History Syllabus For UPSC

History Optional Subject has 2 papers (Paper I and Paper II) in UPSC Mains. Each paper is of 250 marks with a total of 500 marks. History for simplification is divided into four parts for candidates:

1. Ancient Indian History - [Ancient Indian History NCERT Notes](#)
2. Medieval Indian History - [Medieval Indian History NCERT Notes](#)
3. Modern Indian History - [Modern Indian history Notes](#)
4. World History - [UPSC World History Material](#)

Find below the IAS History syllabus:

UPSC Syllabus History Optional Paper I:

1. **Sources**
   
   Archaeological sources:
   
   Exploration, excavation, epigraphy, numismatics, monuments.
   
   Literary sources:
   
   Indigenous: Primary and secondary; poetry, scientific literature, literature, literature in regional languages, religious literature.
   
   Foreign account: Greek, Chinese and Arab writers.

2. **Pre-history and Proto-history:**
   
   Geographical factors; hunting and gathering (paleolithic and mesolithic); Beginning of agriculture (neolithic and chalcolithic).

3. **Indus Valley Civilization:**
   
   Origin, date, extent, characteristics-decline, survival and significance, art, architecture.

4. **Megalithic Cultures:**
   
   Distribution of pastoral and farming cultures outside the Indus, Development of community life, Settlements, Development of agriculture, Crafts, Pottery, and industry.
5. **Aryans and Vedic Period**

Expansions of Aryans in India:

Vedic Period: Religious and philosophic literature; Transformation from Rig Vedic period to the later Vedic period; Political, social and economical life; Significance of the Vedic Age; Evolution of Monarchy and Varna system.

6. **Period of Mahajanapadas**

Formation of States (Mahajanapada): Republics and monarchies; Rise of urban centres; Trade routes; Economic growth; Introduction of coinage; Spread of Jainism and Buddhism; Rise of Magadha and Nandas.

Iranian and Macedonian invasions and their impact.

7. **Mauryan Empire**

Foundation of the Mauryan Empire, Chandragupta, Kautilya and Arthashastra; Ashoka; Concept of Dharma; Edicts; Polity, Administration, Economy; Art, architecture and sculpture; External contacts; Religion; Spread of religion; Literature.

Disintegration of the empire; sungas and Kanvas.

8. **Post-Mauryan Period (Indo-Greeks, Sakas, Kushanas, Western Kshatrapas)**

Contact with outside world; growth of urban centres, economy, coinage, development of religions, Mahayana, social conditions, art, architecture, culture, literature and science.
9. Early State and Society in Eastern India, Deccan and South India:

Kharavela, The Satavahanas, Tamil States of the Sangam Age; Administration, Economy, land grants, coinage, trade guilds and urban centres; Buddhist centres; Sangam literature and culture; Art and architecture.

10. Guptas, Vakatakas and Vardhanas:

Polity and administration, Economic conditions, Coinage of the Guptas, Land grants, Decline of urban centres, Indian feudalism, Caste system, Position of women, Education and educational institutions; Nalanda, Vikramshila and Vallabhi, Literature, scientific literature, art and architecture.

11. Regional States during Gupta Era:

The Kadambas, Pallavas, Chalukyas of Badami; Polity and Administration, Trade guilds, Literature; growth of Vaishnava and Saiva religions. Tamil Bhakita movement, Shankaracharya; Vedanta; Institutions of temple and temple architecture; Palas, Senas, Rashtrakutas, Paramaras, Polity and administration; Cultural aspects. Arab conquest of Sind; Alberuni, The Chaluky as of Kalyana, Cholas, Hoysalas, Pandyas; Polity and Administration; Local Government; Growth of art and architecture, religious sects, Institution of temple and Mathas, Agraharas, education and literature, economy and society.

12. Themes in Early Indian Cultural History:

Languages and texts, major stages in the evolution of art and architecture, major philosophical thinkers and schools, ideas in Science and Mathematics.
13. **Early Medieval India, 750-1200:**

- Polity: Major political developments in Northern India and the peninsula, origins of the rise of Rajputs.
- The Cholas: administration, village economy and society “Indian Feudalism”.
- Agrarian economy and urban settlements.
- Trade and commerce.
- Society: the status of the Brahman and the new social order.
- Condition of women.
- Indian science and technology.

14. **Cultural Traditions in India, 750-1200:**

- Philosophy: Skankaracharya and Vedanta, Ramanuja and Vishishtadva, Madhva and Brahma-Mimansa.

- Religion: Forms and features of religion, Tamil devotional cult, growth of Bhakti, and its arrival in India, Sufism.

- Literature: Literature in Sanskrit, growth of Tamil literature, literature in the most developing languages, Kalhan's Rajtarangini, Alberuni's India.

- Art and Architecture: Temple architecture, sculpture, painting.
15. The Thirteenth Century:
   — Economic, Social and cultural consequences.

