

General Studies

Solved & Practice Papers

For understanding the pattern of
UPSC Civil Services exam and thorough practice

A comprehensive strategy for getting
success in Civil Services Exams

01

9 Years (2014 - 2006) Solved Papers for
observing the changes year by year

02

10 Practice Test Papers for thorough practice
in both General Studies Papers I & II

03

2000 plus Objective Type Questions with
Answer Key and Explanatory Notes

04



The
Gen X
Series

GENERAL STUDIES

Solved & Practice Papers

**FOR UNDERSTANDING THE PATTERN OF UPSC CIVIL
SERVICES EXAM AND THOROUGH PRACTICE**

Edited & Compiled by
EDITORIAL BOARD



V&S PUBLISHERS

Published by:



V&S PUBLISHERS

F-2/16, Ansari road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002

☎ 23240026, 23240027 • Fax: 011-23240028

Email: info@vspublishers.com • Website: www.vspublishers.com

Regional Office : Hyderabad

5-1-707/1, Brij Bhawan (Beside Central Bank of India Lane)

Bank Street, Koti, Hyderabad - 500 095

☎ 040-24737290

E-mail: vspublishershyd@gmail.com

Branch Office : Mumbai

Jaywant Industrial Estate, 1st Floor-108, Tardeo Road

Opposite Sobo Central Mall, Mumbai - 400 034

☎ 022-23510736

E-mail: vspublishersmum@gmail.com

Follow us on:



© Copyright: V&S PUBLISHERS

:DB? *()1*Sl&#'' &)1''1'

DISCLAIMER

While every attempt has been made to provide accurate and timely information in this book, neither the author nor the publisher assumes any responsibility for errors, unintended omissions or commissions detected therein. The author and publisher makes no representation or warranty with respect to the comprehensiveness or completeness of the contents provided.

All matters included have been simplified under professional guidance for general information only, without any warranty for applicability on an individual. Any mention of an organization or a website in the book, by way of citation or as a source of additional information, doesn't imply the endorsement of the content either by the author or the publisher. It is possible that websites cited may have changed or removed between the time of editing and publishing the book.

Results from using the expert opinion in this book will be totally dependent on individual circumstances and factors beyond the control of the author and the publisher.

It makes sense to elicit advice from well informed sources before implementing the ideas given in the book. The reader assumes full responsibility for the consequences arising out from reading this book.

For proper guidance, it is advisable to read the book under the watchful eyes of parents/guardian. The buyer of this book assumes all responsibility for the use of given materials and information.

The copyright of the entire content of this book rests with the author/publisher. Any infringement/transmission of the cover design, text or illustrations, in any form, by any means, by any entity will invite legal action and be responsible for consequences thereon.

Publisher's Note

V&S publishers, after the grand success of a number of Academic and General books, is pleased to bring out a series of books, *The Gen X series* which means **generating Xcellence in generation X**. Under the series we are going to publish an updated book, **General Studies - Solved & Practice Papers** which gives an Overview and Compressive Strategy of the UPSC Civil Service Preliminary exams. The book contains previous *Eight Years (2013 – 2006) Solved Papers and Ten Practice Test Papers* for comprehending the latest pattern and for thorough practice to get success in the prestigious exam.

The book has been divided into three sections namely: *Civil Services Examination: An Overview and Strategy, Previous 9 Years Solved Papers (2014 – 2006), Five Practice Sets (10 Mock Test Papers for both GS - Paper I & II)*. It will help the aspirants to grasp concepts in depth and learn through 2000 plus MCQs as per latest scheme of the exams with Explanatory Notes. The book is also useful for other competitive exams such as State Civil Services, SSC, Banking, and Railway etc. conducted at national and state level.

To get success in such prestigious exam as civil services conducted by Union Public Service Commission, the aspirants have to go through detailed study of the topics covered in the new syllabus and make a dedicated effort during preparation. This exam not only tests the in-depth knowledge of the candidates but also identifies their efficiency in terms of application of the gained knowledge in problem solving. The main objective of this exam is to identify decision making potentials and problem solving approaches of a candidate. Therefore, this exam requires careful attention towards comprehension of concepts and theories, thorough practice, and application of the concepts in everyday life situations. *Hard working, Regularity, and Self-Confidence* are essential to achieve a unique target and to go through such a tough exam. Therefore, a candidate should make a sincere effort to qualify in the exam.

We wish you success in the examination and a very bright future.

Good Luck!!!

Contents

Publisher's Note	3
------------------------	---

1. CIVIL SERVICES: AN INTRODUCTION 7-30

- Civil Services Examination: An Overview
- The Path to Success
- Believe in Yourself
- Civil Services Examination: An Comprehensive Strategy

2. SOLVED PAPERS (2014 - 2006) 31-199

1. Paper I - 2014	33
Paper II - 2014	47
2. Paper I - 2013	61
Paper II - 2013	73
3. Paper I - 2012	85
Paper II - 2012	96
4. Paper I - 2011	108
Paper II - 2011	119
5. Paper - 2010	130
6. Paper - 2009	144
7. Paper - 2008	157
8. Paper - 2007	170
9. Paper - 2006	185

3. PAPER – I : 5 Model Papers 200-262

Paper - I : Model Paper-1	201
Paper - I : Model Paper-2	215
Paper - I : Model Paper-3	226
Paper - I : Model Paper-4	238
Paper - I : Model Paper-5	250

4. PAPER – II : 5 Model Papers 263-328

Paper - II : Model Paper-1	265
Paper - II : Model Paper-2	278
Paper - II : Model Paper-3	291
Paper - II : Model Paper-4	304
Paper - II : Model Paper-5	316

CIVIL SERVICES EXAMINATION

An Overview

1. The Civil Services **Examination** comprises three successive stages:
 - i. **Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination (Objective Type)** for the selection of candidates for the Main Examination;
 - ii. **Civil Services (Main) Examination—Written** for selecting candidates for the Personality Test;
 - iii. **Civil Services (Main) Examination—Personality Test (Interview)** for the final selection of candidates for the various services and posts.
2. **The Preliminary Examination** consists of two compulsory papers of 200 marks each. Both the question papers are of the objective type (multiple Choice Questions).
 - a. The question papers are set both in Hindi and in English. However, questions relating to English language comprehension skills of class X level are tested through passages from the English language only without providing Hindi translation, thereof in the question paper.
 - b. Each paper is of two hours duration. Blind candidates, however, are allowed an extra time of 20 minutes at each paper.
 - c. The examination comprises two compulsory papers of 200 marks each. Details of the syllabi have been indicated below:
 3. Logical reasoning and analytical ability;
 4. Decision-making and problem-solving;
 5. General mental ability;
 6. Basic numeracy (numbers and their relations, orders of magnitude, etc.) (class X level), data **interpretation** (charts, graphs, tables, data sufficiency etc.—class X level);
 7. English language comprehension skills (class X level).

Note 1: Questions relating to English language comprehension skills of class X level (last item in the syllabus of Paper—II) are tested through passages from English language only without providing Hindi translation thereof in the question paper.

Note 2: The questions are of multiple choices, objective type.

This examination is meant to serve as a screening test only; the marks obtained in the Preliminary Examination by the candidates who are declared qualified for admission to the Main Examination are to be counted for determining their final order of merit.

Note 3: The number of candidates to be admitted to the Main Examination is much more than the total approximate number of vacancies to be filled in the year in the various services and posts.

Only **those** candidates who are declared by the Commission to have qualified in the Preliminary Examination in a year will be eligible for admission to the Main Examination of that year provided they are otherwise eligible for admission to the Main Examination.

The Main Examination consists of a written examination and an interview test.

Note 4: Candidates, who obtain such minimum qualifying marks in the written part of the Main Examination as may be fixed by the Commission at their discretion, shall be summoned by them for **an interview or a Personality Test**.

Note 5: Marks thus obtained by the candidates in the Main Examination (written part as well as interview) would determine their final ranking. Candidates are allotted to the various services keeping in view their ranks in the examination and the preferences expressed by them for the various services and posts.

PAPER I—(200 MARKS)

DURATION : TWO HOURS

1. Current events of national and international importance.
2. History of India and the Indian National Movement.
3. Indian and World Geography—Physical, Social, Economic Geography of India and the World.
4. Indian Polity and Governance—Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights, Issues, etc.
5. Economic and Social Development—Sustainable Development, Poverty, Inclusion, Demographics, Social Sector initiatives, etc.
6. General issues on environmental ecology, biodiversity and climate change—that does not require subject specialisation.
7. General Science.

PAPER II—(200 MARKS)

DURATION: TWO HOURS

1. Comprehension
2. Interpersonal skills including communication skills;

ELIGIBILITY

The eligibility norms for the examination are as follows:

Nationality

- For the Indian Administrative Service and the Indian Police Service, a candidate must be a citizen of India.
- For other services, a candidate must be one of the following:
 - A citizen of India
 - a person of Indian origin who has migrated from Pakistan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi, Zaire, Ethiopia or Vietnam with the intention of permanently settling in India
- For other services, a candidate must be one of the following:
 - A citizen of India
 - A citizen of Nepal or a subject of Bhutan
 - a person of Indian origin who has migrated from Pakistan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi, Zaire, Ethiopia or Vietnam with the intention of permanently settling in India

Education

All candidates must have a minimum of any of the following educational qualifications:

- A degree from a Central, State or Deemed university
- A degree received through Correspondence Education or Distance
- A degree from an Open University
- A qualification recognized by the Government of India as being equivalent to either of the above. The following candidates are also eligible, but have to submit proof of their eligibility from a competent authority at their institute/university at the time of the main examination, failing which they will not be allowed to attend the exam.
- Candidates who have appeared in an examination, the passing of which would render them educationally qualified enough to satisfy any of the above points. Candidates who have passed the final exam of the MBBS degree but have not yet completed their internship
- A degree from a private university
- A degree from any foreign university recognized by Association of Indian Universities (AIU)

Age

Prescribed age limits are minimum 21 years and less than 32 years as on 1 August of the year of Examination. A candidate who turns 21 on 1 August is eligible whereas a candidate who turns 32 is not. Upper age limit relaxation is provided to candidates as follows:

- A maximum of three years for OBC candidates [Non Creamy Layer only]
- A maximum of three years in case of Defence Services personnel disabled in operations during hostilities with any foreign country or in a disturbed area and released as a consequence thereof
- A maximum of five years for candidates belonging to a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe
- A maximum of five years if a candidate had ordinarily been domiciled in the State of Jammu & Kashmir during the period from 1 January 1980 to 31 December 1989
- A maximum of five years in case of ex-servicemen including Commissioned Officers and ECOs/SSCOs who have rendered at least five years Military Service as on 1 August and have been released on either of the following basis: (Note: This information has not been updated, so please visit website of FPSC)
 - on completion of assignment (including those whose assignment is due to be completed within one year from 1 August) otherwise than by way of dismissal or discharge on account of misconduct or inefficiency
 - on account of physical disability attributable to Military Service
 - on invalidment
- A maximum of five years in case of ECOs/SSCOs who have completed an initial period of assignment of five years Military Service as on 1 August and whose assignment has been extended beyond five years and in whose case the Ministry of Defence issues a certificate that they can apply for civil employment and that they will be released on three months notice on selection from the date of receipt of offer of appointment.
- A maximum of ten years in case of blind, deaf-mute and orthopaedically handicapped persons
The age relaxation will not be admissible to Ex-Servicemen and Commissioned Officers including ECOs/SSCOs who are released on own request.

