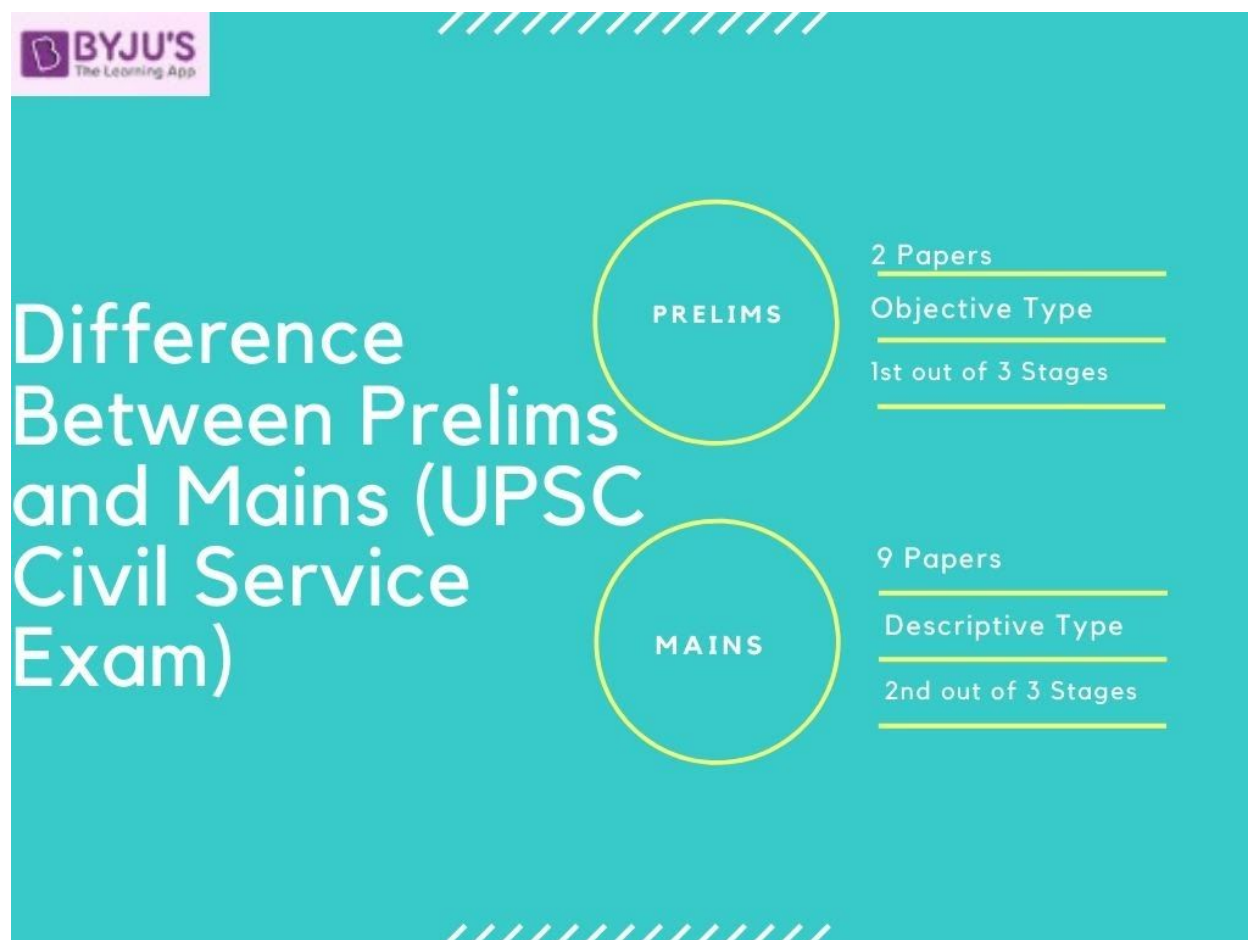


Difference between the Prelims and Mains is explained here in detail. The most prestigious and the most competitive exam conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) is the Civil Services Examination. This is for various Group A and Group B posts in the Government. The difference between Prelims and Mains given here can help the UPSC Civil Service exam aspirants to plan their preparations accordingly.



Aspirants would find this article very helpful while preparing for the [IAS Exam](#).