16. The Fourteenth Century:
   — “The Khalji Revolution”.
   — Alauddin Khalji: Conquests and territorial expansion, agrarian and economic measure.
   — Muhammad Tughluq: Major projects, agrarian measures, bureaucracy of Muhammad Tughluq.
   — Firuz Tugluq: Agrarian measures, achievements in civil engineering and public works, decline of the Sultanate, foreign contacts and Ibn Battuta’s account.

17. Society, Culture and Economy in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries:
   — Society: composition of rural society, ruling classes, town dwellers, women, religious classes, caste and slavery under the Sultanate, Bhakti movement, Sufi movement.
   — Culture: Persian literature, literature in the regional languages of North India, literaute in the languages of South India, Sultanate architecture and new structural forms, painting, evolution of a composite culture.
   — Economy: Agricultural Production, rise of urban economy and non-agricultural production, trade and commerce.
18. **The Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Century-Political Developments and Economy:**
   - Rise of Provincial Dynasties: Bengal, Kashmir (Zainul Abedin), Gujarat.
   - Malwa, Bahmanids.
   - The Vijayanagara Empire.
   - Lodis.
   - Mughal Empire, first phase: Babur, Humayun.
   - The Sur Empire: Sher Shah’s administration.
   - Portuguese colonial enterprise, Bhakti and Sufi Movements.

19. **The Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Century—Society and culture:**
   - Regional cultures specificities.
   - Literary traditions.
   - Provincial architectural.
   - Society, culture, literature and the arts in Vijayanagara Empire.
20. Akbar:
   - Conquests and consolidation of empire.
   - Establishment of jagir and mansab systems.
   - Rajput policy.
   - Evolution of religious and social outlook. Theory of Sulh-i-kul and religious policy.
   - Court patronage of art and technology.

21. Mughal Empire in the Seventeenth Century:
   - Major administrative policies of Jahangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb.
   - The Empire and the Zamindars.
   - Religious policies of Jahangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb.
   - Nature of the Mughal State.
   - Late Seventeenth Century crisis and the revolts.
   - The Ahom kingdom.
   - Shivaji and the early Maratha Kingdom.

22. Economy and society, in the 16th and 17th Centuries:
   - Population Agricultural and craft production.
   - Towns, commerce with Europe through Dutch, English and French companies: a trade revolution.
   - Indian mercantile classes. Banking, insurance and credit systems.
   - Conditions of peasants, Condition of Women.
   - Evolution of the Sikh community and the Khalsa Panth.
23. **Culture during Mughal Empire:**
   - Persian histories and other literature.
   - Hindi and religious literatures.
   - Mughal architecture.
   - Mughal painting.
   - Provincial architecture and painting.
   - Classical music.
   - Science and technology.

24. **The Eighteenth Century:**
   - Factors for the decline of the Mughal Empire.
   - The regional principalities: Nizam’s Deccan, Bengal, Awadh.
   - Maratha ascendancy under the Peshwas.
   - The Maratha fiscal and financial system.
   - Emergence of Afghan power Battle of Panipat, 1761.
   - State of, political, cultural and economic, on eve of the British conquest.

Candidates should check [UPSC 2020](https://byjus.com) article to align their History Optional preparation accordingly.
UPSC Syllabus History Optional Paper II:

1. European Penetration into India:
   The Early European Settlements; The Portuguese and the Dutch; The English and the French East India Companies; Their struggle for supremacy; Carnatic Wars; Bengal-The conflict between the English and the Nawabs of Bengal; Siraj and the English; The Battle of Plassey; Significance of Plassey.

2. British Expansion in India:
   Bengal-Mir Jafar and Mir Kasim; The Battle of Buxar; Mysore; The Marathas; The three Anglo-Maratha Wars; The Punjab.

3. Early Structure of the British Raj:
   The Early administrative structure; From diarchy to direct control; The Regulating Act (1773); The Pitt's India Act (1784); The Charter Act (1833); The Voice of free trade and the changing character of British colonial rule; The English utilitarian and India.

4. Economic Impact of British Colonial Rule:
   (a) Land revenue settlements in British India; The Permanent Settlement; Ryotwari Settlement; Mahalwari Settlement; Economic impact of the revenue arrangements; Commercialization of agriculture; Rise of landless agrarian labourers; Impoverishment of the rural society.
   (b) Dislocation of traditional trade and commerce; De-industrialisation; Decline of traditional crafts; Drain of wealth; Economic transformation of India; Railroad and communication network including telegraph and postal services; Famine and poverty in the rural interior; European business enterprise and its limitations.
5. Social and Cultural Developments:

The state of indigenous education, its dislocation; Orientalist-Anglicist controversy, introduction of western education in India; The rise of press, literature and public opinion; The rise of modern vernacular literature; Progress of Science; Christian missionary activities in India.

6. Social and Religious Reform Movements in Bengal and Other Areas:

Ram Mohan Roy, The Brahmo Movement; Devendranath Tagore; Iswarcharan Vidyasagar; The Young Bengal Movement; Dayanada Saraswati; The social reform movements in India including Sati, widow remarriage, child marriage etc.; contribution of Indian renaissance to the growth of modern India; Islamic revivalism-the Feraizi and Wahabi Movements.