Numbers of attempts

The number of attempts a candidate can give the exam is limited as follows:

- General Category Candidates and OBC Category Candidates under the Creamy layer = 6 attempts
- OBC Category Candidates = 9 attempts
- SC/ST Candidates = Unlimited

However these candidates are requested to bear in mind:

1. An attempt at a Preliminary Examination shall be considered to be an attempt at the Examination.
2. If a candidate actually appears in any one paper in the Pre-

liminary Examination, he/she shall be deemed to have made an attempt at the Examination.

3. Notwithstanding the disqualification/cancellation of candidature, the fact of appearance of the candidate at the examination will count as an attempt.
4. Candidates just applied but not appeared at the exam is not an attempt.

Preliminary

The pattern of the Preliminary examination up to 2010 was based on the recommendations of the Kothari Commission (1979). It included two examinations, one on general studies worth 150 marks, and the second on one of 23 optional subjects worth 300 marks. Until 2011, when it was revamped, the preliminary pattern was sustained with only minor changes once every ten to fifteen years. It is possible that in the coming years there can be some more changes in the format.

From 2011 onwards, the Preliminary examination, now popularly known as the Civil Services Aptitude Test (CSAT) (officially it is still called General Studies Paper-1 and Paper-2), intends to focus on analytical abilities and understanding rather than the ability to memorize. The new pattern includes two papers of two hours duration and 200 marks each. Both papers have multiple choice objective type questions only. They are as under:

- **Paper I** tests the candidate's knowledge on current events, history of India and Indian national movement, Indian and World Geography, Indian Polity and governance, Economic and social development, environmental ecology, biodiversity, climate change and general science.

- **Paper II** tests the candidates' skills in comprehension, interpersonal skills, communication, logical reasoning, analytical ability, decision making, problem solving, basic numeracy, data interpretation, English language comprehension skills and mental ability.

Note: These papers are qualifying in nature and are not used for ranking. Hence their marks are not added to the total. Candidates who fail these papers as per the Commission's standards are not eligible for the mains.

Mains Examination

The Civil Services Mains Examination consists of a written examination and an interview.

The written examination consists of nine papers, two qualifying and seven ranking in nature. The range of questions may vary from just one mark to sixty marks, twenty words to 600 words answers. Candidates who pass qualifying papers are ranked according to marks and a selected number of candidates are called for interview or a personality test at the Commission's discretion

According to the new marks allocations in Civil Service Examination 2013 there are some changes made in the examination according to the suggestion of the Prof. Arun. S. Nigavekar Committee. However, after some controversy, the qualifying papers for Indian languages and English were restored to the examination.

In August 2014, the Centre announced that English marks in CSAT-II will not be included for gradation or merit and 2011 candidates may get a second chance to appear for the test next year.

Civil Services New Mains Format

Paper	Subject	Marks
Paper I	Essay	250
Paper II, III, IV, V	General Studies with new topics (250 marks for each paper)	1000
Papers VI, VII	Any one subject (having 2 papers) to be selected from the prescribed optional subjects (250 marks for each paper)	500
Personality Test	(Interview)	275
Total Marks		2025

Interview

Officially called the "Personality Test", the objective of the interview is to assess the personal suitability of the candidate for a career in public service by a board of competent and unbiased observers. The test is intended to evaluate the mental calibre of a candidate. In broad terms, this is really an assessment of not

only a candidate's intellectual qualities, but also social traits and interest in current affairs. Some of the qualities to be judged are mental alertness, critical powers of assimilation, clear and logical exposition, balance of judgement, variety and depth of interest, ability for social cohesion and leadership, and intellectual and moral integrity.

The technique of the interview is not that of a strict cross-examination, but of a natural, though directed and purposive conversation that is intended to reveal the mental qualities of the candidate.

The interview is not intended to be a test either of the specialised or general knowledge of the candidate, which has been already tested through written papers. Candidates are ex-

pected to have taken an intelligent interest not only in their special subjects of academic study, but also in the events which are happening around them both within and outside their own state or country as well as in modern currents of thought and in new discoveries which should rouse the curiosity of all well-educated youth.

THE PATH TO SUCCESS

We cannot command success but success often comes to those who dare and act; It seldom goes to the timid who are ever afraid of the consequences. – Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru

The paths of success begin with the clarity of thoughts about the purpose, and then the correct strategy and planning to fulfill the purpose. Once the goal is set and one has the belief of succeeding, then willingness to do hard work, perseverance proper time management and flair for continuous learning follows. Because of the increasing competition and shrinking openings in civil services year after year, some aspirants read 'U' of UPSC as 'unpredictable' and hence, the real challenge for the aspirants is to minimise unproductivity related to this examination. This can be primarily done at two levels: (i) at the level of the thought process and (ii) at the implementation level.

PREPARING ONESELF FOR SUCCESS AT THE LEVEL OF THOUGHT PROCESS

Continuously and regularly conveying a specific and unambiguous message to one's sub-conscious mind at once is going to be a civil servant. This drives one fully towards the goal, both at the conscious as well as sub-conscious mind. The sub-conscious part is more powerful than the conscious part. By regularly conveying the message to succeed, each and every cell gets enthusiastic to take an aspirant towards success. For example, writing message such as, 'I am certainly going to be an IAS this year', etc., many times everyday listening to inspirational talks and songs can be some of the many ways that take one towards success. Exploring self-awareness through personal SWOT analysis, one should try to enhance one's strength, minimise ones weakness, explore opportunities related to particular career option, and analyse threat perception of the outer environment that may change the demands related to the career. One strategy of success in Civil Services should specifically be carved, based on Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis.

Take existence of the problems and difficulties as quite a normal phenomena of one's life. Having lots of problems in life is the sign of more liveliness—one should be grateful to God that he considers one strong enough to face these problems. Real challenges and fun should be to overcome all these problems for which an aspirant should seek an effective solution. One should approach problems with a conviction that there must exist a solution to every problem.

One should raise oneself to the heights of proactiveness; one must take control of the circumstances rather than creating the situations where circumstances control an individual. One needs to have a flair for continuous learning which should shift oneself from 'this is not possible' mode to 'yes this is certainly

possible' or let us explore and let us learn'.

Being contagiously optimistic is the prerequisite: Hope and optimism and undercurrents that motivate people towards initiative and hard work. Failures should be treated as stepping stones of success. They should be taken as rare opportunities that can provide us useful insights into how and where should one improve one's performance. One should internalise greater transformational power of positive thinking.

PREPARING ONESELF FOR SUCCESS AT THE LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION

Effective Time Management

Time is the most precious resource. One may divide the tasks into two categories:

- a. Important
- b. Urgent

For example, in context of civil service, improving one's writing skills is an illustration of an important task. One must try to concentrate on important tasks and achieving a stage where tasks do not become urgent at all. A regular study of five to six hours for period of seven to eight months should prove to be sufficient for preparation of examination.

Focussed Approach

One needs to be focussed to the goal one sets. Full dedication towards preparation is required and all efforts should be channelised towards achieving the set objective.

Writing Practice and Mock Interviews

These are the two important ways that help one enhance one's performance. Practising writing tests as well as interviews in simulated conditions prepare one psychologically before the actual test. This reduces the examination anxiety and enhances stress tolerance of the individual.

Clarity of Expression

Clarity of thought becomes a significant factor in scoring high in the CSAT exam, This is instrumental in making your answers systematic and to the point.

Group Study

Having a group of friends who are like minded and have a focussed approach can become very helpful. It creates a win-win situation for all. Group study helps in almost all the aspects of preparation.

Positive Attitude : Success is not a matter of luck or mere intellect but of effort. In the battle of life, the man who wins is one who tries to win and believes he can. *Nothing in the world can replace hard work, deep faith and unfaltering persistence. Positive approach is the basic to anything.* Enthusiasm adds a sparkle of self-confidence in ourselves. Life is not a bed of roses.

It is a thorny road and we ourselves have to pave a way through it by putting in our best effort. It is necessary for us to judge the positive and negative factors in the way to our goal and proceed towards it patiently. One should always remember :

Dare to think,

Dare to try,

Dare to fail,

Dare to succeed.

Success – A Continuous Process : Always remember, ‘Today’s mighty tree is just yesterday’s little nut’. History is replete with innumerable examples where ardent men and women have, by their iron-hand determination and never-say-die attitude, earned the invaluable smile of fortune. Success does not imply a single achievement. Similarly, *habit is a repetitive process*. Therefore, success and habits run parallel to each other. Success is the outcome of habits, especially good ones. Good habits come from good exposure – company of cooperative friends, reading of insightful books, keeping abreast with power-packed articles and study material needful for your path to destination. All these give you a great learning experience.

OTHER MAJOR POINTS THAT ONE SHOULD HAVE IN MIND

CSAT is very important. It is touch and go. If you get through, it is fine, otherwise one attempt gets wasted. Hence, do take the test only when you are confident about your preparation.

The market is flooded with a plethora of materials. Do not go on lofty advertisements. You need to put in good research in finding the correct study material. Though practice for essay writing may seem to be a painful exercise, it can make a difference in scoring marks.

In fact, learning is a process that brings about a permanent change in an individual by practice and experience and not by genetic changes. Hence, what is more important is not to blindly study for more and more number of hours, rather study in a planned way. There is a big gap between hard work and casual approach, but there is also a huge gap between *hard work* and *intelligent hard work*.

In fact, the requirement is—intelligent hard work consistently for a long period.

Finally, it can be concluded that success in Civil Services entirely depends on *meticulous planning* and *devoting oneself to the actual implementation of the plan*. One’s flair for continuous innovation and learning helps a lot. Balanced weightage in preparation matters a lot. All subjects and areas should be given equal importance.

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

In this section of the book, I take freedom to address you beyond the original actual contents or text to be needed for the most prestigious examination of the country. My dear friends, you are one of those lucky ones who have got this wonderful opportunity to transform not only your own life but also the lives of the people of the society and the country. *You are going to be looked upon by the generations together as a role model.* You will be a milestone of inspiration for millions in and out of the country. And believe me, it is going to be the reality because you know when human brain perceives, believes anything, it explores the ways and to achieve it also. So as you are perusing your dreams, I take this opportunity to speak from my guts, these words, I know, will keep you going on the mission that you desire and deserve too.

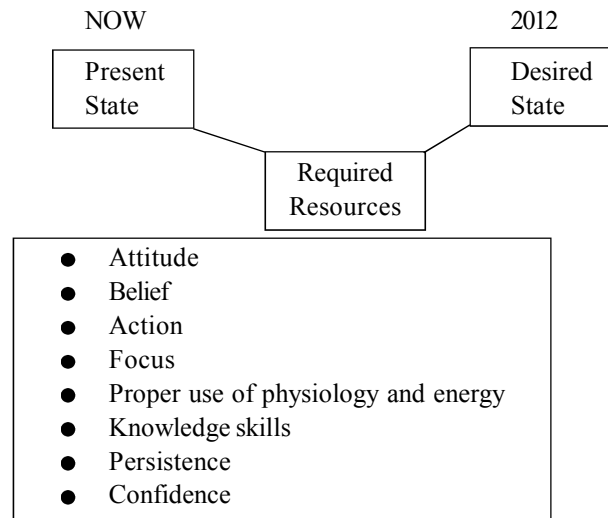
Friends, rightly has someone said that in life, we either grow or decay. And it depends how you make the best use of the resources you have been gifted with. You have a wonderful human software placed between your two ears—your *brain* if runs properly. You can bring about all the changes in your actions and results and you can effortlessly achieve your destiny.