The major Differences between Prelims and Mains (UPSC Civil Service Exam) are:

| Prelims | Mains |
|--|--|
| Preliminary Examination is the 1st stage of Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) Civil Service Exam. | Mains Examination is the 2nd stage of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) Civil Service Exam. |
| UPSC Civil Service Prelims exam follows Objective Type pattern and the answers must | UPSC Mains Civil Service exam follows a descriptive pattern. The answers need to be |

| | |
|---|---|
| be marked in an OMR sheet. | handwritten in a question-cum-answer booklet. |
| Prelims is the qualifying stage for UPSC Civil Service Mains Exam. | Only candidates who clears the Prelims Exam are eligible to appear for the UPSC Civil Service Mains Exam. |
| UPSC Civil Service Prelims exam has 2 General Studies papers - GS 1 and GS 2/CSAT (Civil Service Aptitude Test) | UPSC Civil Service Mains Exam has 9 papers, out of which only 7 are evaluated for ranking purpose and in other 2 papers, candidates need to just get the qualifying marks. |
| There are no optional subjects in the Prelims of UPSC Civil Service Exam. | There are 48 Optional subjects available for UPSC Civil Service Mains Exam. Candidates appearing for the Mains exam have to choose just 1 optional paper out of 48. There will be 2 papers for the optional subject. |
| <p>General Studies Paper 1 - This paper covers subjects ranging from Current Affairs, Economy, Social Development, Indian Polity & Governance, Indian History & National Movement, Science and Technology, Indian and World Geography, Environment, Ecology, Biodiversity and Climate Change.</p> <p>General Studies Paper 2/CSAT - This paper covers topics related to Logical Reasoning, Analytical Ability, Quantitative Ability, Reading Comprehension, Decision making skills, Communication Skills etc.</p> | <p>Paper A - Candidates have to choose 1 compulsory Indian Language.</p> <p>Paper B - This is a compulsory English paper.</p> <p>Paper I - This is an Essay Paper.</p> <p>Paper II (General Studies Paper I) - It Covers subjects related to Indian Heritage & Culture, History & Geography of the World & Society.</p> <p>Paper III (General Studies Paper II) - This paper covers Governance, Constitution, Welfare Initiatives, Social Justice & International Relations</p> <p>Paper IV (General Studies III) - Technology, Economic Development, Agriculture, Biodiversity, Security & Disaster Management</p> <p>Paper V (General Studies IV) - This paper covers topics on Ethics, Integrity & Aptitude</p> <p>Paper VI - This is the paper 1 of Optional Subject.</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| | Paper VII - This is the Paper 2 of Optional Subject |
| In Prelims, Paper II/CSAT paper is a qualifying exam with 33% pass criteria. | In Mains, Indian Language paper and English paper are only qualifying in nature, candidates should not be complacent, if they score below 25% in either of them, their remaining answer sheets won't even be evaluated. |
| Time Duration for both papers in Prelims is 2 hours each. | Time duration for all 9 papers in Mains is 3 hours each. |
| The maximum marks for both the papers of Prelims is 200 marks each. | In the Mains, the Total Marks for each Paper i.e. Paper I to VII is 250 marks, the English and Indian Language Paper is for a total of 300 marks each. |

These are the main differences between Prelims and Mains of UPSC Civil Service Exam. The differences given in the above table can help the UPSC Civil Service Exam aspirants to answer any related questions easily in the exams.

After learning the differences between Prelims and Mains, learn comprehensively about the strategies, books and syllabus for UPSC Civil Service Prelims and Mains exam and latest current affairs. Also download and learn the NCERT notes of Modern Indian History, Ancient Indian History, Medieval Indian History; Art, Culture, Architecture and Literature NCERT Notes, Indian Economy, Polity, Environment & Ecology, Geography, Science & Technology Notes. Visit the below given links to understand the books, strategies and complete syllabus for UPSC Civil Service Prelims Exam and UPSC Civil Service Mains Exam and a host of other study materials for Ancient, Medieval & Modern Indian History, Geography, Science & Technology, Indian Polity, Indian and World Geography; Art, Culture, Literature and Architecture Notes.

- [UPSC Civil Service Prelims Exam - Books, Strategy, and Notes](#)
- [UPSC Civil Service Prelims Exam - Syllabus](#)
- [UPSC Civil Service Mains Exam \(General Studies Papers\) - Syllabus](#)
- [UPSC Civil Service Mains Exam \(Optional Subjects\) - Detailed Syllabus, Preparation Strategy](#)
- [CSAT \(UPSC Prelims GS-II\) - Syllabus and Strategy](#)
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The above details would help candidates prepare for [UPSC 2020](#).

Related Links

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| IAS Salary | Static GK |
| Deepest Lake in India | IAS Topper Interview |
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| MPPSC Notification | President Election in India |