

Reading Between the Lines: PREPARING FOR THE CIVIL SERVICES EXAMINATION

Designed, Written and Compiled by
Nikhil Pavan Kalyan, IAS

Contributions by:

Ravi Shankar Shukla, IAS
Dr. Shena Aggarwal, IAS
Vibhu Goel, IAS
Ajay Singh Tomer, IAS
Ramachandran R, IAS
K Thavaseelan, IAS
Anupam Saha, IAS
Harshika Singh, IAS
Bhuvnesh Pratap Singh, IAS
Rukmani Riar, IAS
Nitesh Patil, IAS
Suhas Sivanna, IAS
Prince Dhawan, IAS
Surabhi Malik, IAS
Mangesh Kumar, IAS
Dr. Piyush Singla, IAS
Rajanvir Singh Kapur, IAS
Ashish Bhargava, IAS

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I was an aspirant for the civil services examination, just like any one of you reading this document, and had to search for all sorts of guidance and support to help my preparation. I did get a great deal of guidance from seniors and friends, young and old, for which I owe even a greater deal of debt. At the same time, I also looked out for any documents or material that could help me understand the expectations of the exam and to be well prepared. I was lucky to find a document online “How to Crack Civil Services Examination”, that helped me immensely. I found exactly what I was looking for!

Ever since, I was forwarding that document to all those aspirants who are looking for guidance and information. It was carefully drafted, thanks to the great efforts of the senior batches of the civil services who made the document. It's been more than seven years since this document was drafted. The pattern of Prelims has changed in 2011 (with the inclusion of CSAT paper and deletion of the optional paper) and the ways of preparation has also considerably changed during this period, with more and more necessity to browse the Internet resources than just sitting with thick books.

Now since the examination pattern has changed significantly for the mains as well (after the March 2013 notification), I feel it is time to update, to revisit this document thoroughly from scratch. Thus the start of this endeavor, to bring out a comprehensive guide to better prepare for the changed civil services examination: *“Reading between the lines: Preparing for the Civil Services Examination”*.

I thank all of my batch mates who encouraged and helped me in making this document. I also thank those who were critical of this effort, as they helped me in having a more clear direction and conviction on the necessity in making this document. And special thanks to all the members of the Society for Social Services, Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, **2012 batch**, for taking up the task of completing this document. They helped with their respective optional subject information, apart from general suggestions on Prelims, GS, Essay and

Interview. Their experiences, suggestions, preparation plans, thoughts and strategies are all well enveloped, to help you better equip yourselves for the examination, so that you all would not repeat the mistakes they (we) did. I can only acknowledge through mentioning their names in the contribution list, but I can never measure the impact of their support, on all of us.

I am very happy that finally this document is coming out and reaching you. It has always been a cherished dream of mine, to make the document, for the benefit of you all. It feels awesome seeing dreams come true!

I hope this document can help, at least a few of you.

All the best!

Nikhil Pavan Kalyan, IAS
Mussoorie
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PREFACE

We hope to make this document as comprehensive as possible, to cover all aspects of the preparation for all stages of the examination. It is a written compilation of the plans, mistakes and suggestions of the previous rankers, to be specific, from the 2012 IAS/IPS/IFS batch.

But it is important to keep in mind, that the document is prepared *from the perspective of an civil services aspirant*: how a person planning to appear for the civil services examination would (and should) think and approach his preparation and what all things he would (must) keep in mind and start doing a planned preparation. We are not attempting any 'coaching' nor there are any theories that we put forward that will **assure** a sure pass through the examination. We tried to bring out those *plans and strategies, tips and tricks* that any aspirant generally craves for. We all here (at the academy currently) have passed this phase of an aspirant; we hope that we could do justice in providing the best possible perspective to prepare for the examination. There might probably be better alternatives or suggestions that either be contradicting what we try to explain here, or be more effective. Nevertheless, we have conviction in what we detail in this document, that the suggestions provided will definitely help, one way or the other, all those aspirants who can perfectly understand the expectations of the total examination process and who can *read between the lines*!

We have gone away from the previous title, "How to Crack the Civil services Examination" and used "*Reading between the lines: Preparing for the Civil Services Examination*" not just to make a point that it is a totally new effort, but to emphasize that we want to provide a perspective for the preparation as a whole and not any direct methods to crack a particular examination. Also, it is important for aspirants *to understand the underlying objective of the exam* while preparing, at almost every stage of preparation. To drive this point, we preferred to include "Reading between the lines" as the primary title for this document.

It is practically impossible to explain each and everything that is relevant to the preparation. We intentionally stayed away from attempting anything near to such an idea because of the very nature of the

preparation. It is *so much unique to each of us*, so much based on personality, habits and attitudes that a one-stop solution is not possible.

The previous document had a ‘disclaimer’ saying the authors are not responsible if any aspirant does not get success after following their suggestions! We are not going to write any such thing (and please don’t go legal☺). This document describes the experiences, suggestions and the fundamentals to be followed; it is up to you to choose whether they will help you or not. And you better choose, one way or the other. We firmly believe that the coming up pages can really provide a direction for your preparation and imbibe confidence.

There are many institutes, books, web resources and sites suggested in this document, it is worth mentioning that we do not have any allegiance with any of these names or sites. We felt all these resources are very essential for one’s preparation and took the freedom to use them wherever they are needed.

This document is a compilation of distinct preparation styles of rankers. So, there will be contradictions at times of aspects between pages. We tried our best to find such contradictions and replace them with the best possible suggestion(s), after thorough discussions, but please be advised to read between the lines, there will be no contradictions!

And for the same reason, there will be many repetitions as well, in what we say. Take it as neither coincidence nor reluctance, but providence!

Please excuse us for any typos or other mistakes. We will try and rectify them in an upcoming version(s) of the document.

Also, please send us your ideas, strategies, suggestions, concerns, comments and any general feedback about the document so that we can assess and incorporate them into the future versions for the benefit of all.

BEFORE YOU START

Every career option has its own pros and cons. If some careers give challenging work environment, some are highly lucrative. If some are cool, peaceful and follow a routine, other options are more on the move with no time to even breathe.

There are many wrong reasons which become, most of the times, the driving factor(s) for choosing Civil Services as a career. These include: Money and opportunity to earn enormous wealth leading to a royal life style, unbridled power, sense of bravado that 'I can do anything if I become a civil servant', a sense of security that 'once I get into civil services I will have unlimited job security and can easily float even if I am a non-performer'. True, all of the above, but definitely wrong.

The notion of power that we generally identify civil services with, is totally misrepresented and many a times, overrated. We perceive it as a personalized power in the civil servant whereas this power is institutionalized, trans-personalized and largely de-personalized in fact. The power belongs to the job and stays with the job. The powers of the civil servants are parallel and co-terminus to their accountabilities and responsibilities. So any illusion regarding the sense of bravado should be confronted at the very beginning.

Let us make it very clear that the salary of a civil servant at the beginning is around a meager forty thousand rupee and it can go up more than a lakh at the max (when it's almost time to retire). Whatever we get is more than sufficient for a decent life, anytime and there is no way one can make a great deal of money through their salaries and perks. The ways to make money are full of illegality and immorality and one should never attempt to build his/her career on the foundation stone of such obnoxious rocks. So, please don't opt civil services for making money!

Now coming to the right reasons for choosing civil services as a career. First is the diverse nature of the job. You contribute to policy making as well as policy implementation, work in diverse situations from headquarters to the field. One day you are working in agriculture department, next day you are in tourism. Second is the possibility of maximum human interface, interaction with the public, which makes the

job lively and humanistic. Third is the challenging nature of job. You are in charge of one entire district or department or embassy or law and order, for that matter. It is a 24* 7 job. You cannot switch off your mobile phone. You are contributing for not a company or an institute or an organization but for building, protecting and developing a nation. Fourth reason is the better job security leading to the highest of job satisfaction. And finally, there lies an opportunity to serve the public, contribute in the betterment of the society, leaving a mark of your work and an opportunity to deliver good governance and there is no other job with such wide reach from PMO to the small hut of a daily laborer in some remote tribal village and from UNO to the capitol of any of the country in the world map.

It is obvious then, with the 'right things' mentioned above, there also comes a baggage with these public jobs, a baggage that we all have to carry no matter what the position is. Political and senior bureaucratic pressures would try define the routine of some of the civil servants, some struggle to find the right balance between the professional life and their personal lives compromising on one or both of them at times, and finding it tough to stay motivated. One has to be prepared for such by-products and unwanted interventions. One has to be courageous.

The first step towards your success is to choose your goal honestly. You shouldn't choose it just because your father or mother has a dream or there is a pressure from your social circle. ***It should come from your heart.*** And once you have decided upon your choice, stick with it. This exam is not like any other entrance examination. It demands more than a decent amount of time to prepare with determination, which is possible only if the desire for coming into the services is burning in your heart incessantly. A **Passion**. Without the utmost passion towards 'your' dream, cracking this exam remains a far cry.

Many of you may be having presumptions that you should have come from a reputed Institute like AIIMS or IITs to succeed in the civil services examination, and we must be a '**topper**' at every stage of our education. But the fact is that you **need not** have come from a reputed Institute or be a topper. You **need not** have a splendid academic background. You **need not** have great scores in SSC or Intermediate. You **need not** have come from a rich family.

But, you ***need to have the passion*** to become a part of the civil services. You ***need to*** be ready to do lots of hard and smart work. You ***need to*** be ready, from now on, to be a topper!

Every dog has its day!