This wonderful human software will help you grow in your life and in living your passion if you take control of it. It certainly needs your command! Yes, your command and that too very clearly! There are number of ways to give this specific command to your brain. Once this command is taken or programmed by your brain, it starts working 24 x 7 to make your dreams a reality. This is what happened in the lives of achievers. The achievers don't have more resources than the ones who lose. The only difference is that the achievers utilise each resource that they have. Here in this topic, I would like to guide you so that you can create those maps in you brain that will guide you to realise your dreams.

Before you start preparing to achieve anything in life, you need to know two things primarily, one the present state: the position where you stand today. Once you are clear about your present state, you need to know your desired state: means what do you want to achieve or where do you need to go. That goal must be clear to your brain, and that is becoming an IAS officer through current year's examination itself. Once you know your desired state, the first thing your brain would like is to live those moments. So, right now you can have those wonderful feelings in your mind and body. Once those feelings are experienced, your brain has got your command. Now you have two things: one the present state, where you need to begin from, and the other, the desired state, where you want to reach. Now once your brain knows the ultimate goals, ask your brain a few questions:

1. What are the pains if I don't achieve my deserved state?
2. What are the pleasures if I would achieve this goal?
3. What are the pains if I achieve this goal?
4. What are the pleasures if I achieve these goals?

These questions will help you understand your mind's deep associations and dissociations that you unconsciously are carrying about this goal. You may wonder while reading questions: number two and three. My dear friends, these two Questions are as important to be answered as the other two Questions, that is, number one and four are.



There may be certain patterns in your mind that may play against you in this mission. Before you start your journey, you need to know your routes well, otherwise, you may take detour and mar the results.

So, take an inventory today. Take a fairly big notebook and answer the first question:

1. What are the pains if I don't achieve my goals!

You can start writing now. What are you going to lose as a person in your life in next 5 to 20 years? How will your identity suffer. How will you not be comfortable socially, financially, emotionally and mentally? Write it as long as you want. Let your brain explore more and more pains. Once your brain knows a clear picture of pains or pleasures of anything, it helps you decide properly. Make a long list of the losses that you will see, hear or feel if you don't achieve your desired state. When you complete this answer, come to the second question.

2. What are the pleasures if I don't achieve this goal? This question may spring a surprise on some of you.

You may bounce back at me saying: "Come on man!", how can one have pleasure in not achieving the goal one longs for? You may sound logical, yet your brain might have found (unconsciously) some benefits in not achieving it. These benefits are known as *secondary gains*. For example, many a time, you may have come across people suffering from long diseases who keep enjoying sympathy while sharing their miseries.

Just start writing the pleasure. I am not saying that they are always there. My intention is if there is any pleasure in not reaching your goal—you must be aware of it. So that your po-

tential and efforts are not discounted. In case, you find any, reframe these pains properly. This type of inventory helps you get insulated against any self-sabotage. Once you come across any pleasure, you need to reframe it well. For example, there could be any response like this—If I don't achieve my goal, I will get sympathy from people around me, or now this inner thought will discount your potential as it will help you get this benefit as it is your own part. So this part needs your proper address. You need to resolve it. In fact, this part is asking you to get connected with people around you. And it doesn't know the better way. Once you adopt the better way, this part will get resolved and you will enjoy the best focus of your life! This way you need to answer Question three and four. These questions are the practical ways to create the deep focus of yours. With these questions, you create pictures of pains and pleasures before your brain. And let me tell you that human brain is wired in such a way that it always avoids pain and looks for pleasures in life. So, to make your brain work for you 24 x 7 continuously, make a long list/contents of the answers of Questions one and four and keep reading them for the next fortnight. This is your second specific command to your super computer (brain) placed in the middle of your two shoulders.

Once you create your goal (desired state) and know the benefits at your emotional level, your brain starts looking for the next resource. The next resource that you need to realise your dream is your BELIEF!

Remember, people who made any mark in any field of their lives were not special. The only special thing they had was their belief. Once you create a belief, it becomes a reality for your brain and your brain starts exploring all possibilities of making it true without any doubt. The winners are the winners when they believe of their win. Remember, belief is the foundation of any excellence in any field of life. If the path to success consists of knowing your desired results, beliefs are the true tool that will help you complete the journey.

Once you know your goal, have your focus clear; now you need to find the beliefs that support your results and destiny. In case, your old beliefs are not supporting you, just throw them away otherwise, they will just be a waste of time and energy. To create new set of beliefs, let me help you: think for a moment—As if you are going to succeed in your mission with 100% conviction—what type of beliefs do you need to drop and what to adopt and create a fresh list now!

Once you create or find new resourceful beliefs, you are preparing new compass, new patterns, or maps that will guide you to your desired state. They will give you the surety to learn that you will be there as a winner to transform your life and the lives of those you care about. Once you achieve what you wanted, you always feel more deeply related with yourself and others.

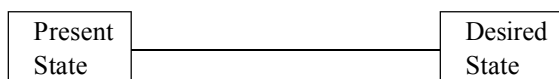
Beliefs are the true tools that you need to carry with you. There might have been a number of occasions when you felt down and thought of giving up. You might have thought that this amazing exam or opportunity is 'not for me' or your friends might have told you that it is not possible— drop these beliefs now! You need to drop this, as having such powerless belief will not give anything worthwhile. My sincere advice to you: 'Give

yourself ten out often. *Believe in yourself—yes! you can do it no matter what your past had been. You can do it, no matter what people are telling.* You can design your own reality by designing your own beliefs. Remember, people are disempowered only when they fail to top the power of their empowering beliefs. Haven't you read about a person who at the age of 21 failed in business, was defeated in a legislative race at the age of 22, failed in business again at 24, lost his wife when he was 26, suffered nervous breakdown at 27, lost the election at 34, 36 and 45, failed to become the vice-president at 47, lost the election of Senates at 49 and wow! became the President of the most powerful nation the United States at 52. Yes I am talking about **Abraham Lincoln**. My dear friends there is no failure, *there are always results in life. Remember tough times don't last— but tough people do!* You can determine your potential by judging the level of beliefs you are having. To help you adopt a wonderful set of beliefs, I give here some of the beliefs that achievers enjoy. Once you adopt them, you will find that you feel very light, while walking on the path to your success. I will advise you to follow these beliefs as they will help you reach to your desired state.

1. *Every event has a meaning, a purpose: Whatever happens, happens for a purpose in life, we need to take the best use of it in terms of learning and growing.* Once you qualify any event with any adjective like bad or horrible, you create an emotional burden out of it. *An event is an event.* Many of you might be in resentment that this year the pattern of the exam has changed and you may have been preparing for a couple of years. It is just an event, you have to take it positively. It is not for you only. It is for everyone. And once you take it positively, you create a wonderful result. Your story will be worth telling to one and all. Remember, no one likes any story sans adventures. This is a great opportunity for you to show your commitment, belief and inner strength. It is a chance for you to prove that you have a strong quality to be flexible and create results instead of being in resentment. Once you are angry or in resentment or discomfort, you are creating unresourceful state, and this state will further take you to feel guilty, lonely and depressed. And this cycle will lead you nowhere, killing your potential. Throw this feeling away and enjoy the belief that you are a unique creature on the face of the earth. Even now, if you wish to calculate the energy you carry in this universe, you can do it. Through the well-known formula of Einstein, $e = mc^2$ —in case your weight is 60 kg, then you are carrying energy equal to 1 80 thousand crore horse power. Remember, it is enough to shake the whole planet if utilised properly. With such a power, you can do at least one thing—REACH YOUR GOALS NOW! Don't give up! Stand up, pull up your socks, fasten your belts— let bygones be bygones and go ahead. Better future awaits you. Keep enjoying positive beliefs and from the next moment, negative things will stop happening. What a wonderful rule of the universe! The competition is here not to distract you; but to help you prove that you are worthy, able, committed, focussed and a victor—it is a chance for you to prove your superiority over the mediocre lot. *Once you believe it, your journey gets interesting.*

2. Every event calls for your responsibility; Events come to remind you of your responsibility. This is the second belief that will help you create excellence in each part of your life. As you are going to be one of the most responsible persons, once you are an IAS Officer, you have a wonderful opportunity to display your responsibility right from this moment. As a leader, you need to be responsible for everything that is happening in your life. Your being well emotionally or mentally is your responsibility even when the odds are not in your favour. Meeting deadlines and bringing about the changes in your behaviour is your responsibility. Remember, more than 98% things that are happening in your life calls for your being responsible. The rest of 2% may be out of your control, like an earthquake, recession, flood or any such thing, yet your taking these things to your stride and keeping yourself positive for better decisions and actions is your responsibility. You can't stop an earthquake, yet how you take it depends upon your responsibility. Take control of your life, otherwise someone else will do it for you and it will be quite painful. Remember, the world belongs to people who take responsibility instead of blaming others for the situations. It is your turn now. Don't merely tell the world that you know how to take responsibility. Show it! And you can start showing your responsibility by the following:

- i. Knowing your present state.
- ii. Deciding your desired state.
- iii. Finding the resources to reach from your present state to the desired state.



What resources do I need for this journey:

- i. My clear focus
- ii. My positive mental frame
- iii. Emotional strength to fight any frustration
- iv. Energetic physiology
- v. My habits/behaviour
- vi. Knowledge/Skills (books, coaching, etc.)

Once you know what resources you need, you show your responsibility. Now you can ask for the help from your colleagues, guides and seniors about the resources.

3. *No one has achieved anything without commitment*: Those who have achieved excellence in their lives, share one thing common—the *highest level of commitment*. Yes, my dear friends—*there is no shortcut to success*. The path that leads you to success is always under construction. Even now you can look around and see people who have become role models because of their excellence—they have been the people of commitment. You will find they are not necessarily the best or the brightest or the strongest. Innumerable people and examples are around you—be it 1983 World Cup team led by Kapil Dev, or Dheerubhai Ambani. Superstars like Shahrukh Khan and Amitabh Bachhan made mod-

est beginnings in their lives. The only thing that they showed was the highest degree of commitment level of your commitment is the a major defining component of your success. If you take responsibility to understand it and believe it also, it will be another clear, specific and powerful command to your brain, which your brain can't neglect.

Friends, there is a long way to go. How long will you go will be decided by the fact how powerful your goals are. Once you make your goals attractive and compelling for your brain, your brain gets pleasure in achieving them. In case, you are not having ample amount of interest in your studies, it confirms the stuck state of your brain. This stuck state will be broken only by the *compelling goals*. Make them now. Believe that these compelling goals are going to be the reality for you. Believe that there is a winner within you waiting for your command to get up and win.

There is a flyer within you to fly high and touch the zenith—Permit him now! You may be facing one or the other challenges even now. This challenge has not come to you to stop you from growing. Rather this challenge is here so that it can strengthen you for better future rewards. The only person who is not facing a challenge now is lying in the grave. When you are facing any challenge, it confirms that you are alive—Be thankful. And stand up thankfully to face and fight it out gracefully. This is the way of being extraordinary and stand away from the losers' lot.

Accept yourself. Stand before a life size mirror and give heartiest compliments to the person before you in the mirror. This person has the true reason to be successful, and to break through the shackles to produce excellence. The moment you start loving yourself, miracles start happening in your life. *Believe you are unique and uniquely gifted. Believe you are at the right place at the right time to do the right things*. Challenge your challenges with positive beliefs. Unless you believe in yourself, you experience hesitation to decide even a small thing. This is the reason most of the people don't take even the first step towards their success, because they see failures before their success. It happens when they lose belief in themselves.

