makes me very careful about water safety whenever I go swimming.

→ **The fact that I almost drowned makes me very careful about water safety whenever I go swimming.**

3. Did they not consider this as quiet convincing?

→ **Did they not consider this as quite convincing?**

4. St Peter's at Rome is the largest of all other churches.

→ **St Peter's at Rome is the largest of all churches.**

5. The amount they receive in wages is greater than twenty years ago.

→ **The amount they receive in wages is greater than it was twenty years ago.**

6. They succeeded with hardly making any effort.

→ **They succeeded with hardly any effort.**

7. Whatever have you done!

→ **What ever have you done?**

8. The officers were given places according to their respective ranks.

→ **The officers were given positions according to their respective ranks.**

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. Keep one's nose to the grindstone — meaning: to work hard and steadily

She kept her nose to the grindstone throughout her final year to secure top grades.

2. Throw someone for a loop — meaning: to shock or confuse someone

The sudden resignation of the CEO threw the entire staff for a loop.

3. Letter perfect — meaning: completely accurate, memorized exactly

The actor delivered his lines letter perfect on opening night.

4. Off the wall — meaning: unconventional, bizarre

His off the wall suggestions surprised the committee, yet proved effective.

5. Out to lunch — meaning: out of touch with reality, inattentive

He seemed out to lunch during the entire meeting, missing every point raised.

6. Salt something away — meaning: to save money secretly for future use

She salted away a portion of her salary every month for emergencies.

7. Take someone to the cleaners — meaning: to defeat or cheat someone thoroughly

The unscrupulous broker took his clients to the cleaners with hidden fees.

8. Wear the pants in the family — meaning: to be the dominant decision-maker in a household

Everyone knew that it was she who wore the pants in the family.

Question 6(B) — Word Pairs

5 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. Council / Counsel

Council (an assembly, advisory body): The city council met to discuss the new budget.

Counsel (advice; also, a lawyer): The lawyer gave her client sound counsel before the trial.

2. Distinct / Distinctive

Distinct (clearly separate or different): The two proposals are entirely distinct from one another.

Distinctive (characteristic, uniquely identifying): Her distinctive handwriting made the letter easy to identify.

3. Apposite / Opposite

Apposite (apt, highly relevant): He made an apposite remark that captured the debate's essence.

Opposite (contrary, facing): North is the opposite direction to south.

4. Deprecate / Depreciate

Deprecate (to express disapproval of): The teacher deprecated the students' careless attitude toward homework.

Depreciate (to decrease in value, or belittle): The car's value will depreciate significantly within a year.

5. Punctual / Punctilious

Punctual (on time): He is always punctual for his morning meetings.

Punctilious (very precise, attentive to formal rules): She is punctilious about following office protocol to the letter.

6. Judicial / Judicious

Judicial (relating to courts of law): The judicial system ensures fair trials for all citizens.

Judicious (showing good judgement, wise): He made a judicious decision after weighing all the options.

7. Salutory / Salubrious

Salutory (beneficial, producing a good effect): The harsh criticism had a salutory effect on his work ethic.

Salubrious (healthy, favourable to health): They moved to a more salubrious climate for their health.

8. Canvas / Canvass

Canvas (heavy cloth; a painting surface): The artist stretched a new canvas before beginning her painting.

Canvass (to solicit votes or opinions): Volunteers canvassed the neighbourhood before the election.