Civil Services in India are still the most preferred career option and they invite talent from all fields without just looking only for motivation to help the needy. But, given the complexities of the problems in the country, and given the enormous power and potential the services put in your hands, aspirants who look at the civil service as just another (and the best) career option might not be the right fit, for the sake of the service to the country. Your motivation to come into the services, in our sincere opinion, should be to help the poor, hunger, and ignorant and helpless people and to attempt to solve the varied problems of our country.

We ***need you*** to be service oriented. We ***need you*** to be compassionate. We ***need you*** to be bold, bold enough to speak up your mind.

The preparation stage would probably be the most fruitful stage of your life. Our experiences gave us a feeling that the preparation gives us an opportunity to know ourselves better, to assess our strengths and weaknesses, and to be a better person every day. It will be the *best learning stage* of all of our lives. This is also the time you lay foundations for your career in the civil services. Most of your ideals, philosophies, and perceptions about the government, administration and civil services would take firm foundations during this time. It's a chance to win you, to compete with yourself and deliver the best out of yourself.

"Stand up, be bold and take the whole responsibility on your shoulders and know that you are the creator of your own destiny. All the strength and success that you want are within yourself."

"Arise awake and rest not till the goal is achieved."

- Swami Vivekananda

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this document is not to just flood with tips and suggestions but to remind you of all those *fundamentals* that need to be done and kept in mind. But these fundamentals are the ones which are most forgotten, in the vastness of information and preparation strategies just the way the policy makers at times forget the face of the poorest person for whose sake they are making the policy in the first place!

As it is already mentioned, this document is more designed from the perspective of an aspirant; the best way to use this document is, *to keep it as a guide*, as a bible. It reminds of you what you forget all the time; it tries to focus, focus on fundamentals, to do the right things at the right time. It focuses on things to be done. You have to always keep two documents with you, first is the syllabus and the second would be some document like this, which can answer your query, whenever you get one.

Go through it thoroughly, and with a holistic view, try to appreciate all the chapters as one single entity. Read between the lines. Pause after you read something from the document, comprehend it and absorb. Refer to the document whenever you feel you are missing something in the preparation. Try to follow, implement the points mentioned, *religiously*, in your actions. The document appraises *you with a routine* for your preparation, *unique to each of you, the way you are*.

Believe in it. It can help you.

KNOW YOUR EXAMINATION

Before starting the preparation, it is very important to have a complete understanding about the exam process, its structure and the various aspects related to the preparation, given that it has seen some very recent changes.

UPSC generally issues the notification in the Employment News. The same should also be available on the UPSC website <http://www.upsc.gov.in>. The complete notification should be studied carefully to understand the structure of the exam and other related information. Most of the doubts that the new aspirants have, would be resolved through a thorough go through of the notification. Given the recent changes, it is even more important to read through the notification for understanding the changes better.

The preparation will be more focused when you know exactly *what the examination expects*, rather demands from you. Remember at every stage of your preparation that this examination is relative. You only need to be better than the other aspirants to get a place in the merit list.

The nature of the exam can be analyzed through:

- A thorough perusal of notification and carefully understanding the syllabus and requirements.
- A thorough analysis of the previous year's papers and the recent trends.
- Discussing in detail with teachers, successful (and un-successful) aspirants, seniors and friends.

All the three points above are quintessential for understanding the expectations exactly.

Plan of Examination

The competitive examination comprises two successive stages:

- Civil Services (Preliminary) Examinations (Objective Type) for the selection of candidates for Main Examination; and

- Civil Services (Main) Examination (Written and Interview) for the selection of candidates for the various services and posts.

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

The Preliminary Examination will consist of two papers of Objective type (multiple choice questions) and carry a maximum of 400 marks, with each paper of 200 marks.

Paper I: General Studies

Maximum Marks: 200

Duration: 2 hours

- Current events of national and international importance.
- History of India and Indian National Movement.
- Indian and World Geography - Physical, Social, Economic Geography of India and the World.
- Indian Polity and Governance - Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues, etc.
- Economic and Social Development Sustainable Development, Poverty, Inclusion, Demographics, Social Sector initiatives, etc.
- General issues on Environmental Ecology, Bio-diversity and Climate Change - that do not require subject specialization.
- General Science.

Paper II: Civil Services Aptitude Test (CSAT)

Maximum Marks: 200

Duration: 2 hours

- Comprehension Interpersonal skills including communication skills;
- Logical reasoning and analytical ability
- Decision-making and problem-solving
- General mental ability
- Basic numeracy (numbers and their relations, orders of magnitude, etc.) (Class X level)

- Data interpretation (charts, graphs, tables, data sufficiency etc. - Class X level)
- English Language Comprehension skills (Class X level).

The question papers will be set both in Hindi and English. However, questions relating to English Comprehension skills of Class X level will be tested through passages from English Language only without providing Hindi translation thereof in the question paper.

Each paper will be of two hours duration. Blind candidates will however; be allowed an extra time of minutes at each paper.

This examination is meant to serve as a screening test only; the marks obtained in the Preliminary Examination by the candidates who are declared qualified for admission to the Main Examination **will not be counted** for determining their final order of merit. The number of candidates to be admitted to the Main Examination will be about twelve to thirteen times the total approximate number of vacancies to be filled in the year in the various Services and Posts. Only those candidates who are declared by the Commission to have qualified in the Preliminary Examination in the year will be eligible for admission to the Main Examination of that year provided they are otherwise eligible for admission to the Main Examination.

Candidates who obtain such minimum qualifying marks in the written part of the Main Examination as may be fixed by the Commission at their discretion, shall be summoned by them for interview for a Personality Test vide sub-section 'C' of Section-II. Marks obtained in the papers will be counted for ranking. The number of candidates to be summoned for interview will be about **twice** the number of vacancies to be filled.

Marks thus obtained by the candidates in the Main Examination (written part as well as interview) would determine their final ranking. Candidates will be allotted to the various Services keeping in view their ranks in the examination and the preferences expressed by them for the various Services and Posts.

Note: Please make sure you are well informed about the various details

before filling the preferences.

The Main Examination is intended to assess the overall intellectual traits and depth of understanding of candidates **rather than merely** the range of their information and memory.

The nature and standard of questions in the General Studies papers (Paper II to Paper V) will be such that a well-educated person will be able to answer them without any specialized study. The questions will be such as to test a candidate's general awareness of a variety of subjects, which will have relevance for a career in Civil Services. The questions are likely to test the candidate's basic understanding of all relevant issues, and ability to analyze, and **take a view** on conflicting socio- economic goals, objectives and demands. The candidates must give relevant, meaningful and succinct answers.

The scope of the syllabus for optional subject papers (Paper VI and Paper VII) for the examination is broadly of the honors degree level i.e. a level higher than the bachelors' degree and lower than the masters' degree. In the case of Engineering, Medical Science and law, the level corresponds to the bachelors' degree.

MAIN (WRITTEN) EXAMINATION

The Main (written) Examination will consist of the following papers:

Paper I: Essay

Maximum Marks: 200

Duration: 3 Hours

Candidates will be required to write an essay on a specific topic. The choice of subjects will be given. They will be expected to keep closely to the subject of the essay to arrange their ideas in orderly fashion, and to write concisely. Credit will be given for effective and exact expression.

Paper II: General Studies I

Maximum Marks: 250

Duration: 3 Hours

Indian Heritage and Culture, History and Geography of the World and Society.

- Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art forms, Literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.
- Modern Indian history from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present- significant events, personalities, issues.
- The Freedom Struggle - its various stages and important contributors /contributions from different parts of the country.
- Post-independence consolidation and reorganization within the country.
- History of the world will include **events from 18th century** such as industrial revolution, world wars, redraw of national boundaries, colonization, decolonization, political philosophies like communism, capitalism, socialism etc. - their forms and effect on the society.
- Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India.
- Role of women and women's organization, population and associated issues, poverty and developmental issues, urbanization, their problems and their remedies.
- Effects of globalization on Indian society.
- Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism & secularism.
- Salient features of world's physical 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 ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects.

Paper III: General Studies- II

Maximum Marks: 250

Duration: 3 Hours

Governance, Constitution, Polity, Social Justice and International relations.

- Indian Constitution- historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.
- 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.
- Comparison of the Indian constitutional scheme with that of other countries.
- Parliament and State Legislatures - structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.
- Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary. 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 for 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, donors, charities, institutional and other stakeholders.
- Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and 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.
- India and its neighborhood - relations.
- Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.
- Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.
- Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

Paper IV: General Studies III

Maximum Marks: 250

Duration: 3 Hours

Technology, Economic Development, and Bio diversity, Environment, Security and Disaster Management.

- Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment.
- Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.
- Government Budgeting.
- Major crops 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.
- 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; economics of animal-rearing.
- Food processing and related industries in India- scope and significance, location, upstream and downstream requirements, supply chain management.
- Land reforms in India.

- Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.
- Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.
- Investment models.
- Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.
- Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology.
- Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, Nano-technology, biotechnology and issues relating to intellectual property rights.
- Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.
- Disaster and disaster management.
- Linkages between development and spread of extremism.
- Role of external state and non-state actors in creating challenges to internal security.
- 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 organized crime with terrorism.
- Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate

Paper V: General Studies IV

Maximum Marks: 250

Duration: 3 Hours

Ethics, Integrity, and Aptitude

This paper will include questions to test the candidates' attitude and approach to issues relating to integrity, probity in public life and his **problem solving approach** to various issues and conflicts faced by him in dealing with society. Questions may utilize the **case study approach** to determine these aspects. The following broad areas will be covered.