There is no failure in life—there is only feedback. Feedback to know where the changes in approach and actions are needed and one should start working towards improvement based on this feedback. *There is no competition with others. The competition lies within*. Once you start competing against yourself, you gather the power to outclass anyone in life. Make your own parameters to break. Raise your standard, see yourself differently. *Visualise your goals*. See yourself achieving them—create feeling 'as if you have achieved your goals. "Stop for a moment—let you enjoy it. Experience the change in breath, blood reach in your veins and some sensation in your body. The more you experience this feeling, the stronger these patterns become in your mind.

I conclude to affirm it with the STRONGEST belief that you can achieve it, Now it is your turn to ACCEPT and BELIEVE it—And I know you will.

CIVIL SERVICES EXAMINATION

(A Comprehensive Strategy)

The Civil Services Examination, the highly competitive and prestigious examination in India, is conducted by the UPSC to pick up the best brains out of lakhs of applicants vying for the top government services, such as IAS, IPS, IFS, IRS, etc. The selection process is lengthy that spans over more than a year. Owing to it, the competition appears mind-boggling and many find it too difficult to qualify. Undoubtedly, the competition is tough but if one focusses on the requirements of the exam and makes oneself committed to the preparation incorporating the strategy, one can surely succeed in the first attempt itself.

The million dollar question is: Why do many aspirants fail, while only a few succeed? The simple answer is that majority of the aspirants don't adopt the correct strategy and don't focus on what qualities, skills and priorities the exam demands at each stage of preparation. Unless an aspirant interacts with teachers and good seniors, it is very difficult to know the right way to go ahead and to avoid mistakes which may prove crucial in the final exam. It is true that many aspirants don't get the opportunity of being guided by good faculties throughout their preparation.

To bridge this gap between the aspirant community and the successful candidates, this is an attempt to give the aspirants a complete overview about the Civil Services Exam and how to go about the preparation at each stage. This book includes few guidelines and suggestions based on the experiences of various successful candidates.

A unique strategy may not be there to clear the Civil Services Examination as different aspirants may plan different paths of preparation that suit them. This note is an effort to give some suggestions to the budding aspirants so that they can avoid common mistakes during the course of their preparation and clear the exam successfully within minimum possible attempts.

Before reading this note, please have complete understanding about the whole examination process. The various stages of the exam and other details including optional-related information, etc., can be obtained from the latest notification published in *Employment News*, generally in Nov—Dec, every year. Aspirants must go through the latest notification thoroughly to gather the complete information about the CSAT examination. Aspirants can gather more information by surfing the website of Union Public Service Commission.

Nature of the Civil Services Exam

Many embark on preparations sans understanding the nature of the Civil Service Exam thereby missing the most important phase of the exam. You may stay focussed only when you know exactly what skills/aspects the examination demands from the aspirant. As the competition demands you to be better than the other aspirants, you have to strive for enhancing your knowledge to get a final place in the merit list.

Every year 2—3 lakh candidates apply for the exam. Out of that, 1—1.5 lakh aspirants actually write the prelims exam. Out of these, 5,000-9,000 (depending upon the number of vacancies

that year) are selected for the mains. Of them, 2,000 qualify for interview. Out of these, 300-700 aspirants get selected finally to various services.

Before anyone starts playing a game, he/she would like to know the rules of the game and that is sportsmanship. Similarly, in any competitive exam, understanding the nature of the exam is very critical. The preparation will be more focussed when you know exactly what the examination expects or rather demands from you. Remember, that every stage of your preparation is related to this examination. You only need to be better than the other aspirants to get a final place in the merit list.

The nature of the exam can be analysed through the following ways:

- A thorough perusal of notification and carefully understanding the requirements from it.
- A thorough analysis of the previous years' papers and the recent trends.
- Discussing elaborately with teachers, successful candidates and seniors.

There is a lot of hype around the IAS exam. A fresh aspirant comes with the idea that he has to do some hi-funda preparation and be a scholar in the subjects. He starts his preparation on a high note and works hard in the beginning. For each topic, he tries to do the maximum and the best preparation. In the process, he reads all the textbooks and the coaching material available in the market. Some spend 2-3 days on each topic and prepare 10-15 pages of notes. Gradually, he feels exhausted and the momentum slows down. Due to such approach, he is not able to complete the syllabus. So, he goes for a selective study as the exam approaches. Now the pressure becomes unbearable, as on one hand he has not completed the syllabus and on the other hand, he prepares so much notes for each topic that revision now become impossible within a short time. People have a funny misconception that the Civil Services Examination can be cleared only in multiple attempts. So, the aspirant starts succumbing to pressure and convinces himself that it is only his first attempt, and therefore, he can prepare better next time.

Though the exam demands hard work from the aspirant, it should be 'intelligent hard work' and not just hard work. This exam is all about the basics with a lot of clarity. The exam can be written well when the preparation is simple and the aspirant is very strong in basics with clarity. Since the competition is relative, your answers in the examination should not only be correct but also different with a touch of creativity. The creativity and innovation is not something that you will get in the textbooks. They have to be developed on your own. It requires a lot of thinking and observation. By innovation in answers what is meant is—

- Catchy introduction
- Diagrams

- Graphs
- Flow charts
- Maps
- Case studies
- Contemporary touch and applicability
- Catchy conclusion

The Basics with Clarity will come when there is lot of questioning while studying. The topic has to be studied in a logical manner. Suppose you are studying a topic on inflation. Think logically as a layman, then you should get the following sequence of questions:

- What is inflation?
- Why should there be inflation, that is, causes.
- So what if there is inflation, that is, impact.
- If impact is negative, then naturally we should be doing something to reduce it, so what steps should be taken and what would happen then.
- If still inflation is there, then what is, wrong with the steps taken.
- How to control inflation, any suggestions by experts and recent developments.

You can add innovations such as a simple graph showing how the inflation has been in recent times and also a flow diagram about the impact of inflation.

In this manner, the basics in the topic can be covered with clarity. And the topic should be remembered in this logical structured way for the exam. It should be understood that once you have done the topic in this comprehensive method through logical questioning, the preparation is over for that topic. You need not go through any journals or hi-funda textbooks for becoming an expert in the topic. This much of basics with clarity are sufficient for the exam. And this is what is humanly possible in view of the huge syllabus.

The following points should be kept in mind while doing preparation:

- The focus should be on gaining basic clarity in each topic, which will come only through a lot of logical questioning.
- More time should be spent on thinking about the topic and making innovations, rather than on reading too many study material.
- The previous papers should be thoroughly analysed to understand the expectations of the examiner.
- The preparation should be focused and all the hard work should be channelised in the right direction.

Choosing the Optional Subjects

Choose optional subjects very carefully as the choice of your optionals can make or spoil your success in the exam. Never imitate others. While selecting optionals, the aspirants must take care of the following:

- Select the subject you find interesting.
- Know your aptitude; take an optional that suits your personal abilities.
- Try to find a guide, may be a senior who cleared with the optional or a coaching institute.

- Analyse the syllabus thoroughly.
- Never imitate others: just select the subjects you are familiar with or you find them interesting.
- Performance of the optional in the last few years.
- After brainstorming, you may zero in on few optionals (say 4—7). Now this is the time to go through some representative books in these subjects to have a ‘feel’ of each optional. Having done all this, finally, you can select two optionals for the main examination.
- Never choose optionals in a hurry, just because some coaching centre had directed you to choose so, or many of your friends took the subject. Remember, you may find the subject boring which many others find interesting. Please don’t commit the mistake of choosing wrong optionals. So, take a wise decision and select subject of your interest with which you are familiar.
- Some of the popular optionals are as follows; Philosophy, Public Administration, Anthropology, Geography, History, Political Science and International Relations, Psychology, Sociology, Hindi Literature, etc.

The reasons for the popularity of these optional subjects are as follows:

Availability of guidance material and coaching which reduces the efforts to a large extent and some topics of these optionals help in GS, essays and interviews.

Some of them are also relevant for an administrative career. The easily available guidance in these subjects helps a lot in understanding the exam quickly. Therefore, the aspirants prepare accordingly and score well, making these subjects ‘scoring’. A lot more candidates have cleared the exam with these optionals because of the availability of good study materials.

If a person is from a professional educational background (engineering, medicine, law, etc.), which optionals should he/she choose? This is a basic question for many aspirants. There is a tendency to opt for the subject in which one has graduated. Let us understand some problems associated with these subjects:

- It is very difficult to get good guidance in terms of coaching, study material or seniors advice, etc. A lot of time is spent in understanding the requirements of the exam and searching for the material. All the energy is spent on this, while you get exhausted when really studying. At the same time, you also have to complete the huge syllabus of another optional and GS.
- Because of the above problem, it may take more time and more attempts.
- You will have to do everything on your own. Initially, it might be fine. But the exam is of long duration. So, it becomes difficult in the long run to sustain the momentum on your own.
- However, this doesn’t mean one should not take one’s graduation (professional) subjects. In fact, many people scored excellent marks with these optionals also. Only question one has to ask oneself is whether he/she is very good at that subject and whether he/she can compete with the best in those subjects (say aspirants from IITs, etc.).

Earlier, the science and engineering optionals used to do very well. Among the top 20, there used to be 15-16 candidates from IIT and engineering background. But after 2010, UPSC has modified the syllabus. It has become vast and even the exam questions have been made tough. This is the reason why very few IITians appear for the exam now. Many engineers are taking arts optionals instead of science. Just observe the background of the toppers and their optionals. There will be no guidance available for engineering/ medical/science subjects. So, a lot of time will have to be spent in understanding the requirements of the exam. Then, searching for the material becomes a trial and error process. All the energy is spent on this, while you get exhausted when really studying. At the same time, you will also have to complete the huge syllabus of another optional and GS. Because of the above problem, it will take more time and more attempts, while your friends with other optionals go far ahead.

Hence, both peer and social pressure begins. The exam is anyhow psychologically demanding; if other pressures add to it, then it becomes unbearable. Finally, your goal of cracking the exam becomes impossible. You will have to do everything on your own. Initially, it might be fine, but the exam is of long duration. It becomes difficult to sustain the momentum on your own.

A person might be the university topper, but we have to understand the difference between an academic exam and a competitive exam. So it is very important to be careful, while choosing optionals, even though you might feel you are really good in a particular subject. Still, if you are confident about your subject, then do take that optional. There are some people who cleared with optionals that others don't take generally. But take into consideration the following points:

- Whether you have a senior who has cleared with this optional and who can guide you well.
- Whether you have close association with professors who have good understanding about this exam.
- Are you clear about the requirements of the exam? Study the previous years' papers thoroughly and assess yourself.
- Be clear about the books to follow. Don't do trial and error process. Do a focussed exam-oriented preparation.
- Do not neglect other optionals and GS. Give equal importance to all.
- Form a group of aspirants with the same optionals. If you prepare in isolation, then there will be no flow of information.

Never choose an optional in a hurry. Be very cautious and consult the right person about the information. Analyse carefully all the pros and cons, and then take a decision purely based on your assessment.

Coaching: As the exam procedure is complex, the coaching has a significant role to play. Unfortunately, it is a costly affair.

But the coaching has the following advantages:

- Coaching helps in understanding the requirements of the exam quickly, so that the preparation is focused.
- As a candidate has to prepare for at least one new optional, coaching reduces the efforts in preparation, as subject experts teach the topics in exam orientation.

- Coaching helps in getting in touch with the co-aspirants which is useful for exchanging exam-related information. Never prepare for this exam in complete isolation.