7. Indian Response to British Rule:

Peasant movement and tribal uprisings in the 18th and 19th centuries including Rangpur Dhing (1783), the Kol Rebellion (1832), the Mopla Rebellion in Malabar (1841-1920), the Santal Hul (1855), Indigo Rebellion (1859-60), Deccan Uprising (1875) and the Munda Ulgulan (1899-1900); The Great Revolt of 1857 — Origin, character, causes of failure, the consequences; The shift in the character of peasant uprisings in the post-1857 period: the peasant movements of the 1920s and 1930s.
8. Factors leading to the birth of Indian Nationalism; Politics of Association; Foundation of the Indian National Congress; The Safety-valve thesis relating to the birth of the Congress; Programme and objectives of Early Congress; the social composition of early Congress leadership; the Moderates and Extremists; Partition of Bengal (1905); The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal; the economic and political aspects of Swadeshi Movement; The beginning of revolutionary extremism in India.

9. Rise of Gandhi; Character of Gandhian nationalism; Gandhi's popular appeal; Rowlatt Satyagraha; the Khilafat Movement; the Non-cooperation Movement; National politics from the end of the Non-cooperation movement to the beginning of the Civil Disobedience Movement; the two phases of the Civil Disobedience Movement; Simon Commission; The Nehru Report; the Round Table Conferences; Nationalism and Peasant Movements; Nationalism and Working class movements; Women and Indian youth and students in Indian politics (1885-1947): the election of 1937 and formation of ministries; Cripps Mission; the Quit India Movement; the Wavell Mission; The Cabinet Mission.

10. Constitutional Developments in the Colonial India between 1858 and 1935.

11. Other strands in the National Movement.

   The Revolutionaries: Bengal, the Punjab, Maharashtra, U.P. the Madras Presidency and Outside India.

   The Left; The Left within the Congress: Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose, Congress Socialist Party; the Communist Party of India, other left parties.

12. Politics of Separatism; the Muslim League; the Hindu Mahasabha; Communalism in India; the politics of partition; Transfer of power; Independence.

13. Consolidation as a Nation; Nehru's Foreign Policy; India and her neighbours (1947-1964); The linguistic reorganisation of States (1935-1947); Regionalism and regional inequality; Integration of Princely States; Princes in electoral politics; Question of National Language.
14. Caste and Ethnicity after 1947; Backward Castes and Tribes in post-colonial elections; Politics; Dalit movements.

15. Economic development and political change; Land reforms; the politics of planning and rural reconstruction; Ecology and environmental policy in post-colonial India; Progress of Science.

16. **Enlightenment and Modern ideas:**
   (i) Major Ideas of Enlightenment: Kant, Rousseau.
   (ii) Spread of Enlightenment in the colonies.
   (iii) Rise of socialist ideas (up to Marx); spread of Marxian Socialism.

17. **Origins of Modern Politics:**
   (i) European States System.
   (ii) American Revolution and the Constitution.
   (iii) French Revolution and Aftermath, 1789-1815.
   (iv) American Civil War with reference to Abraham Lincoln and the abolition of slavery.
   (v) British Democratic politics, 1815-1850: Parliamentary Reformers, Free Trade, Chartists.
18. **Industrialization**:
   (i) English Industrial Revolution: Causes and Impact on Society.
   (ii) Industrialization in other countries: USA, Germany, Russia, Japan.
   (iii) Industrialization and Globalization.

19. **Nation-State System**:
   (i) Rise of Nationalism in 19th century.
   (ii) Nationalism: State-building in Germany and Italy.
   (iii) Disintegration of Empires in the face of the emergence of nationalities across the World.

20. **Imperialism and Colonialism**:
   (i) South and South-East Asia.
   (ii) Latin America and South Africa.
   (iii) Australia.
   (iv) Imperialism and free trade: Rise of neo-imperialism.

21. **Revolution and Counter-Revolution**:
   **Revolution**:
   (i) 19th Century European revolutions.
   (iii) Fascist Counter-Revolution, Italy and Germany.
22. World Wars:
(i) 1st and 2nd World Wars as Total Wars: Societal implications.
(ii) World War I: Causes and Consequences.
(iii) World War II: Causes and Consequences.

23. The World after World War II:
(i) Emergence of Two power blocs.
(ii) Emergence of Third World and non-alignment.
(iii) UNO and the global disputes.

24. Liberation from Colonial Rule:
(i) Latin America-Bolivar.
(ii) Arab World-Egypt.
(iii) Africa-Apartheid to Democracy.
(iv) South-East Asia-Vietnam.

25. Decolonization and Underdevelopment:
(i) Factors constraining Development; Latin America, Africa.

26. Unification of Europe:
(i) Post War Foundations; NATO and European Community.
(ii) Consolidation and Expansion of European Community.
(iii) European Union.

27. Disintegration of Soviet Union and the Rise of the Unipolar World:
(iii) End of the Cold War and US Ascendancy in the World as the lone superpower.