- Ethics and Human Interface: Essence, determinants and consequences of Ethics in human actions; 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 values.
- Attitude: content, structure, function; its influence and relation with thought and behavior; moral and political attitudes; social influence and persuasion.
- Aptitude and foundational values for Civil Service, integrity, impartiality and non-partisanship, objectivity, dedication to public service, empathy, tolerance and compassion towards the weaker-sections.
- Emotional intelligence-concepts, and their utilities and application in administration and governance.
- Contributions of moral thinkers and philosophers from India and world.
- Public/Civil service values and Ethics in Public administration: Status and 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; 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.
- Case Studies on above issues.

There will be two language papers, an English Language paper (compulsory paper, but with marks not added to the final score) and a paper on language of your choice (again a compulsory paper, and with marks not added to the final score). One has to **pass these language papers** to have the rest of the Main examination papers even evaluated.

After the language papers would be the two papers for the one optional subject that you choose. Each of these papers would be of **250 marks with three hours duration**.

List of Optional Subjects for the Main Examination:

Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Science, Anthropology, Botany, Chemistry, Civil Engineering, Commerce and Accountancy, Economics, Electrical Engineering, Geography, Geology, History, Law, Management, Mathematics, Mechanical Engineering, Medical Sciences, Philosophy, Physics, Political Science and International Relations, Psychology.

Literature of any one of the following languages:

Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Maithili, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Santhali, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, English.

Each paper will be of three hours duration.

Candidates will have the option to answer all the question papers, except Section 2 of the Paper-I (English comprehension and English précis) in English or Hindi. If the candidate has had his/ her graduation in any of the following language mediums using the particular language medium for qualifying the graduate level examination, then he/she may opt for that particular language medium to answer all the question papers, except Section 2 of the Paper-I (English comprehension and English précis) as mentioned below.

Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Maithili, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Santhali, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu.

Candidates exercising the option to answer Papers in any one of the languages mentioned above may, if they so desire, give English version within brackets of only the description of the technical terms, if any, in addition to the version in the language opted by them. Candidates should,

however, note that if they misuse the above rule, a deduction will be made on this account from the total marks otherwise accruing to them and in extreme cases; their script(s) will not be valued for being in an unauthorized medium.

The question papers (other than the literature of language papers) will be set in Hindi and English only.

PERSONALITY TEST (INTERVIEW)

The candidate will be interviewed by a Board, who will have before them, a record of the candidate's career. He/she will be asked questions on matters of general interest. **The object of the interview** is to assess the personal suitability of the candidate for a career in public service by a Board of competent and unbiased observers. The test is intended to judge the mental caliber of a candidate. In broad terms this is really an assessment of not only his/her intellectual qualities but also **social traits** and his/her interest in current affairs. Some of the qualities to be judged are mental alertness, critical powers of assimilation, clear and logical exposition, balance of judgment, variety and depth of interest, ability for social cohesion and leadership, **intellectual and moral integrity**.

The technique of the interview is not that of a strict cross-examination but of a natural, though directed and purposive conversation, which is intended to reveal the mental qualities of the candidate

The interview test is **not intended** to be a test either of the specialized or general knowledge of the candidates which has been already tested through their written papers. Candidates are expected to have taken an intelligent interest not only in their special subjects of academic study but also in the events which are happening around them both within and outside their own state or country as well as in modern currents of thought and in new discoveries which should rouse the curiosity of well-educated youth.

RAMBLINGS ON THE NEW PATTERN

Believe us when we say, that the new pattern of the examination has in fact made it easier to attempt than ever before. The way the full syllabus is detailed has to be commended as it gives a good understanding of the expectations of the examination.

We have seen many aspirants worried about the GS Paper on Ethics and Integrity. Let us assure you there is nothing to be worried about this paper. It is a new set of topics included, and once they are covered as a part of your preparation, they will become one of the most interesting and perhaps, most scoring topics of the GS paper. We will try and cover some of the sources and methods to prepare for this paper in this document, and we hope they help you in every way to get rid of your worries.

Another important aspect is that, since there is only one optional subject to take, it has to be selected wisely. Those coming from specialized faculties like medicine, law, MBA, history etc. would not have any issues to choose (we hope they go with their subject of specialization, and if they do not, they have to really consider with conviction why they are not doing so). For others, it will be slightly tricky than before, all the social sciences would be equally good (and bad). So a careful selection optional subject, from this time onwards, would define the total marks and one's selection in the final merit list. We will discuss in detail about the optional subjects in later sections of this document.

We cannot yet predict the competition. The only confirmation is, it is here to stay and you have to live with it. And one has to be at his best to compete with this competition.

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE CANDIDATES FOR FILLING ONLINE APPLICATIONS

Candidates must apply Online using the website <http://www.upsconline.nic.in/>.

Salient features of the system of Online Application Form are given hereunder:

- Detailed instructions for filling up online applications are available on the above mentioned website.
- Candidates will be required to complete the Online Application Form containing two stages viz. Part-I and Part-II as per the instructions available in the above-mentioned site through drop down menus.
- The candidates are required to pay a fee of ₹100/- (Rupees Hundred only) (excepting Female/SC/ST/PH candidates who are exempted from payment of fee) either by remitting the money in any branch of SBI by cash, or by using net banking facility of State Bank of India/State Bank of Bikaner & Jaipur/State Bank of Hyderabad/State Bank of Mysore/State Bank of Patiala/State Bank of Travancore or by using any Visa/Master Credit/Debit Card.
- Before start filling up on Online Application, a candidate must have his photograph and signature duly scanned in the .jpg format in such a manner that each file should not exceed 40 KB and must not be less than 3 KB in size for the photograph and 1 KB for the signature.
- The Online applications (Part I and II) can be filled within the period notified for the purpose, after which link will be disabled.
- Applicants should avoid submitting multiple applications. However, if due to any unavoidable circumstances any applicant submits multiple applications then he must ensure that the applications with higher RID is complete in all respects.
- In case of multiple applications, the applications with higher RID shall be entertained by the Commission and fee paid against one RID shall not be adjusted against any other RID.
- Candidates are strongly advised to apply well in time without waiting for last date for submission of online application.

FILLING THE APPLICATION FORMS

The following are some important aspects that you must keep in mind while filling up the application forms, especially for Mains (Written) examination:

Filling the cadre preferences

You will have to live with your cadres, once selected, for almost the rest of your life. Hence, cadre preferences have to be given utmost thought before filling them up. Generally, and obviously, the home cadre would be the first choice for almost 99% of the aspirants, there won't be any confusion on that. The second and third preferences are the tricky ones. Make sure you get as much info about a cadre as possible, through seniors and other people in services. They are the best persons who can give the right perspective about the cadres. The perception outside is very much different from what we see inside about the cadres. For example, Chhattisgarh and Odisha might not be treated as high valued cadres but, they are one of the best possible cadres one wishes to work in. So, please make an informed choice.

Filling the service preferences

Whatever has been said above regarding cadre applies appropriately to services as well. More, service preferences are very personal, they depend on your choice and attitude towards the services. So, ensure you have conviction in your order of choice and stick with it. Do not leave the preferences for fate or fluke, you might end up getting a good rank in the merit list and get a service that you may regret.

Filling the bio data and other personal information

Please fill this section in detail, and **make a copy** of it for your reference. These details are very much used in the interview process and so you have to prepare from whatever you submit in this section for your interview. Hence, while filling itself, make sure you write bona fide details, even related to your hobbies and other personal traits, and start working on them. So that you can talk about them in your interview. There is no hurry in filling up the form, take your time for each of these

sections, they need such attention, and then submit.

Re-check before you submit

Make sure you don't go into unnecessary headaches by forgetting to fill some sections or columns or making some mistakes in filling up. Though there would be some help (hopefully) from the UPSC in giving you a chance to correct, it might not be taken for granted all the time.

Society for Social Services, LBSNAA

NEW COMERS TO THE PREPARATION: WELCOME ABOARD

We welcome all the new aspirants to have a great time preparing. More, we welcome, with great hopes and aspirations from our side, all those people who have lots of potential and commitment, who finally decided to leave their current (many times, lucrative) career and other opportunities and work for the betterment of the nation, through the civil services.

There must be a thousand questions running around your mind. It would be tougher than said, when we say to not to worry. The starting phase of any activity or effort is always the toughest of the times. We try to help as much as we can by trying to answer as many of your queries as possible to have an effective preparation. All we ask in return is to have conviction in your decision, belief in your potential and confidence that the exam can be cleared.

This document can really help in filling the role of that 'big brother' whom you probably are missing. Lot of people told us they don't have anyone to guide, this document should be that guide.

The best way to start the preparation is through newspapers. There is no better alternative than newspapers. In fact, newspapers are the single most important source of information that can get you through the exam! Take any one newspaper, to start with, and read it thoroughly. The Hindu is the most popular suggestion for the choice of newspaper but other papers can also be followed. To list:

- The Hindu
- Times of India
- Economic Times
- Indian Express

Read the newspaper religiously, every single day. This has to become a habit, newspaper is from now, a part of your daily routine.

You can start with reading everything from the newspaper, and then slowly try to make selective reading, which will come naturally after

some days. Try not to go into much of political news, but rest of all of them are always useful to read. Some of the sections to cover (not in any order):

- National and social events
- International
- Economics and business
- Sports
- Editorial and Op-Ed
- Opinions and discussions

Newspaper reading **should** be complemented by background study through internet and weekly magazines. For example, once you read a news item, say on Nuclear Reactors in India, try to get as much information related to the area, by reading from Wikipedia or reading an analysis from Frontline. This is the way to improve your knowledge and understanding about the topic.