So, it is advisable to go for some good coaching institute. But, remember that there are not many genuine teachers and institutes available. So, be very careful while joining any institute. Please take into account the following points:

- Do not merely go by the advertisements, nor the claims made in magazines or the interviews supposedly given by the toppers.
- Meet the successful candidates and the seniors who have taken coaching from that institute.
- Do not go by the advice of only one person. It is better to contact as many as possible and get a general opinion.
- Meet the teacher personally, ask for their programme details, previous results, etc., and assess if it is worth joining there.
- Some institutes are known for particular optionals because of good teachers associated with that institute. Find out those details also.
- You can check out the competitive magazines to get the addresses of various coaching institutes.
- If you belong to SC/ST/OBC, there are government institutes. If you can afford, you can go to Delhi, but the cost of preparation will be high. You'll have to spend about Rs. 7,000—10,000 per month for food and accommodation. Coaching institutes charge anywhere between Rs. 15,000 to Rs. 30,000 per subject (fees vary based on the reputation of the institute, etc.). Some institutes offer 'Prelim cum Mains' course as single package: Prelims, 2 papers—general studies and CSAT Mains, 3 subjects—general studies and two optionals.

Don't be disheartened if you are working somewhere or financially not sound. There are many people who cleared the exam without coaching. You can chalk out your plan to crack the exam. But keep in mind the fact for sure that you will have to work harder than others to clear the exam.

General Trend of Marks

The following data about the marks and the ranks will give a general idea about the efforts that are required. The marks and the ranks keep varying every year depending upon the vacancies and the standards of the question papers. Looking at the trend, it is believed by majority that a same proportion of students are taken from each optional. So, in any case, you should be in the top segment in your optionals to get selected for the mains. The qualifying scores vary from optional to optional.

The trend of qualifying scores for the prelims with negative marks

Category of Marks:

General—240

OBC—230

SC—220

ST—200

The scores for the mains are in the range of 50-55%. Usually, a score of above 1,050 is better to ensure a place in the final list.

Trend of cut-off scores for the interview call

Category marks:

General-980
OBC-960
SC-950
ST-920

In the interview, a score around 150—180 is a normal performance. Some get a score of even 220-240. The UPSC has deliberately kept a wide range in interviews (scores vary between 50 and 240), so as to have the final say in who would get into the service. So, it is very important to make personality development a vital part in your preparation. The final rank is going to depend very much on the interview marks.

General trend of final scores for selection

Category of marks

Top 20 ranks—1,300+
Top 50 ranks—1,280+
Top 100 ranks—1,250+
Top 200 ranks—1,225+

Cut off scores (last rank marks) for final selection

Category of marks

General—1,200
OBC—1,175
SC—1,150
ST—1,120

The actual final ranks and the service allocation of successful candidates can be obtained from the personnel ministry (website: www.persmin.nic.in).

Examination Timetable

The exam timetable for the main examination is almost the same every year. This information will be useful in selecting the optionals. But remember clearly that your interest in the subject should be the main criteria.

The exam sequence is generally as follows:

General Studies (GS)
Essay in English
Indian language paper
History
Mathematics, Statistics
Sociology, Anthropology
Geography
Engineering subjects
Political Science, Public Administration
Literatures
Physics
Commerce, Management
Zoology
Economics
Botany
Law
Philosophy
Agriculture, Veterinary Science
Psychology
Chemistry
Geology

General Suggestions

Observe the following points

- Long hours of study and lot of other sacrifices are needed. You should have a very determined mental make up and a never-say-die kind of spirit.
- The fortune favours the brave. So work hard with courage in spite of the failures. The final reward is bound to come. The luck factor does not help if you don't work hard to your full capacity.
- To err is human, but the one who rectifies is a champion. So, do a lot of introspection as you progress in the preparation. This will help you in identifying the mistakes and rectifying them at the right time.
- *Devotion and determination are the keys to the success.* Be ready to work hard. But at the same time, ensure that your efforts are channelised in the right direction.
- Plan your study and try to work it out within schedule. Set weekly targets and at the end of the week, do a self-appraisal.
- There will be lots of temptations to give up the attempt, as you progress in the preparation. This is mainly due to the huge syllabus and the accumulating pressure. But be aware that these are the critical moments. You should face all these pressures with courage. Be determined to clear the exam in the first attempt.

How should a fresh candidate approach the exam?

A new aspirant should keep in mind the following points:

- First try to understand the exam. Gather information from various sources, analyse the previous years' papers, meet seniors and teachers, and think deeply about the exam, and the way you should prepare.
- Choose the optionals very carefully.
- Settle down in some place where you can study without disturbances, it is better to be isolated for a year during the preparation.
- Select the coaching centres carefully after enquiring from various sources. Do not merely go by the advertisements.
- Do not be in a hurry to buy all the materials available in the market. Be selective and choose only the best, based on the advice of the right seniors.
- Establish good relations with the teachers and take complete advantage of their experience.
- Always remember that you are going to have a tough period for the next two years. So be well prepared for all situations. Keep working hard right from the beginning without any distractions.
- Believe strongly that you will clear the exam in the first attempt itself, and do not compromise at any stage. If required, work harder than ever before.
- Take care of your health aspects.
- Do not be in a hurry to complete the syllabus. Go slow when you read new concepts. Do regular revisions.
- Make writing practice a part of your daily routine.
- The current affairs notes should be prepared every day.

- The preparation should be started at least a year ahead of the prelims exam.
- Do not give the attempt unless you are confident of qualifying for the interview. The first attempt should be the best one, so work hard with determination.

Preliminary Examination

Paper 1: General Studies

This is the first stage of the exam and should never be taken lightly. The preparation should be such that you should not have any doubt about clearing the exam. The prelims should only be a passing phase. If you prepare well for the mains exam and be clear about the basics, then prelims should not be a problem. The practice of General Studies questions should be done regularly.

The preliminary exam is a test of recognition. It is sufficient if you can recognise the correct answer from the given choices. So if you are strong in basics this should not be a problem. Do not spend too much time in memorising facts. It is fine if you can recognise it. Prepare some mnemonics, which will help you in recognising the right answer.

One should do as many previous year papers as possible. It will help you in time management and also in identifying the weak areas. Please remember that this practice should be right from the beginning and not in the final stages.

Negative Marking

The UPSC has taken a right step introducing negative marking to filter out candidates who get selected on the basis of smart guesses and luck. So, the serious candidates should cheer up now. Negative marking make the paper more complex. But it is easy for a well-prepared student and gives an extra benefit to genuine candidates. How to tackle negative marking?

- Identify the areas of your strength in the question paper. Solve questions from these areas first. Solving easy question will boost your confidence.
- Don't waste your time for particular questions. Leave time-consuming questions to take up in the end.
- The definition of intelligent guessing changes now with negative marking. You should tick only those answers which you feel are 70% correct.
- Don't play any blind and stupid game of guessing.
- Practice, practice, practice! Mock tests reduce mistakes in the exam and prepare you to face the real environment in which you can tackle and solve the questions within time limit.
- Mock tests provide you a platform where you can check your own weaknesses, mistakes and errors and develop a better understanding for solving different types of questions.

The UPSC is not following a standard pattern of allotment of questions for various topics. It is becoming difficult now to attempt or even to prepare for the complete syllabus. Hence, it is wise to stress on those subjects which are common for the main examination. The areas to be taken care of are *Modern India, Polity, Indian Economy, Geography, Current Events* and *General Science*.

The GS paper is feared by many at the prelims stage as very difficult questions are asked from wide areas. It should be re-

membered that the GS paper is generally set on a higher difficulty level compared to the CSAT. Remember that even the top-pers feel many questions in the GS prelims very difficult to tackle. In the present negative marking scenario, the cut-off's are still lesser.

While preparing for the GS paper, the first efforts should be to analyse the previous years' papers and then begin the preparation. Even while studying, you should keep looking at previous years' questions. This will help in a focussed preparation. In GS, it is equally important to know what not to study. So, preparation should be made in such a way that in every area the basic understanding is very clear. All the basic questions should be answered correctly in the exam. This is sufficient to qualify for the mains. Despite all that, aspirants crack the exams.

The Paper I of the preliminary examination is of 200 marks and is of two hours. This paper covers the following areas:

1. Current events of National and International importance.
2. History of India and the Indian National Movement.
3. Indian and the World Geography—Physical, Social, Economic Geography of India and the world.
4. Indian Polity and Governance—Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues, etc.
5. Economic and Social Development—Sustainable Development, Poverty, Inclusion, Demographics, Social Sector Initiative, etc.
6. General Issues on Environmental Ecology, Biodiversity and Climate Change—that do not require Subject Specialisation.
7. General science.

1. Current Events of National and International Importance— This has become a very important component. The preparation should be continuous from the sources given in the mains strategy. The notes should be focussed on the factual aspects that come in the news. Many questions are asked from this area, so prepare thoroughly. The efforts will be useful for all stages of the exam. It should become a part of your daily routine: one national newspaper, preferably, *The Times of India*, two monthly competitive magazines, one current affairs yearly compilation.

2. History of India and Indian National Movement— The areas to be covered are the history from ancient to modern period. The basic understanding can be obtained from the below the 10th NCERT books. The focus should be more on Modern Indian history which is covered in the mains also. The basic contours in other areas are sufficient. Some cultural aspects should also be covered.

The NCERT Books (Ancient India, Medieval India and Modern India) are good enough for the purpose.

3. Indian and World geography—physical, social, economic geography of India and the World: Geography of India may be emphasised apart from the principles of geography and world geography.

All NCERT books (VI to XII)

Any one good atlas (Orient Longman/Dreamland etc.)

4. Indian Polity and Governance—constitution, political system, panchayati raj, public policy, rights issues, etc.: The

constitution and various related aspects of polity should be studied well. Some important articles of the constitution and other facts should be memorised. It is better to prepare this area well since it will be helpful in the mains as well as the interview.

The Indian polity by Laxmikanth (thorough reading required).

DD Basu's book on Indian Constitution (for reference).

5. Economic and Social Development—sustainable development, poverty, inclusion, demographics, social sector initiatives, etc.: The basic concepts are being asked along with the current affairs-based questions. The basic clarity can be obtained from the standard books.

1. Economy section in daily newspapers or any finance/economy newspaper
2. Economic survey
3. Dutt and Sundaram or Mishra and Puri or IC Dhingra (any one among these three)
4. Evolution of Indian Economy—NCERT

General Issues on Environmental Ecology, Biodiversity and

Climate Change: Study of newspapers and current affairs magazines should broadly cover these issues.

6. General Science: Sometimes, very difficult questions are asked that even science graduates cannot answer. But the preparation should be in such a way that all the basic questions can be done correctly. The questions are also asked in applications orientation.

1. NCERT books: VIII to IX Standard, (Biology, Physics and Chemistry)
2. What, why and how books by CSIR
3. Science and Technology supplements in the newspapers and magazines
4. General Science portion of TMH or Spectrum Prelims books
7. General knowledge: Quite a few questions are asked from this area. Some difficult questions are also asked. Do not spend too much time in memorising unnecessary facts. You should have a broad awareness about various fields. At the same time, focus more on areas which have been asked in the past.

1. The India Year Book (Government of India Publication)— This is very important for the prelims and also for the mains to some extent for two-mark questions. But do not read everything in the book, be logical and concentrate on the basics which can be asked in the exam. You should prepare notes on various terms that are given in the book. Do not focus too much on unnecessary facts given in the book.
2. Manorama Year book—This book should also be taken as reference.

