

Best Booklist for Art & Culture for IAS Exam

Art & Culture is an important segment of the civil services examination. The subject Art & Culture is a fragment of Indian History but is vast in itself. It does not find an exclusive mention in the Prelims syllabus of the [IAS Exam](#), however, UPSC Mains GS-I mentions Indian Culture - Salient aspects of Art Forms, Literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times. Read on to know which the best resources to prepare Art & Culture are and what can be the right strategy to prepare it for the UPSC Exam.

To get a list of relevant books for UPSC preparation, once can refer to linked articles below that can be useful to cover [UPSC Syllabus](#):

Best History Books for IAS Preparation	Tips to Study from Laxmikanth for Indian Polity for UPSC
UPSC Mains Booklist for International Relations	Environment & Ecology Books for UPSC
Best Books for Ethics, Integrity & Aptitude	Complete list of NCERT Books for UPSC

UPSC Art & Culture Books for Prelims & Mains

As mentioned earlier, Art & Culture is not mentioned separately in the syllabus of UPSC Prelims. However, as seen in the questions asked in the prelims, topics like architecture, visual art and literature become important for this stage too. You can see examples of such questions asked in previous years below:

Year 2019

Q- Building 'Kalyana Mandapam' was a notable feature in the temple construction in the kingdom of

- (a) Chalukya
- (b) Chandela
- (c) Rashtrakuta
- (d) Vijayanagara

Again, once an aspirant reads about the architecture of the Vijayanagar Empire, he/she will read about Kalyana Mandapam.

Year 2018

Q - In which of the following relief sculpture inscriptions is 'Ranyo Ashoka' (King Ashoka) mentioned along with the stone portrait of Ashoka?

- (a) Kanganahalli
- (b) Sanchi
- (c) Shahbazgarhi
- (d) Sohgaora

Aspirants will read about inscriptions when they read about Mauryan Empire and also when they read about Architecture of Mauryan Empire.

Q - With reference to the Mian Tansen, which one of the following statement is not correct

- (a) Tansen was the title given to him by Emperor Akbar
- (b) Tansen composed Dhrupads on Hindu god and goddesses
- (c) Tansen composed songs on his patrons
- (d) Tansen invented many Ragas

Now, it can be said that this question is not related to art and culture, but in reality, it is. Once an aspirant reads about Performing Arts and under it, when they will read about classical music, they will come to know about Ragas, Dhrupads and with that they will know about Tansen.

Year 2013

Some Buddhist rock-cut caves are called Chaityas, while the others are called Viharas. What is the difference between the two?

- a. Vihara is a place of worship, while Chaitya is the dwelling place of the monks
- b. Chaitya is a place of worship, while Vihara is the dwelling place of the monks
- c. Chaitya is the stupa at the far end of the cave, while Vihara is the hall axial to it
- d. There is no material difference between the two

The question had come from the Buddhist architecture which is a sub-topic of Architecture mentioned in the syllabus of the [UPSC Mains](#).

Solution (b)

Year 2012

Q. Lord Buddha's image is sometimes shown with the hand gesture called 'Bhumisparsha Mudra'. It symbolizes

- (a) Buddha's calling of the Earth to watch over Mara and to prevent Mara from disturbing his meditation
- (b) Buddha's calling of the Earth to witness his purity and chastity despite the temptations of Mara
- (c) Buddha's reminder to his followers that they all arise from the Earth and finally dissolve into the Earth, and thus this life is transitory
- (d) Both the statements (a) and (b) are correct in this context

For this question, an aspirant can answer once he reads about the art and literature of Buddhism.

To see what kind of questions from the Art & Culture section have been asked in the Mains, aspirants can check [Art & Culture Questions in UPSC Mains GS 1](#) page.

While, in UPSC Mains, more questions are asked from Art & Culture in GS 1 Paper. Aspirants can get the entire trend analysis of subject-wise questions in our UPSC [Mains GS 1 strategy, syllabus and structure](#) page.

The table below mentions the important Art & Culture books for UPSC:

Art & Culture Books for IAS Exam	
S.No	Art & Culture Books & Other Resources
	NCERT Class 11 - Living Crafts Traditions of India
	NCERT Class 11 - An Introduction to Indian Art Part-I
3.	NCERT Class 12 - Craft Traditions of India
4.	Indian Art & Culture By Nitin Singhania
5.	NIOS Art & Culture Notes
6.	CCRT Books from Ministry of Culture
7.	Friday Review of The Hindu newspaper that covers Art & Culture segment

How to Prepare for Art & Culture for UPSC?

Art & Culture covers the following topics and sub-topics, mentioned in the table below:

UPSC Art & Culture Topics	
Topics	Sub-Topics
Salient Art Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performing Arts - • Visual Arts • Literary Arts
	Visual Arts
	Literary Arts
Literature (Ancient to Modern Times)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literary Sources • Vedic Literature • Buddhist Literature • Jain Literature • Sangam Literature • Other Literature
Architecture (Ancient to Modern Times)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indus Valley Civilization Architecture • Rock Cut Architecture • Buddhist Architecture • Temple Architecture • Modern Architecture

Tips to cover the above-mentioned topics:

1. The first and foremost thing is to refer to previous year question papers and analyse what kind of questions are actually asked in the exam. You can get [topic-wise GS 1 questions](#) from the linked article.
2. Cover each topic of History in following subtopics:
 - a. Religion
 - b. Architecture
 - c. Literature
 - d. Miscellaneous. While reading any topic of history from any book, if you come across a fact that is related to any of the subtopics mentioned-above, you can make a note of it under your art and culture notes.
3. Focus on topics likes:
 - . Dance Forms - Background and Details
 - a. Puppetry
 - b. Indian Philosophy Schools
 - c. Architecture of all types
 - d. Martial Arts, etc.

You can also fetch important [Art & Culture notes for UPSC](#) from the linked article.

Conclusion

Art & Culture is a part of Indian History from ancient times to modern times. Indian Heritage is a pride of the country and hence, extreme importance should be given to the art and culture evolution in India.

Like Art & Culture, there are other other major subjects which are covered in the GS paper 1 of UPSC Mains. Candidates can check the GS 1 related articles from the links below:

GS 1 Structure, Strategy and Syllabus	Topic-Wise GS 1 Questions for UPSC Mains
History Questions for UPSC Mains	Art & Culture Questions for UPSC Mains GS 1
Geography Questions for UPSC Mains	Indian Society Questions for UPSC Mains GS 1