It does take quite a bit of time to complete the newspaper, anywhere from 45 minutes to 2 hours, or more. Don't worry on the time as such, though you can try and reduce the time taken, slowly. Time saved this way should be utilized for more background study as mentioned above, to get better understanding of the subject.

As mentioned, while picking up on newspapers and once getting comfortable, it is time to get into some more study. Any of the below mentioned sources can be taken up, depending on your access and taste.

- Frontline, or any other similar magazine of your interest.
- NCERT Textbooks
- DD Basu's Introduction to the Constitution of India (with a copy of the Constitution also along).
- Subhash Kashyap's books on Parliament and Constitution
- India's Struggle for Independence and India after Independence by Bipin Chandra.

These are chosen so that, one gets a perspective of the fundamentals of the country and the basic premises on which the rest of your preparation can depend.

Do **not** try to mug up, or by heart, or remember anything at this stage. Your reading should be more to understand the philosophy of these books and form your personal opinions out of them.

Frontline complements The Hindu as they are from the same publishers. This way, there can be a nice revision every two weeks of all the topics you read in the paper as Frontline analyses most of the topics from the previous weeks.

In our opinion, this is the best way to make a start for your preparation. It does take a considerable amount of time to get through the above sources. So, if someone is looking for starting the preparation just a few months before the exam, the above suggestions might not work. They have to do a very selective study out of the suggestions above and quickly go with working on **practicing** for the exam.

Get used to studying from the internet from this phase itself, it helps immensely. In fact, most of the resources suggested in this document are web links. These can also reduce the time take for preparation significantly. Many aspirants coming from the engineering background, foreign universities, the digital freaks, people from IT and other corporate sectors are well versed in using the internet, and to compete with them, one has to adapt to it.

Initial times of the preparation is also the best time to study many books and novels, which one cannot give time to, at later stages of preparation or before the examination. Some of our recommendations include the following:

- Books by Ramachandra Guha (India after Gandhi, etc).
- Amartya Sen's writings, especially, "The Idea of Justice", "Development as Freedom" and other books.
- Books by Shashi Tharoor (Pax Indica etc.)
- India Unbound (Gurucharan Das)
- 'The Clash of Civilizations and Remaking of the World Order' by Samuel P Huntington
- The Wonder that was India by AL Basham

The above suggestions for novels and other books are purely through our personal likings and tastes. These could easily be replaced by many other novels that you can grab. Please do so. Our intention here in mentioning some novels is to appraise the kind of study one can do.

This is also the best time to improve and practice all those things which take a long time to get used to, such as,

- Improving handwriting
- Reading comprehension
- Communication skills

Once you are going along good, move ahead for the next steps, by **making a plan** for the rest of the preparation.

Do not rush through your attempts. Spend time with your subjects before you appear in the exam. Keep in mind that there are no shortcuts to success. Each individual has his/her own pace of studying. Some people like me, take more time to grasp things as compared to others. You must know yourself well. Know what timings of study suit you; know what inspires you; what motivates you; know what relaxes you; know what you ultimately want to do as a civil servant; know what are your strengths and your weaknesses. If you know yourself well, then things will get easier.

Preparation in Hindi or other regional medium

There are definite apprehensions that it is tough to crack the exam through other mediums. This is not so. There are people who gave exam in Hindi and other regional medium and have cleared it without any issues. So, please shed away any of these misconceptions and start preparing in the language of your comfort. It is true to a certain extent the amount of material one gets in a particular language is less than that is obtained in English, yet it doesn't minimize the chances of clearing the exam. To repeat, cracking the exam is neither dependent on the number of books/material one reads nor the number of hours one spent. Choice of language should be based on your comfort levels with that language as well as with English. A good practice of answer writing and questions

solving in the language you choose would help in making things easier for you.

Need for Coaching

The most pertinent question we keep hearing from new aspirants is whether to join coaching or not. In fact, there might be nothing wrong in the question, but the timing might be. In our conscious opinion, in the initial phases it is always better to go for a certain amount of self-preparation before even thinking of joining any coaching institute. Unless one has some basics about the topics, it would be very tough to comprehend and recollect whatever is being taught in a coaching institute. Once the fundamentals are good, once you are able read newspapers and NCERT books (with some magazine etc. included), then it is time to give a serious thought whether to join coaching or not. One can think of even a small method, to try and clear the preliminary exam with your self-preparation and then go for a quick coaching in the time between preliminary and Main examination.

Most of us here (in the academy) believe that **coaching is not mandatory**, if not it could be totally done away with. Self-preparation is the best way to improve your chances of doing well in the exam. Nevertheless, coaching does have some positives, they improve your understanding from different perspectives, their experience in the expectations of the exam would give a better idea, they do lot of homework in helping you with compiled material and other information (which of course, one must do himself, ideally ☺). Though we finally leave it to you to decide whether to take coaching or not, our inclination is always towards self-preparation.

On the other hand, mock tests, multiple choice questions and other test series (for both preliminary and main examination) would be a very good option to take. They provide a definite help to your preparation.

Some coaching institutes also are famous for their printed material and even class notes. In fact, they do a terrific job in compiling a great deal of information. As long as you do not burden yourself with lots of material, this option could be explored for your help, to take some printed material from any of the institutes. Let us also mention that, class notes would not

be so useful all the times. As it is 'class notes', it is very much tightly coupled with the discussions and explanations in a class and so, it will be tough to comprehend a class notes without sitting in that particular class.

Working Aspirants

Some of you must be working in some organization and wanting to give a shot at the exam, an increasing trend in the recent years. Even some of you might not even be in India while thinking about the attempt! Experience always helps, and we hope all the people coming from some work experience would be able to bring along with them the learnings from their previous environment. The average age of joining into services also increased progressively over the years to 27.5 years. Many with job experience anywhere between 2-7 years(excluding those who come from armed services, who has even more experience), MBA graduates and working in highly reputed and lucrative MNCs, IT professionals, are all part of the services now (mentions from 2012 batch). So, the obvious question, does one need to leave the job and prepare or is it possible to prepare along with job?

Well, most of it depends on the kind of job (and the job environment) you are in. Some jobs have a very restrictive work place with even little internet usage allowed. Such places are tough to prepare. Not to mention the work load. IT jobs especially extract a huge amount of work from people, it is extremely tough to either prepare while at office or at home with all energy drained. So, make a thorough observation of your job environment and see how much time and energy you can take out for your preparation. You should have no restrictions for internet usage (and please use Internet at office, in fact, exploit it) and should be able to read while at office. Another important aspect is your relation/interaction with your manager and team/colleagues. Don't try to hide and do secret preparations under their nose. It is not possible to drag it for longer times, neither the mind would be peaceful for any serious study. Talk to them and see if there any way to come to a common understanding, only if it's possible, we hope so.

If the job environment is not conducive for any study, no other option but to leave, if you are serious about getting into the services.

Even if you are outside India, you can prepare for the exam, as effectively as anyone else preparing from within the country. You have every access to information and books (which you might have to just get couriered) and with coaching being not mandatory, your chances are even. May be, with the examination turning slightly biased towards your way, you might even end up in the services sooner than you imagine. Have constant contacts with those who are preparing full time. Interact with them regularly.

Don't worry if it's your only attempt left (due to age or otherwise). You still have a great chance of cracking the exam.

Time management

With job, managing time becomes a predominant factor as one always would be trying to 'find' time. More than time, the important aspect is energy. One has to have the same amount of energy levels when one leaves his office as was his levels when he comes to office in the morning. That defines the entire amount of preparation one can do while doing job. Sorry to say, but one has to exploit the office facilities as much as possible, use the Internet, stationary and printing facilities to help with your preparation (and that's why, a great deal of cooperation is required from your colleagues and boss). Prepare in the office hours, use your smart phones for preparing, there are lot many apps that let you study a wide variety of stuff. Try to get some leaves under your belt, the longer the better.

SMART WORK: PLANNING YOUR PREPARATION

Though the exam demands hard work from the aspirant, it should be “intelligent hard work”. Through the current times, hard work seems to be not just sufficient. It has to be supported by a good planning, a lot of selective reading and thorough feedback to yourselves about your preparation.

The most important aspect of the whole preparation is to plan it. Without planning, how much ever you read, how much hard work you invest, they might not be directed towards the goal and it all ends up getting wasted. Most of the hard working people don't realize this and they fail in the attempt. Others can only see their hard work and feel things are unfair to them. It might not be so all the time!

Plan your preparation. You will always know the date of the examination well before hand. So you know how much time you have with you.

You need to then know what your speed is. Unless you know how much time you take to go through a certain topic, it is not possible for you to know whether you can complete all things you want to complete before the exam. We know this speed can vary from subject to subject, but all we want to convey is for you to know your speed. Invest time to observe yourself and come up with some speed numbers for yourself.

After this, you need to obviously know what all to read. Make a nice chart for yourself, write all the books/topics you think you have to read and start estimating the time they need. Gross approximations would suffice, the estimates would give an idea how long you need for each of the topics/subjects.

There might be a worry that you will not be able to know what all stuff you might have to read to be sure to clear the exam. So you put constraints only through the time you have. This whole exercise of estimating time gives a definite idea how much you can cover. There is no way you can cover more! You don't have time. So let's not worry about what cannot be covered, instead let's try to find out how best one can cover topics and how to maximize the efforts. Planning is all about maximizing the outcomes of the efforts.