For the GS prelims, if you want a compilation of all materials at one point, then you can refer some standard book such as Spectrum or TMH. But, do not ignore the NCERT and other basic books mentioned above since they give better clarity and focus on the fundamentals.

Paper II

Paper II of the preliminary examination is of 200 marks and is of two hours. This paper covers the following areas:

1. Comprehension
2. Interpersonal Skills including Communication Skills
3. Logical Reasoning and Analytical Ability
4. Decision Making and Problem Solving
5. General Mental Ability
6. Basic Numeracy (numbers and their relations, orders of magnitude, etc.) (Class X level), Data interpretation (charts, graphs, tables, data sufficiency, etc.—Class X level)
7. English Language Comprehension Skills (Class X level)

Majority of the topics are new and hence, one needs to do a proper research in choosing the correct study material. This book primarily aims at providing you with the complete syllabus indicated in the second paper of the CSAT.

Main Examination

The *mains* is the crucial stage of the Civil Services exam, while prelims is a qualifying exam and its marks won't be considered for final ranking. Interview is for 300 marks only. Hence, the whole Civil Services Exams may be equated with mains (in terms of marks) which accounts for 2,000 marks. If you are well prepared for the mains, then a good foundation will be made for the prelims also. The risk involved with the interview can also be reduced with good performance in the mains. The preparation should be mains oriented right from the beginning. You should try to gather as many marks as possible in the main exams. Broadly, the requirements for mains are as follows:

1. Content/information
2. Clear and effective expression
3. Time management
4. Balanced analysis

Note the following points

- *Read less, think more and write even more*' is the mantra for success in the mains. *Selective reading and more of writing practice is the key for success.*
- Writing practice within the time limit should be done from the beginning. Study a topic thoroughly and attempt questions from that area from the previous papers under the strict time limit. Perhaps, this is the most important thing in the mains preparation, but rarely given enough importance by the aspirants resulting in failure. Writing practice helps in understanding what you could grasp and whether you could reproduce within the time limit. Not only writing answers but you have to get them corrected by the teachers and seniors who can give suggestions on how to improve your answers. This should be a continuous process from the very first day of your preparation. Some aspirants do the mistake of postponing the writing practice having the wrong assumption that writing practice should be started only after a lot of study and experience.
- Improve your handwriting if it is not legible. Remember that our handwriting need not be beautiful but it should be easily readable/legible by anybody.

- The answer is the medium through which you are communicating to the examiner. So, you should think as to *how to impress the examiner with your answer*. Your pen, handwriting, writing style, logical presentation, innovations, relevance to the question, etc.—everything matters. Be careful about these aspects, right from the beginning.
- You can use colour pens when you draw figures, diagrams, etc., and to highlight details.
- While writing answers, focus on good introductions and conclusions. The presentation should be logical. The introduction should introduce the reader about the path he is about to take and what is in store for him. It should raise the curiosity of the reader, while the conclusion should sum up what the reader has gone through in the path. There should be a balanced judgement in the conclusions.
- You need not have a very good vocabulary or scholarly writing style, it is sufficient if you can present your answer in a simple and logical manner.
- Your aim should be to score equally well in all the papers.
- In general category, an average score of about 300 in each optional and GS (Paper I and Paper II put together) and a score of about 100 in essay should be just sufficient to fetch you an interview call. So, after that total of 1,000 marks, how many extra marks you get decides your place in the final list. Depending on your strong areas, you should get more marks in some papers. In this way, for general category, if you manage to get around 1,100, and 150-180 marks in the interview, then your chances are very bright to be in the top slots. For reserved candidates, the above scores may be reduced by 20-40 marks. Note that these marks are illustrative only and based on the trends in the last 4-5 years. The actual cut-offs, as noted earlier, depend upon a lot of other factors.
- One should not dump the information in the answer, but present it in a logical and attractive manner. The *point form* can be used only for some factual answers. Otherwise, *paragraph mode* with good analysis should be used.
- The final two months should be devoted to repeated revisions.
- Read the question carefully and grasp the aspect being asked. The answer should be relevant to what is being asked.
- Due to lot of optionals and descriptive nature of the mains exam, and different examiners valuing papers, an element of ‘uncertainty’ will be there in terms of marks one gets for a given effort, and this affects our chances of success in the exam. Keep this in mind and be detached about the result. Only thing in our hands is to give the best effort possible and leave further to the UPSC.

General Studies (GS)

The GS paper is common to everyone, both at the *prelims* and *mains* stage. It is usually observed that the aspirants fear the GS paper. But with proper orientation GS becomes very interesting and scoring. In fact, many try to concentrate more on optionals than the GS. This may not be a good strategy, as GS gives good marks with relatively less effort. The preparation for GS is also helpful in essay and interview, and also later on in our career as civil servant. Therefore, proper attention should be given to the GS preparation.

Firstly, the nature of GS should be understood. This can be done by a thorough analysis of the previous years’ papers. It can also be observed that the questions are asked from a variety of areas, as they are focussed only on certain dimensions, especially those related to current affairs, etc. In this context, it is important to know the difference between a ‘generalist’ and a ‘specialist’. A generalist is a person who knows ‘less and less of more and more’, while a specialist is a person who knows ‘more and more of less and less’. To get good marks in GS, one has to follow the ‘generalist’ approach, that is, focusing on basic information and fundamentals in a wide variety of areas.

History

The national movement and related developments have to be studied with basic clarity. The aspirant should have a clear idea about the chronological sequence, the linkages between various topics and a good analysis about each stage of the freedom struggle. It should be remembered that the portion is not to be studied as if writing history optional. The GS paper will only test the basic clarity on the National Movement. Thoroughly analyse the previous years’ papers to understand the nature of questions being asked. **Sources:**

1. ‘*Modern India*’ by Spectrum Publications—This is in fact a concise and exam-focussed version of Bipin Chandra’s *India’s Struggle for Independence*.
2. Bipin Chandra’s book or Grover & Grover (for reference only).
3. NCERT XII standard book for basic understanding.
4. Indian Culture (Spectrum).
5. A book on History by Panorama Publication.
6. Art and Culture portions of History books and *Gazetteer of India*.
7. Books on culture/cultural topics brought out by the *Publications Division of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting* and *National Book Trust*. (Refer only if one has the enough time.)
8. Culture Chapter in the India Year Book.

Take care of following points:

- Observe the forward and backward linkages at every stage of the National Movement and its importance in the overall context. Note that all the events were related in some way or the other.
- Prepare simultaneously for the two markers—note down the personalities, places, terms, movements, journals, etc. You should be able to identify them and their role in the national movement.

- Innovations, such as *maps* (e.g., 1857—spread and the centres of revolt), flow diagrams, etc., can be made.
- Try to attempt factual and non-controversial questions.
- Concentrate on the cultural aspects also which are asked for the two markers.
- A time line of events during Indian Freedom Struggle can be prepared. The diagrammatic presentation helps one to remember these events and also minimises the chances of getting confused between the two events.

Geography

There should be a basic understanding about the geography of India. If your preparation for geography prelims is thorough, it'll take care of your mains geography also. As this area accounts for relatively less marks compared to history, polity, etc., lesser time may be devoted to this area compared to other major areas.

Sources:

NCERT books on Indian Geography.

Note the following points:

- Some current affairs based questions are also asked. For example, MRTS, etc.
- Lots of maps and diagrams can be used while answering these questions.
- This part is quite scoring with focused efforts.

Polity

There is a standard syllabus for this part and good material is also available. The questions are also mostly asked directly and this is one of the highly scoring areas. The knowledge in this polity also helps a lot in the essay and interview. This will give a good foundation for the career as an administrator also.

Sources:

- *Indian Polity* by Spectrum or Laxmikant (TMH Publications)—To be read thoroughly.
- DD Basu (for reference).
- NCERT books on polity (Democracy in India, etc.).
- A special issue published by *Competition Wizard* also is extremely concise and useful.

Note the following points:

- You need not mug all the articles. There are only around 50 articles which are important. Note them when referred to in the text.
- It's better to quote some articles and court judgements (only very important ones), while writing answers.
- Give examples with contemporary relevance.
- Prepare simultaneously for two markers.
- Some questions are repeated, so be thorough with previous years papers.
- Questions are linked to various topics. So, while preparing, you should be aware of the inter-linkages between various topics.
- Various current affairs topics which are linked to polity are asked. Also, sometimes basic questions linked to current affairs can be asked.

Social Issues

There is no standard material for these topics. Furthermore, questions of social issues are not asked every year. Even if asked, they are of general nature mostly which can be answered with common sense. So, do not spend too much time on these areas or in search of material. Prepare well for other parts of GS and later, if time permits then come to these areas.

Suggested readings:

- Competition magazine articles.
- *Social Issues in India* by Ram Ahuja. (For reference only.)

Note the following points

- You only need a basic information for each topic. If there is no material, just spend time in thinking on the topic and to prepare a basic structure. Then, you may spend time in searching for the material. For example, for drug abuse, you should raise the following logical questions:
 - What is drug abuse; what are the causes; distribution; impact; efforts to check; loopholes in the present strategy; suggestions, etc.
 - Discuss it with other aspirants and get the information.
 - Current affairs based questions can be asked. For example, some controversial case related to child labour comes in the media, then one may expect a question on child labour.

India and the world

The questions are asked to test the basic understanding about the relations with other nations and India's foreign policy. Mostly, questions are related to current affairs. There is a need to have clarity about the basic contours of the evolution of India's foreign policy. But do not get into too much depth on controversial topics. You are expected to have a basic clarity on India's external affairs.

There are not many standard books available on the subject. Mostly, the preparation has to be based on current affairs.

Sources:

- *The Hindu* or any other newspaper—Articles on foreign policy and global affairs in the Edit pages and front pages.
- *Frontline Magazine*
- NCERT 12th standard book on Political Science
- Radio—AIR 'Spotlight—analysis by experts after 'News at 9'
- External Affairs Ministry website.

Note the following points:

- Understand the core issues between India and various nations.
- The external relations can be structured into political, economic, defence, cultural, S&T, etc., so prepare in these dimensions.
- The relations with important nations are to be done for long answers, while for other nations, it is sufficient for the two markers.

- Note the various terms, for example, Track 2 diplomacy, which can be asked for two marks.
- There is no material for the topics on Overseas citizens of India. So, look but for any issues that come in media related to NRIs. They can be asked for the two marks.
- You can make innovations, such as *maps, flow charts*, etc. For example, a map for Indo—Iran pipeline, or for Munnabao—Khokrapar rail link, etc.

International Affairs

The questions are mainly related current affairs. The most important developments which appear in the newspapers will be sufficient for the preparation. Observe the terms, personalities, places, etc., which can be asked for two marks. Also prepare for the international institutions. List out the various important world bodies, conventions, nation groups and then gather the basic materials on them. You can also try the websites of the UN and its agencies etc. *The Hindu* and *Frontline* magazines may be followed regularly. One may also follow Current Affairs and News Analysis of the BBC.

Economy

This is an area which is feared by many, especially because of lack of proper exam-oriented textbook with clarity. But with some basic understanding the economy can become very scoring because of 15 two-mark questions.

Sources:

- Dutt and Sundaram or Mishra and Puri
- NCERT XII standard books
- One financial daily (for the latest news)
- Political & Economic Weekly (important articles only).

