

UPSC Mains Syllabus for IAS Exam

UPSC Mains Pattern

Paper	Subject	Duration	Total Marks
Paper A	Compulsory Indian Language	3 hours	300 (Qualifying)
Paper B	Compulsory English	3 hours	300 (Qualifying)
Paper I	Essay	3 hours	250
Paper II	General Studies I - Indian Heritage & Culture, History & Geography of the World & Society	3 hours	250
Paper III	General Studies II - Governance, Constitution, Welfare Initiatives, Social Justice & International Relations	3 hours	250
Paper IV	General Studies III - Technology, Economic Development, Agriculture, Biodiversity, Security & Disaster Management	3 hours	250
Paper V	General Studies IV - Ethics, Integrity & Aptitude	3 hours	250
Paper VI	Optional Subject - Paper I	3 hours	250
Paper VII	Optional Subject - Paper II	3 hours	250

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Language Papers (Indian language and English)

Although both these papers are only qualifying in nature, candidates should not be complacent as if they fail to score below 25% in either of them, their remaining answer sheets won't even be evaluated. Both the papers follow a similar pattern of questions as given below.

- One essay question for 100 marks - candidates have to select one out of a few given topics
- Reading comprehension and related five-six questions for a total of 60 marks
- Précis writing for 60 marks - the answer sheet will have a separate grid structure where this has to be written
- Translation from English to chosen language for 20 marks
- Translation from chosen language to English for 20 marks
- Grammar and basic language usage such as synonyms, sentence correction etc. for a total of 40 marks

Essay

The UPSC mains syllabus does not have any prescribed syllabus for the essay paper as such. As per the UPSC, “Candidates are expected to keep closely to the subject of the essay to arrange their ideas in an

orderly fashion, and to write concisely. Credit will be given for effective and exact expression.”

Candidates are required to write two essays from a list of given topics for a combined total of 250 marks.

GS Paper 1

- Modern Indian History
 - Significant events, issues, personalities during the middle of the eighteenth century (1750s) until the present.
 - Different stages and important contributors and contributions from various parts of the country in 'The Freedom Struggle'.
 - Post-independence consolidation and reorganisation within the country.
- History of the world
- Events, forms and effect on society since the 18th century (world wars, industrial revolution, colonisation, redrawing of national boundaries, decolonisation, political philosophies like communism, capitalism, socialism, etc.)
- Society
 - Indian society and diversity - Salient aspects.
 - Role of women and women's organisations, population and associated issues, poverty and developmental issues, urbanisation, their problems and remedies.
 - Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism & secularism.
 - Effects of globalisation on Indian society.
- Geography
 - Distribution of key natural resources across the world including South Asia and the Indian sub-continent; factors responsible for the location of primary, secondary, and tertiary sector industries in various parts of the world including India.
 - Important Geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes, Tsunami, Volcanic activity, cyclone etc.
 - Geographical features and their location, changes in critical geographical features (including water-bodies and polar ice caps) and, in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes.
 - Salient features of world's physical geography.

GS Paper II

- Indian Constitution
 - historical underpinnings,
 - evolution, features
 - amendments, significant provisions
 - basic structure doctrine
 - Comparison of the Indian constitutional scheme with that of other countries
- Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.
- Separation of powers between various organs, dispute redressal mechanisms and institutions
- Structure, organisation and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary
- Parliament and State Legislatures
 - structure, functioning
 - conduct of business
 - powers & privileges and issues arising out of these
- Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations

and their role in the Polity.

- Salient features of the Representation of People's Act
- Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.
- Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies.
- Government policies and interventions aimed at development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.
- Development processes and the development industry – the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, institutional and other stakeholders.
- Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and the States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.
- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources
- Issues relating to poverty and hunger
- Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance- applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential; citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures
- Role of civil services in a democracy
- International Relations
 - India and its neighborhood - International relations
 - Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting the Indian interests
 - Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.
 - Important International institutions, agencies, their structure and mandates

GS Paper III

- Economy
 - Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilisation of resources, growth, development and employment.
 - Government Budgeting.
 - Inclusive growth and associated issues/challenges
 - Effects of liberalisation on the economy (post 1991 changes), changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.
 - Infrastructure - Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.
 - Investment models (PPP etc)
 - Agriculture
 - Major cropping patterns in various parts of the country, different types of irrigation and irrigation systems storage, transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints; e-technology in the aid of farmers
 - Economics of animal rearing.
 - Food processing and related industries in India - scope and significance, location, upstream and downstream requirements, supply chain management.
 - Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices; Public Distribution System objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping; issues of buffer stocks and food security; Technology missions
 - Land reforms in India.

- Science and Technology
 - Recent developments and their applications and effects in everyday life
 - Achievements of Indians in science & technology.
 - Indigenisation of technology and developing new technology.
 - General awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, Robotics, Nanotechnology, bio-technology
 - Issues relating to intellectual property rights
- Environment
 - Conservation,
 - Environmental pollution and degradation
 - Environmental impact assessment
- Disaster Management (Laws, Acts etc.)
- Security
 - Challenges to internal security (external state and non-state actors)
 - Linkages between development and spread of extremism
 - Challenges to internal security through communication networks, role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges,
 - Basics of cyber security; money-laundering and its prevention
 - Security challenges and their management in border areas; linkages of organised crime with terrorism

GS Paper IV

This Ethics paper in the UPSC mains syllabus includes questions to check the candidates' attitude and approach to issues relating to integrity and probity in public life and his/her problem-solving approach to various societal issues. Questions may utilise the case study approach to determine these aspects and the exam covers area as mentioned in the syllabus given below.

- Ethics and Human Interface
 - Essence of Ethics, Determinants and Consequences of Ethics in Human Interaction
 - Dimensions of Ethics
 - Ethics in private and public relationships
 - Human Values – lessons from the lives and teachings of great leaders, reformers and administrators
 - Role of family, society and educational institutions in inculcating moral and ethical values
- Attitude
 - Content, structure and function of attitude
 - Influence of attitude in thought and behaviour
 - Relation of attitude to thought and behaviour
 - Moral and Political attitudes
 - Social influence and persuasion
- Aptitude
 - Aptitude and foundational values of Civil Service
 - Integrity
 - Impartiality and non-partisanship
 - Objectivity
 - Dedication to public service
 - Empathy, tolerance and compassion towards the weaker sections of the society
- Emotional Intelligence

- Concepts of emotional intelligence
 - Utility and application of emotional intelligence in administration and governance
- Contributions of Thinkers and Philosophers
 - Contributions of moral thinkers and philosophers from India and the world to the concepts of morality
- Public/Civil Service Values and Ethics in Public Administration
 - Status and associated problems
 - Ethical concerns and dilemmas in government and private institutions
 - Laws, rules, regulations and conscience as sources of ethical guidance
 - Accountability and ethical governance
 - Strengthening of ethical and moral values in governance
 - Ethical Issues in international relations and funding
 - Corporate governance
- Probity in Governance
 - Concept of public service
 - The philosophical basis of governance and probity
 - Information sharing and transparency in government
 - Right to Information
 - Codes of ethics
 - Codes of Conduct
 - Citizen's Charters
 - Work culture
 - Quality of service delivery
 - Utilization of public funds
 - Challenges of corruption

Optional Subject (Two Papers)

A candidate has to choose one optional subject (out of a total of 48 options). There will be two papers for a combined total of 500 marks. Selecting the [best optional subject](#) for UPSC mains should be a careful and considered decision. Refer to the link given above to understand which optional subject will be the best for you.

Please check the optional subjects' syllabus from the link below:

[Optional Subjects Syllabus](#)