So, to repeat, make a list of best possible books/topics to read, all of which are mentioned in this document in various pages. Collect more from friends, seniors and other places and make a good list. Try to mix and play with the whole plan, giving weightages to different topics, keeping in mind your strengths and weaknesses etc.

Next is for you to know **how to read**. The main requirement when you sit for studying is total concentration. Without 100% focus, whatever time you spent on study will be only get wasted. So endure that you always have a pleasant environment tuned for a focused study.

Suggesting in this area is a tough ask. It is a very specific and subjective. Yet, we will try and put some basics. Read for understanding the concepts, read for getting clarity, even if it takes more time. Try to find patterns while reading. Read only one or two books for a certain topic/subject, do not read too many books for the same topic/subject. This way one can remember better. Look for side headings and try to summarize all that you read below the sub heading into it.

This exam is all about the basics with lot of clarity. The exam can be written well when the preparation is simple and the aspirant is very strong in basics with clarity.

And the topic should be remembered in this logical structured way for the exam. It should be understood that once you have done the topic in this comprehensive method through logical questioning, the preparation is over for that topic. You need not go through any journals or hi-funda textbooks for becoming an expert in the topic. This much of basics with clarity are sufficient for the exam. And, this is what humanly possible in view of the huge syllabus.

The following points should be kept in mind while doing preparation:

- The focus should be on gaining basic clarity in each topic, which will come only through lot of logical questioning.
- More time should be spent on thinking about the topic and making innovations, rather than on reading too many study material.
- The previous papers should be thoroughly analyzed to understand the expectations of the examiner.

- The preparation should be focused and all the hard work should be channelized in the right direction.

Discuss what you read with your friends or colleagues, you would be able to talk about a topic only when you understand it, and when discussions help in looking at different aspects of the same topic, poses new questions to clarify upon.

Revising often what was read is required constantly. Revision gives a different perspective of the same topic, it gives a better understanding. And to have this all happen, you have to read from same sources. It is always better to revise something already read than going for new topics or books.

One good way of revising is to **solve** questions or practicing answer writing. It will recollect all that you read and also help in **organizing** your ideas.

When it comes to the question of whether to make notes or not, it is again entirely a personal call. If you are comfortable making notes, please do so. If you are not, please don't do just for the sake of making them. Making notes is not compulsory for clearing the exam, let's be clear about this. It is just another aid for your preparation. If you use your textbook itself for revision, you do not need notes. Even when you make notes, don't just copy some sentences from a textbook into your notebook, doing that you are just increasing the number of pages you have to read 😊. **Make notes in your own words.** That way, it is sort of trying to revise already. And one last mention about notes, make notes if you **really are going to** take a look at it later. We have seen people making notes from newspapers and not going through them while revising because they don't have time anymore! You need notes if you are reading from very many different sources because it will be tough to go through all of them again.

Let us also talk quickly about the notes from institutes or from previous rankers. It is tough to judge their value, but **notes are never a better option** compared to textbooks or original source of information. It is not mandatory to have these notes, the best way to find out is going through them for some time and deciding yourself.

Summing up, plan for your holidays, cool-off periods, visits and all other

breaks. More, plan for your downtimes. It is inevitable for all of us to have such low times that we can hardly do anything, let alone concentrated preparation. So, one needs to have some buffer time as well in the plan. Make place for solving questions, for mocks, everything. See how much efforts you need to put each day. It might be 3 hours or 13 hours, depending on your speed and choice of books/topics and other criteria. It is your plan that defines the quality of your preparation. **So do not judge your preparation just by the number of hours you put in.** This plan would be unique, to each of you, depending on your preparation styles. You can have diverse topics planned for a day or one can plan and finish a certain subject in one go etc.

Once the plan is in place, don't think that it cannot be changed and final. Indeed it is final to a large extent, but be ready to have flexibility for making amendments (just like our constitution☺).

You can always change your plan, but you need to have one first!

Finally, the idea of having a plan is to **implement** it, to follow it. Otherwise, this exercise is futile.

Feedback

Planning is so important not only to track the time versus effort but also to find for yourselves how you are doing with your preparation. It gives a way to provide feedback to oneself and find whether we are on the right track, before it is too late. Once you know where you stand, you can make necessary changes and get back on track. Remember to set targets and daily or weekly goals in your plan and see how many times you are able to reach them and how many times you fail to. For example, if you can plan for writing one mock per month, or some answer writing for mains per week, and actually do them accordingly, you will know how much of your study helped you and where you are falling short. Or, if you have suddenly got a new material like say, Economic survey of India in the month of February, you might have to adjust your plan to fit it. This will be a great way to fix the problems very early in your preparation and by the time the exam is near, you would be in a better shape, or better, you would be **READY**.

Enjoy the preparation

Do not worry too much about the results and questions etc. every time. Leave it for the best judgment of whoever takes care of it. All we need to do is to have a planned preparation and go about it day by day, one day at a time.

Do not pay heed to rumors

It is a surety that people get carried away with rumors, especially in those areas that are famous for aspirants. Do not spend even a single moment thinking or even discussing about these rumors unless you have nothing else to do. Rumors about the results dates, cut offs, change of patterns etc. will generally go around you all the time. The less you pay attention to such topics, the better it will be for your preparation. It is not easy to stay away from such rumors, especially when they relate to results (of prelims) but try to realize the damage they do to one's mental peace and how they screw up one's routine unnecessarily.

Do not stay alone and grow beard

It looks funny but only two kinds of men grow beard, one whose love has gone unfortunate or one who is preparing for Civil Services Examination!

Just try to understand that staying alone or away from people or growing beard doesn't show any seriousness about your preparation nor they are the sure shot ways to get in to the services. Staying away from phone and family, thinking of preparation as a 'yagna' are old perceptions when there was less access to information and aspirants are truly misinformed. Not so anymore. Mingle with people (that definitely does not mean to waste time, you are grownups, you know where to draw a line), stay in touch with friend and family, maintain yourselves, live your life and prepare.

Do not buy each and every material that comes in to the market

Preparation is not measured in terms of neither the number of books you read from, nor the number of hours you sit with your books. Get books selectively.

Start using Internet and laptops

Please start using the laptops, if you are not already familiar with them. They are essential not just for the preparation but also for all the activities you need to take up later.

Have lots of discussions

To understand any topic with clarity, discussions are a great way. More, discussions help in giving a pattern to your random thoughts, gives a feedback to oneself how much one knows about a particular topic. It brings out different perspectives that does not stuck to one's mind by self-study. Embrace discussions as a part of your routine. Don't ever think that the other person benefits more than you through sharing of information in discussions, it is never the case. Share freely all the information you have that is necessary in a discussion. Do not confront! Discussion is for improving the understanding, not to prove a point or to prove that you're the only one who is right and who knows everything. If possible, form a small group with likeminded people, and have a continuous discussion and sort of, shared preparation where each can help others.

Try to get involved in opinion sharing

Similar to discussions, try to start writing comments in leading newspapers like The Hindu, on topics that you know and that you don't know, on topics that you understand and those that you don't understand. It is a platform where you can put your thoughts into words. It also gives a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment to see one's comments getting published on the website/hard copy. Encourages a lot! Next time you search your name on Google, you can find your comment.

Blog

If you are anywhere near to a tech savvy person, or one who sits on a laptop for a considerable period of time, start blogging. Put down your ideas and thoughts. It can be anything from your childhood memories to something that troubles you badly that needs to be changed in the country. It helps a lot in making a huge difference to your answer writing and compilation of thoughts in your mind.

Postal Coaching

For all those of you who feel they are far from the centers of preparation, you can always go for postal coaching, which is provided by many institutes nowadays. It is not mandatory to take such coaching, but this just ensures a constant supply of current information from a remote location (or even out of India) and helps in gathering material easily.

Preparing Notes and Revision

It is always better to prepare notes from every topic for which you prepare from different sources, as it will be easy this way to revise. Revision is very important because you will only write what you can recollect in the exam, and that depends mostly on your revision. Therefore your efficiency in revising matters a lot for your performance in the examination. And if you can prepare a good quality notes, your performance is now directly related to these notes. Yet, a point to remember is, while making notes, do not blindly copy paste the information. Try to write it in your own words so that the notes making effort would itself be a revising step. Also, revision does not mean some part of preparation that happens in the last phase, before the exam. No. Revision must be a continuous process and should not be solely postponed till before the examination. As you keep preparing, sometime must be spent in revising and consolidating what you read. Never have the misconception that it is a waste of time.

Make Synopsis of topics

Make synopsis of each of the topics you read. This can help effectively in revision. This is of course, a part of preparing notes, or rather, making notes in a different way. These can help in retaining a substantial part of what we read. The synopsis could be prepared in pocket diary or sticky notes to be pasted on walls etc.

Society for Social Services, LBSNAA

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can Civil Services Examination be cleared only through multiple attempts?

Response(s): Not necessarily. With proper planning and smart work for a considerable time, it is possible to clear the exam in a single attempt as well. It is possible even if it's your last possible attempt!

There is so much hype around the examination. Is it so tough?

Response(s): Most of the hype is unwarranted. It is true that the exam is tough, but not as much as it is hyped. With careful planning and selective reading, preparation indeed becomes comfortable and fun. It has to be that way. Remember, if 'anyone' can do it, 'anyone' can do it.

Do we need to study everything under the sun?