Note the following points:

- Questions can be on basics or on current affairs
- You can use innovations like graphs, diagrams, flow charts, etc.
- The main aspect is to gain the basic understanding with clarity. So, spend more time on logical thinking and inter-relating, rather than on various books or articles.
- Note various economic terms that keep appearing in the newspapers. Also, be thorough on the previous years' papers.

Science and technology

Some arts students fear this part and leave them for the exam. However, note that the examiner is not interested in the technical aspects. They are only testing whether the candidate has the basic understanding on the technological developments. In fact, technology is going to play a very key role in changing the administration. So, do take an active interest in the technological developments, as they will help you in being an effective change agent when you join the service.

In the exam, questions are asked from both the standard and the current affairs. While preparing, concentrate on the relevance and the application of the topic. The following dimensions should be focussed:

- What is the basic technological dimension of the topic?
- How is it being used what is its applicability?
- Developments in India

There is no good material available in this area. The notes have to be prepared from various sources. The synopsis should also focus on the diagrams and figures, wherever applicable.

Sources:

- *S&T*—RC Reddy Publications/Wizard/Spectrum (any one, among these)
- *Science Reporter*
- *Yojana*
- S&T articles in competition magazines
- Internet
- Newspapers
- Websites of various related ministries and departments related to S&T, Agriculture, etc.

Note the following points:

- Do not go into much technical details, even if you are from a technical background.
- Concentrate on applications and related issues.
- Put innovations, such as figures, diagrams, flow charts, etc.
- Prepare notes on various computer-related terms.

Statistics

This is another area which is feared by students from the arts background. While others from the technical background take it too lightly and lose marks at the end. This area is very scoring for anybody who can concentrate on the basics and do lots of practice.

Sources:

- Spectrum publication on Statistics
- NCERT 11th standard.
- *Statistical Methods* by S.C. Gupta (for reference only)

Note the following points:

- Understand the basics with clarity.
- Practise the previous papers within the time limit.
- Show the calculations clearly.
- Draw the diagrams and graphs neatly.
- Do not forget to take the basic calculator (non programmable) to the exam hall.
- Sometimes difficult questions are asked. Do not orient preparation keeping those questions in view. Just be strong on the basic standard questions that are asked every year.
- If you are very good at statistics, attempt the statistics questions in the beginning of the exam.
- You can spend about 40-45 minutes in the exam hall on these questions.

Current Affairs

This is the most important component of the preparation. It has a crucial role in *prelims, essay* and *interview*. It requires continuous efforts throughout the year. The notes have to be prepared from various sources. The effectiveness of the preparation will increase if you have a good understanding about the questions that are asked every year. That way you will be in a position to discriminate between what to read and more importantly, what not to read.

Sources:

- *The Times of India* or *The Hindu* newspaper or some aspects of *Hindustan Times* or *The Indian express*
- *The Frontline*
- AIR news—8AM, 2PM, 9PM
- *Yojana*
- Internet

Note the following points:

- Apart from above books, make full use of the internet to get information on various aspects of the syllabus for which there are no books directly available.
- **Prepare topicwise.** As you go through various sources, identify the topics that can be asked in the exam. Write the topics on a sheet of paper. You will be preparing notes for those topics only. Now, for the notes, you will have to go through the materials. The main source will be *The Hindu* newspaper. While reading newspapers observe the following—abbreviation; new terms; organisations, quotes and examples which can be used elsewhere, etc.
- Everyday listen to the AIR news bulletins. They cover all the important topics in a dispassionate manner. The analysis after the bulletin is also quite good. Try doing something else, while listening to the news so that you don't waste time. If any political or unimportant issue is being discussed in the news, you can ignore and concentrate on your work.
- Next day, by the time the newspaper comes, you already know what to expect from that since you followed the news on AIR previous day. So, go through the important topics while read slowly while preparing notes.
- Do not read everything in the newspaper. Read only that which is significant for the exam. Do not even look at the items from the second page to the centre page. The main focus should be on the *front page*, *editorials*, *edit page articles*, *news analysis*, *business* and *economy*, etc. In the sports page, just spend time on recognising the personalities and tournaments which can be asked in exam (prelims).
- Before reading a news item, question logically about that topic or issue. Then read the article. This way the eyes try to gather the answers for the questions raised. Also, the clarity on the topic increases.
- The *logical and intense questioning* is very important. For example, if there is a news item on the Siachen Glacier, then you should question and find answers as following: what is Siachen Glacier; where is it; what is the problem; why the problem developed; what is its impact on the Indo-Pak relations; what efforts have been made to solve the dispute; what are the difficulties; what is its significance; and how can it be solved.

Once you have a logical structure, the preparation is over. And, this is what the examiner expects from you.

- With practice, you should increase efficiency and should not spend more than 1.5 to 2 hours on the daily newspaper.
- Many innovations can be made, such as maps, diagrams, flow charts, graphs, case studies, etc.
- Keep the two-mark questions in mind, while preparing for the current affairs. Make separate notes for the personalities, places, awards, terms, etc.
- Keep the cuttings of the editorials in a monthly file.

Essay

The essay paper (200 marks) in the Civil Services Main Examination is crucial for determining the final outcome/selection and ranking. It is decisive because there is no specialisation in an essay and so no aspirant can claim expertise, unlike optional subjects.

The essay paper does not have a source of definitive information as in the case of General Studies or Optional Subjects. This constitutes a challenge. It is vital to understand that an essay is a reflection of one's personality—ideas, views, analysis, assessments and inferences, values, attitude, aptitude, orientation and communication (written) abilities, all the attributes that are wanted by The UPSC in an aspirant.

The general trend is that essay paper contains six topics out of which one topic has to be chosen. There is no syllabus for the essay. Anything's under the sun can be asked. But, if we analyse the previous year paper, it is conspicuous to find some root topics. For example, there is at least one question on women empowerment every year. So, the topic 'women empowerment' is a root topic.

Suggested Root Topics:

1. Women empowerment
2. Environment, S&T, energy security, sustainable development
3. Democracy, Judiciary and related topics
4. Education, Indian culture
5. Current events

Suggested Reading

- a. *Yojana* issues
- b. *Frontline* cover stories
- c. *'The Hindu'* Sunday magazines
- d. *The Times of India*

Groundwork Preparation

The duration of the essay paper is three hours and the word limit is not mentioned. It is generally said that *1,500-2,000 words should make a good essay*. This can comfortably be written even with a moderate pace in 2 to 2.5 hours. So the first 30—45 minutes can be spent for the groundwork preparation. First is the selection of the proper essay topic. Out of the six topics, one topic would generally be related to philosophical issue, unless one is confident, it is better to opt it out. Likewise, one can eliminate topics with which one is not comfortable. In some topics, most of the aspirants cannot maintain a balance throughout the essay, so better opt them out also. Finally, select the topic that you think can do justice. The answer booklet of the main examination consists of *24 single pages. The last 3—4 pages*

can be used for rough work. If you are sure that you can complete the main booklet, then ask for one additional at the beginning of the exam and use it for rough work. In these pages, prepare the outline for the essay by asking questions yourselves. It is also called as *brainstorming*.

Suppose take a topic, for example: 'Terrorism and global peace (CSE-2005)'

The questions can be:

1. What is terrorism, its aims, methodology and its origin?
2. How is it affecting global peace?
3. What are the different ways/types of terrorism and how each one is a threat to global peace?
4. What are the causes for terrorism to flourish?
5. How can the global peace be maintained (remedy and a global approach in fighting terrorism because of its spread to all countries)?
6. What is the relevance of terrorism to India and what are its effects on the Indian way of living?
7. What should be the conclusion? Terrorism is affecting global peace and it is a fact, So the solution is to make it disappear. Whatever form it may be, it should be condemned because it involves loss of precious lives and living of many.

On these lines many more questions can be evolved.

The next step is to question yourself regarding the topic and scribble whatever comes to your mind without any order in just words, not sentences. After this part is over, write the conclusion part in detail in the rough area.

Tips

1. Good introduction and good conclusion are must.
2. There should be link between paragraphs.
3. Clarity of expression is very important. Use simple English to express your point clearly You need not use flowery language. Simple logical presentation is sufficient.
4. Practice is essential for getting a good score.
5. Try to give a good introduction. It should guide the examiner what you intend to convey in the essay. The conclusion should be good and should satisfy the examiner. Always conclude on a positive note.
6. The main focus should be on giving a good analysis or the topic.
7. Do not divert into areas, which are irrelevant to the topic.
8. Make sure that you have sufficient understanding and material to write, before choosing the topic

Strategy

Introduction: The introduction is the opening part of the essay and should be confined to a paragraph. The introductory paragraph is expected to introduce the topic, and wherever necessary, explains the central theme or idea, basic or core concepts, and definitional criteria. The introduction should arouse interest and generate curiosity in the mind of the reader. Spend good amount of time for introduction.

Main Text: The main text of the essay must develop, support and explain the main ideas stated in your introduction. This essentially is a systematic organisation of information based on a consistent methodology. It deals with the topic and related issues to be addressed, the correlation of facts, figures, ideas, views, concepts; an in-depth, systematic, coherent analysis based on the topic leading to logical inferences; as well as making (if it is required) plausible projections and providing with (if necessary) viable solutions.

Conclusion: As the text draws close to the conclusion, the essay should have reached the stage of 'critical mass', a sort of a climax. The conclusions summary, should express the essence of the essay. It should not contain any fresh evidence, facts or figures.

Language Papers (Compulsory): These papers are only of qualifying nature, but at the same time cannot be ignored. If you do not qualify, then there is a real danger that all your other mains papers will not be evaluated.

Note that every year, there are some candidates who get disqualified just because of their underperformance in compulsory subjects. So, ensure that you have the minimum knowledge about the languages. The score should only be above 40% and the questions are also set in such a manner that this is not difficult at all to answer. There is no need for any special preparation. But, do practise previous years papers' to gain familiarity.

Those from non-English medium schools might face some difficulty in the English paper. Then there should be more emphasis on the English language. A good knowledge of English very much helps in the prelims also to read and grasp the questions fast and answer them quickly. Note that the grammar is not much tested, but it is only the functional knowledge in the language that is tested in compulsory papers. Similarly, some aspirants face difficulty with the Indian language paper also. Ensure that you have functional knowledge in at least one Indian language.

Personality Test

The interview stage has emerged as the most deciding phase of the exam. The range of marks awarded itself is a proof for that; it varies between 50 and 240. If the UPSC board feels that a candidate is unsuitable for administration, then it awards very low marks. As a result, one may not get service or gets a service with low priority, in spite of good performance in the mains exam. So, it is very important to prepare for a the interview, right from the beginning. Aspirants writing in Telugu medium can do interview in Telugu with the assistance of translator/interpreter. Where it is difficult to express in Telugu or when you feel the interpreter is not translating exactly what you've expressed, you can very well use English words to explain clearly to the members. Note that those writing the mains in English have to invariably do interview in English only. The personality is something that teh cannot be developed overnight, or in few days. It is a continuous process since your childhood. But, you can modify it suitably to get good marks in the interview. You will have to be conscious about this aspect throughout the preparation. The

personality cannot be developed after the mains exam results and just before the interview. So, the process should begin from the initial stages of preparation itself. During preparation, discuss on various current issues with your friends in English only so that you can develop the flow in the language. It is to be noted that your fluency doesn't count much, provided you are clear and balanced in your words and opinions.

