

Classical languages in India - UPSC Prelims

Art and culture is an unavoidable part UPSC IAS Prelims Examination. Indian culture is a sundry topic. It incorporates cultural phase from ancient, medieval to modern times. UPSC aspirants always find it difficult to solve the questions from the Culture segment is quite factual in nature. Indian culture includes of Art, Literature, and Architecture.

Aspirants should try to try to find relevant current issues from newspaper and prepare it. In recent times, few languages were added to the class of classical languages, so UPSC asked a question in 2014. In such a manner there are a lot of literary festivals of national importance are conducted. In this scenario, it is important to know about the classical languages of India.

According to Article 343, the official language of India should be Hindi in the Devanagari script. As per the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, we have 22 languages. In 2004 it was decided by the Indian Government to proclaim Indian Languages meeting certain requirements as "Classical Language". Here we are giving the details about the classical languages in India.

Classical Languages of India Criteria

The idea of Classicism had its origin in Europe. According to information provided by the **Ministry of Culture** in the Rajya Sabha in February 2014, the guidelines for declaring a language as 'Classical' are listed below. The Government tracks the following criteria to define the eligibility of language to be considered for classification as "classical language":

- Extraordinary antiquity of its early transcripts or verified history over a period of 1500-2000 years.
- A body of ancient literature or texts, which is considered a valuable heritage by generations of speakers.
- The literary tradition should be original and unique, and certainly not hired from another language community.
- The classical language and literature being diverse from modern, there may also be a discontinuity among the classical language and its later forms or its sprouts.

Classical Languages

- In 2004, the Government of India declared Tamil as the Classical Language of India.
- In 2005, right after Tamil, the government declared Sanskrit as a Classical Language of India. These two languages are undeniably parental sources for several languages belonging to the Indo-European family and the Dravidian family of language groups.
- The government gave the classical language status to Kannada and Telugu in 2008.
- Malayalam was declared as a classical language in 2013 and in 2014, Odia was also given the status of the Classical language.

Also See:

[List of Languages in the 8th Schedule](#)

Frequently asked questions related to classical language

What is the meaning of classical language?

A classical language is a language with an independent literary tradition and a large and ancient body of written literature. Classical languages are typically dead languages, or show a high degree of diglossia, as the spoken varieties of the language diverge further away from the classical written language over time.

How many classical languages are there in India?

Six languages in India namely Tamil, Telugu, Sanskrit, Kannada, Malayalam and Odia have been given the status of classical language.

Which is the first Indian language to be given a classical language status?

Six languages in India namely Tamil, Telugu, Sanskrit, Kannada, Malayalam and Odia have been given the status of classical language. The first language to be accorded with that status is Tamil. Tamil was declared classical language back in 2004. As per Schedule VIII of the Constitution of India, 22 languages have been recognised as Scheduled languages.