Response(s): No, this is one of those basic misconceptions. True that huge amounts of information is required, but not everything. There are limitations to the topics the exam expects one to be good at. Try not to measure the amount of subject one has to cover. Take it as it comes. Confine it within the limitations of your plan, time and energy/efforts. Filter the warranted information amidst the sea of unwarranted information. Try to note down the catchwords or phrases that may remind you of the concept or fact.

Do we need to do hi-funda and scholarly like preparation for the subjects?

Response(s): Not at all. What is required is simple basics and a slight depth into the concepts, in each of the subjects. No specialized and scholarly research is expected out of you. However, when it comes to optional subjects, it is always better to have sound conceptual clarity.

How many hours do I need to study?

Responses(s): This is the MOST frequently asked question for the entire preparation. And no answer we tried to give have satisfied the aspirants. A good preparation is beyond just the number of hours one studies for. Yet a minimal amount of efforts are required to cover the vast amount of information. We do not want to quantify any number of hours, but

however long it takes to cover all the topics for conceptual clarity, one has to devote that much time. Quality only matters, not quantity.

Is it necessary to make notes? And how to make it so that we can revise before the exam?

Response(s): One has to make notes if she is comfortable doing so, if you are such a person who prefers to revise from quick pages at the last minute before the exam etc. Making notes is not mandatory. If one can read from the textbooks and Internet and can somehow revise it in his own way, making notes is redundant. But still in such cases also, making synopsis is highly recommended, if not for any other reason, at least for the sake of efficient revision☺.

How to read and make notes from ncert?

Response(s): For ncert books, try to read them as a novel, do not try and remember everything. They are meant to be understood and digested. They may also need multiple readings, to definitely understand well. In NCERT books, every sentence may be important so try to understand every part of it.

From which month one should revise current affairs/magazine/newspaper for main exam?

Response(s): For the main examination, current affairs could be revised from the starting of the year, may be February-march would be a good time.

How much time one would need to pass this exam in first attempt?

Response(s): It takes a consistent effort for at least one / one and half years to be ready for the exam. Of course it took me more than that.

Are interviews really a deciding factor? Even if someone does excellent in mains, still interview can ruin his chances?

Response(s): Yes. Every stage has its own importance. Interview is very important.

Some unfortunate aspirants are not able to crack this exam in their whole

life and some students can do this twice! While working as IPS. What do they do different?

Response(s): For those who are not able to crack the exam in any of their attempts, it is their wrong decision. Please keep in mind that the UPSC expects to take the best of the talent not everyone. So, even if someone is highly committed, sincere, honest etc., UPSC might still won't take him. One has to be really good at assessing himself, and improve. Anyways, for those who get it more than once, it's easy, they know they can do it, they are ready to improve and learn, they are ready to invest time and efforts, they have a plan and they approach it with utmost commitment.

Does age factor matters for the exam? If someone is at wrong side of 20s (28, 29 years), will that be a negative point for him?

Response(s): No. Age does not matter significantly. Even in the interviews, there are no direct evidence that age has worked negatively for any aspirant.

What should be the length of answers? Would there be any penalty in marks if we cross the maximum length?

Response(s): There won't be any penalty for just crossing the maximum length. But yes, if you cross by a large margin, the examiner might take it as a bad instance of not following the instructions and can penalize. On the other hand, why one does has to cross the maximum limit, nowadays the paper is getting so long that finishing the paper in the prescribed time is becoming tougher. So, instead of wasting time in writing extra words in an answer, try to utilize that time in attempting another question. Ideal length of the answer should be the provided word limit for the answer. You can always finish the answer below the maximum limit if you feel there is nothing else to write. Do not try and just fill words.

Should I go for core subjects?

Response(s): Any subject is fine as long as you are interested in them. Core subjects are a definite choice to take.

If an aspirant is a science graduate, what were the possible reasons for

taking anthropology or other social sciences?

Response(s): Whenever we select optional we have to know the following points

1. Length of syllabus
2. Availability of sources/material, institutes, and seniors
3. Easiness and help in GS the subject can make
4. Interest in the subject (very important)

A very basic doubt, I wanted to clarify as to how different government websites are to be made use off? I am unsure about what to read and what to weed out.

Response(s): Any link containing relevant data, fact or information from examination point of view or recent news may be useful. Many of the important web resources have been populated in this document. Please look at the web links section. You may find some of the information as repetitive of what you have covered in newspapers and magazines that may be escaped. But at least you will be sure that you have covered everything.

I am really worried about this one. I don't have a job security right now. And CSE is full of uncertainties, I sometimes feel scared that something bad might happen so, I am not able to gather enough courage to study for whole one year. What should I do?

Response(s): There is a word for it: confidence. You need to have it. And you also need to know little bit about yourself. Honestly, this exam is not for everyone. It is only for those with confidence and who can gather confidence. Make sure you know whether you can prepare and give your complete time and mind to the preparation.

How did you keep yourself motivated during the course of the exam? What did you do to overcome that fear? What did you think of, when result was not favorable the first time?

Response(s): It will not be easy to keep oneself motivated all the time.

There are huge ups n downs all through. What is important here is to renew ourselves when we fall. As in the batman movie, **why do we fall sir? - So that we can pick ourselves up!** It is very much a natural process to have ups and down, but just realize that you need not spend long times being down. You have to understand that you felt bad and that's enough, now it's time to change the curve back to up, and stay there on the top as long as u can. So practice coming back to normal as fast as you can, and staying lively as long as you can. So, this is the way to overcome fear as well, by realizing that its completely natural to be discouraged, you won't be afraid anymore of any further down times. Pick yourselves up, u have to do it yourselves.

You are your own inspiration. Your preparation is your motivation. We need to do all this inspiration and motivation stuff, just for performance. There is a good equation that we found in our training:

Performance = Ability * Motivation (efforts), where

Ability = Aptitude * Training (Preparation) * Resources

And

Motivation = Desire * Commitment

You have to also try and make sure you remove the results out of the equation altogether, for the time of your preparation. You cannot prepare thinking about the outcome. When you are doing something, you need to focus 100 % on that particular thing only, so wait for the results when it comes. And when they come, u see if that suits your preparation, it is again natural to deny the result, and it's natural to be disappointed. But again the same rule applies, come out of it as fast as you can, and do what you have to do.

This response is not a generic one. But it gives a perspective on how different one can approach the situation.

Didn't you ever feel depressed? Or failed?

Response(s): Won't be human if we don't feel depressed. We all feel it, all the time. At least, many times. It's not so important to see whether one is

depressed or not, or will stay motivated all the time. The more important point is that, how fast you can get out of that low times. That defines your fighting spirit because, you are going to be depressed many times, u have to make sure you get out very soon. The faster you get out, the better the results would be.

I don't have any guidance, and from a poor family. Would that be disadvantageous?

Response(s): Honestly, some guidance would help learn from their experiences in a quicker way. But there need be no regrets. We are trying to bridge this gap by bringing this document. Being poor is disadvantageous only in its financial aspects. Rest assured, you have all the chances of making it to the merit list, just like anyone else.

How can we remember so many things, so many points to write in the 20 marks or 30 marks questions?

Response(s): It is impossible to remember so many things through mugging up. The only way is to try and understand and get conceptual clarity. This will make sure most of the information is retained in your mind. Frequent revisions, studying from the same books/material is one good way to remember more. Practice answer writing through recollecting concepts instead of raw data and practice constantly.

What is ethics, integrity and aptitude means?

Response(s): These relate to the moral behavior of a person, a civil servant in the examination's perspective, and they are essential for the working of all the civil servants. Ethics in work, in governance, in politics is the prime topic of discussion and controversy in the country at the moment. Integrity is in peril with many scams and corrupt practices. The need of the hour is a bunch of young, honest and efficient men who has the right aptitude to deliver. Such ideas are all to be tested through the recently added GS paper.

What are the important magazines and newspapers to be read?

Response(s): You may follow any one monthly magazine out of the following: Competition Wizard, Chronicle and Civil Services Time. It is

always better to see these issues every month and decide after looking at the content as to which one is beneficial. I used to read Competition wizard and sometimes CST. Apart from one regular magazine you must follow Yojana and Kurukshetra. Frontline and The Economist are optional reads depending upon whether you find something interesting therein. However, they are not mandatory. Newspapers: The Hindu and Indian Express. (Try to make point wise brief synopsis of relevant articles.)

Which are the NCERT textbooks that have to be gone through?

Response(s): NCERT (old) for Ancient, Modern and Medieval History. NCERT (New) for Geography- X to XII.

You may start with the newspapers and magazines right now and then depending upon the availability of time divide it accordingly for GS and optional.

Do I need to prepare from CAT books for CSAT?

Response(s): Not required. Basic aptitude, logical reasoning and reading comprehension would suffice. We tried to provide some resources to help in CSAT preparation. Please take a look at the relevant sections.

I got a job offer, should I join it or leave it and prepare for the exam?

Response(s): This depends entirely on the kind of person you are as well as the kind of job you are offered. In general, it is definitely very tough to prepare while in job, so the easiest suggestion is not to take the offer and prepare. But it is not as easy as suggested. The big consideration that worries everyone is: 'what if I can't get a job later as well as does not clear the exam'? Well, that is why this exam is so tough. Not because it requires lot of hard work, but it requires a vast amount of self-confidence and decision making at a personal level right from the beginning. If you have confidence that you can get a job later, please sit and prepare. If you believe that you can prepare while in job, please do so. Interestingly, one can also think about the option of staying in the job for a year or two, and then start preparing (either by resigning or while in job itself). We suggest this last option as the best, since it gives a private work experience which can help immensely later in your public job and also,

one gets to see and enjoy the best of both the worlds.