The UPSC is looking for some traits which can be summarised below:

- Suitability to a public career
- Mental calibre
- Not only intellectual traits but also social traits
- Interest in current affairs
- Mental alertness
- Critical powers of assimilation
- Clear and logical exposition
- Balance of judgement
- Variety and depth of interest
- Ability for social cohesion and leadership
- Intellectual and moral integrity
- Mature opinions and ideas on a variety of issues

In the words of the former UPSC chairman, Surendra Nath, the definition of an ideal civil servant is:

Firstly, an officer must be a gentleman. He should possess good character qualities. He should have courage of conviction, intellectual and moral capabilities, leadership qualities and capable of taking the right decisions at the right time. He should have in-depth professional knowledge, self-confidence, good communication skills, analytical in his thinking, flexible and not rigid, must be able to inspire and motivate his colleagues and his subordinates. There should be a balance of judgement in his/her decision-making.

So, you will have to improve these qualities as you progress towards the interview stage.

Note the following points for preparation:

- Start specific full-scale preparations for the interview, immediately after the mains exam and not after the mains results are announced.
- The preparation should be at two levels—the subject matter preparation and the way you present yourself.
- Use a handycam or a mirror to see how you speak, the facial expressions, mannerisms, etc.
- Keep visualising the interview scenario and modify yourself accordingly.

In an interview, you are assessed right from the moment you enter the room. So, the following aspects are important—the way you walk; the way you sit down; the way you are dressed; the enthusiasm and cheerfulness in your face; the way you talk; your mannerisms; facial expressions; politeness; behaviour; the way you tackle the questions; the confidence you display; the way you take leave and walk out of the room, etc. So in all these dimensions, you should keep contemplating and put your best performance on that day.

- Be very careful while filling the *mains application form*. *This form is the basis on which the whole interview*

depends. So, consult the seniors and fill the information carefully. Through this form, you can direct the board into your strong areas. The interview will go on expected lines and you can give well-prepared answers.

- The broad areas of preparation should be
 1. Biodata
 2. State issues
 3. National issues
 4. International issues
 5. General issues (e.g., ragging, etc.)
- Keep in mind that you will get only 1—2 minutes to tell the answer. So, prepare in this direction for all the expected areas. You should be in a position to counter any other supplementary questions.
- The best way of preparation is to just sit and do brain storming intensively. Think what type of questions can be asked and how you can give a simple and logical answer. This will not come from reading many books. It requires a lot of introspection.
- **Some areas to be focussed are the following:** name; why IAS; why optionals; background of the parents; places where you stayed; academic background and related aspects; optional subjects; graduating subject; service preferences; positions if held; job experience if any; hobbies; sports, etc.
- Have good knowledge about the Civil Services, general debate, reforms, etc.
- Show a positive body language. You believe that you are suitable for the job. Convey to them the message that you are the person they are looking for.
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Do not bluff to the Board. You cannot substantiate if they go into depth. It is not easy to fool such experienced persons.
- Do not entertain any rumours regarding the integrity of the Board. The UPSC interviews are of the top class and the marks awarded are also proportional to what the candidate deserves. The rumours are mainly spread by people who do not clear the exam. Instead of criticising others, it is better to introspect and make efforts to develop one's personality. So, go to the interview with utmost respect for the Board and confidence in their integrity. Put your best performance on that day.
- The main aspect is to be calm and cool on the day of the interview. Go with high self-esteem and self-confidence. Do only those things which will increase the 'feel good factor'.
- Take good number of mock interviews to get used to the interview conditions. The best mocks can be done with our friends who are preparing for the interview and we have to ensure that they give a frank feedback and suggestions for improvement. One may take 2—3 mocks in an institute to gain confidence.
- Read the various original interviews given in the magazines to understand what the UPSC expects from you.

Some more information about the interview:

An 'Interview' is a popular term but in the words of UPSC, it is a 'Personality Test'. The reason being that it is not a test of knowledge, but of the overall personality of the candidate/aspirant.

An Interview is more of a psychological test that is just content based. Along with good communicative skills and self-confidence, good knowledge base no doubt gives you an upper hand. However, it has to be borne in mind that nearly all the aspirants/candidates in the personality test begin more or less as equals in the sphere of knowledge base.

The most important thing to know about an interview is that it is not always a *question-answer session* and that the Board members are looking for different aspects of one's personality.

One is not expected to know everything under the sun. If you do not know the answer to a particular question, do not hesitate to say—I don't know, Sir/Ma'm. However, even 'I don't know Sir/Ma'm' should be said confidently and with a reasonable amount of cheerfulness. Remember, your knowledge levels have been thoroughly checked during the earlier stages of the CSE, viz. Prelims and Mains.

Always remember that the interview is not a cross examination, but a natural, purposeful conversation. Personality is a life-long asset and a thing, which evolves and changes every day.

How to Prepare

Keep a photocopy of the form filled for the mains examination handy. Most of the initial questions—viz. the meaning of your name, educational background, professional experience, hobbies, etc., will be based on this form only. Try to prepare on your bio-data; roughly 70% questions are based on bio-data, 20% questions are based on your subject and 10% are based on current affairs.

Aspirants to CSE should take an intelligent interest not only in areas of their specialisation, but also in what is happening around them—both within and outside the country.

Be well informed about your interests and hobbies as there will be a few questions probing your levels of knowledge as regards your hobbies and interests.

Prepare thoroughly about your hometown and home state. If you hail from a place of historical importance or tourist interest, prepare well on it.

Know yourself. Prepare brief answers to choice of your subjects, family background, meaning of your name. You should try to take the lead by answering questions based on your bio-data.

One of the secrets of success is to prepare for the personality test along with the written test.

If a person gives the impression of being a bookworm, the chances of his/her selection are reduced. The candidate must exhibit an all-round personality, which indicates that the aspirant possesses a complete personality.

Mock Interviews/Practice Interviews

An aspirant should form a group of 4-5 people, as the preparation for personality test cannot be done in isolation. Try holding as many mock interviews as possible.

No training institute can develop/transform your personality in a few days. However, some of the tips may help in ironing out some weaknesses/grey areas and can provide an avenue for a well-planned preparation and group discussions.

Take mock interviews. In the mock interview, ask your friends to grill you so that you can face pressure from the Board easily.

Dressing up

Dress sense is of crucial importance. The choice of dress should be according to the weather conditions. Try not to wear newly stitched clothes, as they might make you uneasy. Light colours should be preferred. White colour is a good choice.

Wear comfortable clothes. Men need to wear light coloured shirt and a dark trouser with a tie (if weather permits). Women appear best in a saree or salwar/kameez.

Do not wear anything that connects you with a religious or political group. In case you have a running nose or have caught a cold, carry a handkerchief, or sufficient stock of tissue paper. Tissue paper is preferable.

Some candidates take medicine to relax on the previous night of the interview; this should be avoided as the effect of medicine may decrease your alertness during the interview. What and how you eat is also important. Have a light meal on the day of the personality test. Do not go for the interview on an empty stomach. However, also avoid over-eating, or having a heavy meal.

First impression is often the best impression. So create a positive, good impression within the first few minutes of the interview.

Entry

- Arrive 20-30 minutes early. This will give you enough time to relax.
- Keep a file/folder to keep your certificates and documents in an organised manner. They are verified before you enter the interview room. (You don't have to carry file/folder inside board room.)
- While waiting for your turn in the waiting area, read a newspaper or a magazine and try to remain focused without thinking too much of what will happen in the interview. Do not try to pre-suppose situations in the personality test.
- Take a final, deep breath before entering the boardroom.
- Do not forget to knock at the door before entering, as it indicates basic courtesy.
- On entering the room, greet all the members cordially and do not sit down on the seat without being asked to.
- If there is a lady member in the interview board, greet her first.
- Be conscious of your body language when you are seated.
- Men should keep the feet flat on the floor during the interview, knees at the waist level, and hands on the thighs the placing the elbows on the armchair. Avoid locking hands.

- Women should cross their ankles or legs, but keep the bottom leg straight down and do not swing it over the top leg and keep the elbows positioned on the arms of the chair.
- When the Board members thank you at the end of the personality test, do not forget to thank the members one last time and keep your body posture straight at the time of leaving the room.
- Be cool. Be yourself during the interview.
- Your aim should be to make the Board members feel comfortable in your presence.
- Don't expect any expression on the faces of the board members, even if your answer is very good.

During the Interview

- In a personality test, what is of importance is how you say what you say. It is the style of presentation that matters.
- Your personality is, on an average, assessed in 25-30 minutes; it is your responsibility to bring out your very best in front of the board.
- Intelligent listening is the *mantra*, and for this maintaining eye contact is very important. You should not glare but all the same appear attentive and do not glance at other members, it can be very distracting for the interviewer. However, if some other member asks you anything, look at that member and answer and turn back to the first—this is what we do in normal attentive listening.
- Try not to jump into an answer before the complete question has been posed, as you will end up wasting time on answering a question that you were not actually asked. If you are not sure of what was asked, you can always politely seek a clarification.
- Do not try to answer the question as soon as it is posed. Think over the question, take your time and organise the broad outline of the answer before airing it. Pause a while before answering, even if you know the answer.
- Do not speak rapidly. Speak slowly and clearly so that the Board members grasp what you are saying and do not have to interrupt you or ask you to repeat your views.
- Do not fidget or throw your hands around, or shake your head. Less amount of movement does not mean you should sit unnaturally still. Your posture should be attentive and relaxed at the same time. Do not crouch/bend forward or place your hands on the table.
- At times, you will be given situations wherein you will be required to take a decision. In such situations, the board is testing your ability to comprehend issues and use reason and good judgement logically, precisely and arrive at a balanced decision.
- Your replies should be crisp and to the point. Do not beat around the bush.
- Cut your answer short to the required patience shown by the member talking to you. They usually like to talk more, so listen carefully and think for a few seconds before you start answering the question. This will show that you are organising your thoughts in your mind before beginning to speak.
- Leave some room for difference in opinion. Do take a stand, but do not look adamant or unwilling to appreciate the Board's opinion.
- Use couple of words from the question while answering any question. It shows you have listened to the question carefully. But at the same time, limit the use of the technical jargon.
- Do not start evaluating your performance, while still in the interview. Even if you have committed mistakes in the beginning, do not think that you have already lost the game. They are looking for warm, sensitive respectful and attentive youngsters. They know you are good or you would not have come so far.
- Talk humbly about your achievements and hobbies. You may have mentioned some hobbies in the form without serious background in them, but before the interview, it would be useful to pick up some basic information on your hobby or hobbies.
- Say less to convey more. Argue logically and generalise correctly.
- Remember, while answering any question, *what is easy to see is easy to miss*. We often tend to miss the obvious and go for some non-crucial aspect of the subject.
- Questions posed before a candidate by the interviewing board are very well framed and answers to them should be made taking into consideration all possible views and a balanced approach is expected from a candidate.
- Remember, non-awareness of something should be admitted with politeness. It is okay to not know something! It is better to say 'No' than to bluff around. Those interviewing are highly experienced persons and know much better than us.
- If the question put is not clear to you, politely ask for more information. It is not the factual knowledge but your views, which will be tested in the interview.
- Always observe *interview etiquette* and be honest, polite, convincing and modest. Arrogance, rigidity, flicking a round the issue should be avoided.
- Don't be argumentative. Be consistent in your views, that is, just don't change your views because of the fact that the Board is differing with you. Remember that they are only testing you and often even try to provoke you. Give balanced answers and avoid taking extremes.
- The most important thing to know about the interview is that it is *not a question-answer session* and what they are looking out for is different aspects of one's personality. As far as possible, the answer given should reveal a particular aspect of one's personality and attempts should not be made to present a make-up ap-