I have asked many people, and they suggested different set of books. Which ones should I follow? Also, are the books suggested in this document sufficient?

Response(s): We specifically wanted not to suggest too many books. We tried our best not to, and if one finds already there are enough books suggested, please let us know and we would be more than happy to reduce them! Too many books is not the solution. They just add to the reading stuff and to mental pressure. Stick to some set of books. One or two good books in each field of study would be more than sufficient. In fact, many of the successful candidates actually studied the same set of books! It's the same set of books that everyone reads (and probably, have to read), the uniqueness comes not from these books but from the level of understanding, the amount of information one can reproduce in the exam and the decisions one can make.

Similar goes with the suggestions, too many of them make your life miserable. You will get as many different suggestions (of books and otherwise) as the number selected rankers are. Everyone had/has their own ways of preparation and that causes to this differences, but the underlying essence generally remains the same. You must be best judge of filtering these suggestions, and this filtering includes selection from this document as well. Do not follow blindly anything just because a set of successful people have said it. Make your own decision.

PRELIMINARY

This section should start, in our opinion, in only one way, by mentioning:

Preliminary exam preparation should be such that you should have **no doubts** about clearing the examination. The moment you come out of the examination hall, you should be able to find yourself *certainly* on one side, whichever it is. Your preparation should guide you to find yourself well above the cut-off, and not dilly-dallying near around the cut-off mark.

Tip: Never even spend a single minute worrying about the rumors on cut-off, results date etc., and your preparation should provide such confidence to you that you already know what's going to happen with your result!

Paper I: General Studies

Preliminary is a test of recognition. It would be sufficient, most of the times, if you can recognize the correct answer(s) from the given choices, though it is not as easy as said.

If your basics in the various subjects (that are a part of the GS paper) were strong, one would find identifying the right answer easy. *Do not try to memorize facts from the beginning.* That's the last thing to be done. **Before memorizing should come the understanding of the concept(s).**

So, if you start understanding the concepts, for each of the subjects, the preparation for prelims would more or less be the preparation for mains as well! That's where I want to drive each of you. There is no separate preparation for prelims as such.

It is all a **singular** conscious preparation for the Civil Services Examination!

The only difference comes in when you start doing/solving multiple-choice questions or mock/previous papers. This is the application part of what you read and understood. For mains, it will be answer writing, which we will discuss in the later sections of this book.

One should **solve as many questions as possible** (multiple choice questions). The more you do, the better would be your grasp on the subject as well as on the examination overall.

Please solve all the previous question papers of prelims as well as any mock exam papers that you come across. In fact, try and make a good collection of all the mock papers, objective type questions, solve them one by one. Use Internet extensively in this regard, there are very good sources (which are increasing day by day) which provide excellent multiple-choice questions (with trustworthy answers and explanations) that you all could spend time on.

*There **has to be a change in mindset** of preparation, to believe that solving questions is as important as reading books/syllabus.*

This whole process of solving objective type questions has lot of plus points on its side (whether solving mock papers or just a set of questions)

- You would be able to manage time better. A better idea of how much time each question takes to solve, depending on its complexity, and how much time you are taking for coming to a confirmed answer would all come out for you to observe.
- It gives a better idea of what questions to attempt and which questions to leave, essentially you would get judiciousness in your attempts. Very good remedy for tackling *negative marking*, isn't it?
- One would not feel any sort of tension or anxiety. Your prelims would just be another set of 100 questions or just another mock. You won't get carried away with the significance of the 'big day', and your mind would in fact work more effectively. Even if you were unable to do some 10 continuous questions, you would be confident that you should be able to do the rest of them.
- It is better to do all the mistakes before the exam by solving questions, instead of making *in* the exam!

You don't need to revise the topics before starting to answer or solve any of these questions or mock papers, **just start them right away**. You will recollect all topics slowly yourself. Better to repeat this point, to add certain emphasis, start the mocks without any hesitation that you didn't cover some syllabus somewhere or you are not confident of attempting

it. This starting trouble is the biggest stumbling block and many aspirants fail right at this stage itself and end up doing very few or no mocks. Don't do this mistake of stopping at the beginning itself.

UPSC generally does not follow a standard pattern of allotment of questions for various topics. Hence it is wise to stress on those subjects, which are common for Mains examination as well. The areas to be taken care of: Modern India, Polity, Indian Economy, Geography, Current Events and General Sciences. Considering the general nature of the examination, the strategy must be to focus on greater rather than intensive coverage.

History

History has three parts in total, ancient, medieval and modern India. For getting a general understanding of the Indian history from ancient to medieval, the NCERT books (Class XI and XII) can give a good start. Modern Indian History has to be covered extensively, both for prelims and mains. For the ancient and medieval history, only a set of aspects (and related eminent persons) are being tested generally, which are:

- Literature
- Arts: Art, Drama, Music and Dance
- Architecture
- Culture (Indus valley civilization, Vedic Culture, Buddhism, Jainism, Hinduism (and Parsi), Islam and Christianity)

You can refer following books for more reading (same books would be relevant for GS Mains Paper I preparation):

- Ancient and Medieval India, NCERT Class XI
- Modern India, NCERT Class XII
- Spectrum publications (Three books, each on Modern India, Indian Culture and Indian Persons)

Apart from knowing just the books for reading, you also need to know (and practice) what sources are there for solving questions. Some of the possible options I could find are as below:

- Arihant Publications: Modern History (Multiple Choice questions)

- TMH (Multiple Choice Questions)
- www.gktoday.in (Multiple Choice Questions)
- All the previous papers (for History questions)

In fact, for history, it is better to solve questions than reading endlessly. This is one good way to remember more from history, especially.

Polity

This subject consists of concepts from the Constitution of India, the various acts and amendments (generally of the central government, and at times from some of the state governments) and the political philosophies and structures of the country. So, the preparation should cover all of these aspects from the sources one reads from.

Books for initial preparation:

- Indian Polity by Lakshmikanth
- Introduction to the Constitution of India by DD Basu
- TMH Synopsis for Polity
- Constitution of India (with latest amendments included)

More references:

- Indian Parliament by Subhash Kashyap (and other books by the same author)
- www.pib.nic.in (daily releases from all ministries)

Questions to solve:

- TMH Polity Questions
- www.gktoday.in
- All the previous papers (for polity questions)

Geography

This subject does not require extensive preparation as a part of General Studies, yet it has many disconnected topics that one must know. Hence, the sources for geography preparation would be more, and *a very selective study* from each of these sources is highly recommended.

Suggested Reading:

- Physical Geography of India, NCERT Class XI
- Land and People, NCERT Class XI For World Geography
- TMH Geography synopsis
- IMT (meteorological department) website
- www.gktoday.in (Environment section)
- India Year book (for Indian topography, flora and fauna etc.)
- Ecology and environment by PD Sharma

Questions to solve from:

- TMH Geography questions
- www.gktoday.in
- All the previous papers (for geography questions)

Economy

Economy is one subject in which the understanding of all the basic concepts and terminology is of utmost importance. The examination also would test mainly these basic concepts of economics along with Current Affairs (in economics).

Suggested Reading:

- NCERT Textbooks
- Economic Survey of India
- 12th Five year plan
- Newspapers for economy related news
- Economy and political weekly
- www.pib.nic.in
- India Year Book
- www.khanacademy.org
- Any good compilation of economy (from either magazines or coaching center material).

Reference books (very selective reading and at times can be ignored):

- Dutt & Sundaram

- Mishra & Puri
- IC Dhingra
- Uma Kapila

Questions to solve:

- TMH questions for economy
- www.gktoday.in
- All the previous papers (for economy questions)

Sciences

Sometimes the questions asked are very difficult that even science students find it difficult to answer. But the preparation should be in such a way that all the basic questions can be done correctly. Questions are also asked from general applications of science. The 2013 prelims had many questions on general science, which are all basic in their concepts.

There are a set of websites we compiled for science and technology preparation. Please see the web links section in this document.

Suggested Reading:

- Science section of The Hindu (comes every Thursday)
- CSIR Website(s)
- Science reporter
- Websites of important institutes like TIFR, TERI, and CRL etc.
- www.pib.nic.in for science innovations and technology updates, adopted by the government and otherwise

References:

- "Science" Journal.
- India Year book.

Questions to solve:

- TMH questions on science (Do not waste lot of time reading the synopsis, read it only if you have enough time to spend!)
- www.gktoday.in

- All the previous papers (for science questions)

Current affairs

Read current affairs *religiously*, from the newspapers every day. Many questions are asked from this area, so prepare thoroughly. The efforts will be useful for **all stages** of the exam. It should become a part of your daily routine.

In fact, newspaper is the single unique source of information that can help you *crack* the examination by itself!

Suggested Reading:

- The Hindu Newspaper (please also read the section, how to read newspaper, for further details)
- Frontline Magazine
- www.pib.nic.in
- Any good compilation of economy (from either magazines or coaching center material).
- www.gktoday.in

Questions to solve:

- TMH Questions
- www.gktoday.in
- Mocks and other quizzes from magazines
- Mock papers of some of the coaching institutes
- Mock papers available online (either test series or otherwise)

General Knowledge

Quite a few questions are asked from this area. Some difficult questions are also asked. Do not spend too much time in memorizing unnecessary facts. You should have a broad awareness about various fields. At the same time, focus more on areas, which have been asked in the past.

India Year Book

This is important for the prelims and also for some mains two mark

questions. But there is no need (and practically not possible) to read everything given in the book, be logical and concentrate on the basics, which can be asked in the exam.

Some of the important chapters from this yearbook are as follows:

- Land And the People
- National Symbols
- Agriculture
- Art and Culture
- Communications
- Defense
- Education
- Energy
- Environment
- Industry
- Rural Development
- Scientific and technical developments
- Welfare
- General information

Paper II: CSAT

We had three CSAT papers to get an idea of what is expected from this paper. There was also a considerable change in the pattern from the first CSAT paper (2011) and the second one (2012). The 2013 paper saw a similar pattern but with more weightage to the reading comprehensions. Increasingly the shift has been towards testing English language and reading skills. We hope there will be lot more clarity in the coming years. Nevertheless, we will try and present you basic ideas about the preparation strategies for the examination.

For CSAT, the most important skillset that is tested (directly or indirectly) is the **speed and accuracy** of mental aptitude. And the only way to assure that one attains such skillset is to **practice**. Practice from previous papers, practice from mock exams and quizzes either those published in the magazines or the mock papers of some of the coaching institutes. The preparation can also be made from some standard guide like General

Studies Manual by TMH (if they are already updated for CSAT).

Generally, CSAT poses an entirely different challenge for science (math) and non-math students. This is where it gets really tricky. Some of those who are from math, say they have **not even prepared for two days** for CSAT! They might be so true that the idea is itself impossible to think for non-math aspirants. So, we have to bear with this difference and plan accordingly, the priorities.

Preparing for Reading Comprehensions

The Reading Comprehensions (RCs) in CSAT are short/not very long in nature. **Just glance the questions once** before reading the passage. Time is not much of a constraint and it helps when one goes through the passage later. Most importantly, it's always advisable to read varied topics. Which would get support from GS preparation. Reading any magazine (Frontline, Week and etc.,) would help in the long term for RC.

Anyone who has got time to spare, please pick up some novel (some of which are mentioned in this document, elsewhere). You will find a huge difference after a span of time. This exercise would help immensely in the essay as well. Pick up some **second hand material of Time/CL or any GMAT series**. Solving one or two RCs per day would be really helpful. A marked difference can be seen after 1-2 months. It is sincerely suggested not to overload with the RCs/day; one or two is always a good amount of practice. Please don't get bogged down with Time/CL or any CAT RC passages. The answer options are unnecessarily complex and even many times the coaching centers get it wrong. CSAT would not be of the level of CAT or GMATs. So, try to take these material as only supportive.

Analysis of the RC **after attempting** is again very important. Which questions were wrong, where in the thought process you went wrong, etc., are some of the questions one should come up with. Give some time after attempting in analyzing the answers. Try to make those corrections in your practice for next time, and you can see a marked improvement in your accuracy. Read and read more. RC solving takes some time and trust us no one can brag that he/she is a champion in RC solving.

Improving on English

There might be some aspirants who would require some help in English as well. We tried to collect some of the internet resources which might be useful in practicing and improving some English language skills, at least, related to the exam. Please refer the Web links section.

How to improve mathematics for non-math students?

The priority for non-math aspirants should be to really practice hard on aptitude. Don't worry with the idea that it is not their cup of tea, of they can never improve. This is definitely rocket science and with good practice and hard work, it is possible to improve substantially. Solve lots of puzzles, take a book on aptitude and reasoning and keep working on the questions whenever possible. Have some applications on your smart phone, if possible, that can provide some questions to solve while on the move. Books by MK Pandey and RS Aggarwal would be the best resources for Logical and Analytical Reasoning. You can solve the same questions repeatedly, as the mind always has to apply the reasoning, it doesn't matter whether it is the same question or a new one.

Summarizing:

- Practice reading, writing, speaking, communication skills.
- Read newspaper religiously
- Learn vocabulary and language.
- Read lots of novels.

Suggested books for CSAT:

As mentioned above, the preparation strategy for CSAT is not to obtain some information or knowledge from books but to practice the speed, accuracy and logical reasoning. For practicing these, one needs exercise books than some sort of textbooks. **So any page of a book or magazine with a set of questions for CSAT is a recommended book for preparation.**

A very dear faculty from one of the reputed institutes has suggested the following books for practice. Please choose whether they fit your bill.

- **Must Read : Analytical Reasoning : M K Pandey** (for Logical &

Analytical Reasoning)

- **RS Aggarwal** books on Verbal/Logical Reasoning, Aptitude and reading comprehension.
- **Quantitative Aptitude By Arun Sharma** (TMH) / Abhijeet Gupta : Selected Topics (Easy & Medium difficulty level)
- **Reading Comprehension by Arun Sharma** (TMH) : Selected Topics
- Arihant Publications book on CSAT
- **“Puzzles to Puzzle You” by Shakuntala Devi** (less priority).

Update from Preliminary 2013

The GS paper seems to be relatively simple. Not much stress on Current Affairs when compared to testing the concepts and basics in Polity, Economics and General Sciences. Also they seem to have slightly got away from multiple-answered questions and the paper has a majority of single-choice- answer questions.

Overall, a through clarity of the concepts would easily sail you through the GS paper.

When it comes to the CSAT paper, the stress is again more on reading comprehensions, there are even more of them when compared to the previous year paper. Less of logical reasoning has been the trend in this year's paper. But the overall pattern remained more or less the same, giving us hints the pattern is here to stay and a planned preparation could sail you through the preliminary stage without any second thoughts.

Aspirants who couldn't clear Preliminary Exam

Don't worry about the missed opportunity. One has to look ahead and make the best of the next attempt. The first task at hand is to assess, very objectively, the mistakes that went into the attempt. Don't generalize your failure by petty reasons like “should have prepared better”, “little more extra preparation would have helped a lot”, “paper was easy, but I could not do as I wanted” etc. There must have been some specific issue/issues that caused you to fall short of the cut-off. You are the best judge of your attempt and hence, **make sure you chart out all the aspects that went wrong during your preparation**. At times, your friends and

seniors would be better positioned to point out the shortcomings in your preparation. Take an honest feedback from them even if it's uncomfortable to take.

We have come across aspirants who couldn't clear preliminary even after multiple attempts. These aspirants have to understand that unless they learn from their mistakes, it will be disappointing preparation times that they face.

Once you bring out few mistakes out of your preparation, formulate a strategy to work upon the shortcomings. Work hard and exclusively on these aspects till you are good at them.

Change your revision strategies to include more mock exams, test series and solving multiple-choice questions.

Do not take repeated coaching for preliminary as well. It will not be effective unless the basics are sorted and you are having a very good conceptual clarity.

Follow upon the suggestions gathered, religiously. They help a lot and you can see yourselves writing mains in the next attempt itself.

MAINS

Remember to set targets and achieve daily goals! Anything left over tends to add up dangerously in History. Remember you will be writing 4-5 page answers, and when you have covered an 'aspect' of a question that satisfies that word limit, move on. You're not here to do specialized research on one particular area. While answering questions, your introduction and conclusion should be impressive.

Paper II: General Studies I

Paper I is an extension in terms of scope and coverage of the syllabus of the previous GS Paper I. Please observe the syllabus again carefully to make note of what all things to study (and from where).

The syllabus starts with History, not just Indian, but also a good amount of World History. Since it is 'History', it is vast. There is no requirement of in-depth study. Yet, make sure that the full syllabus for History is covered in some way or the other.

Indian Culture should be covered thoroughly; definite questions can be expected from this section. Spectrum books for Indian Culture, Modern India and on Persons (three books in total) would help immensely in covering all these aspects. Culture special edition by Wizard is also a good book to try. Of course NCERT XI and XII (preferably the old ones) are always an asset to rely upon. Revise several times to ensure that the history is digested in terms of its chronological sequence of events and in terms of significance. If you recollect, these are the same set of books recommended for prelims. So if you can prepare well for prelims for history, this section would be more of a revision.

Alternatively, a set of NBT books on Indian paintings, Indian classical Dances, Indian theatre, Musical Instruments, Folks dances should be useful. Book on Indian temples published by NBT is a comprehensive one, please refer it as suited. Special focus on Folk dances /dramas/arts should be kept in mind. For a historical perspective on Indian culture AL Basham's book Cultural history of India should be useful.

Modern Indian History could be specifically covered from Bipin Chandra (India's Struggle for Independence). Sumit Sarkar (especially for personalities) and Shekhar Bandhopadhyay (From Plassey to Partition is updated with the most recent research) books would give a more comprehensive reading of the freedom struggle. Freedom struggle has been specifically mentioned in the syllabus, so put more attention to this section. Spectrum book on Persons would give a good list of all contributors. Make a list of your own, all the contributors/contributions and try to fill it whenever any information is obtained. (This is the kind of 'notes' one must prepare). One book which should be read to know about India is Jawaharlal Nehru's Discovery of India.

For post-independence consolidation, Bipin Chandra's book on India after Independence, and *India after Gandhi* by Ramachandra Guha would give a broad perspective. Do not try to mug up anything. Try to understand the sequence of events, why they happened and what the implications are.

For World History, please ensure you do not go too deep into the given areas. Very selective study is required. Since this is newly added, questions can be surely expected. If one observes the topics under World History, they are the most basic events that defined the last 150 years. So a broad understanding is what is expected and not a mugged up order or events and people. The following resources would be useful:

- **Wikipedia:** The best resource for each of the topics mentioned in the syllabus.
- World History: Jain and Mathur (selective reading)
- World History: BV Rao
- Indian Culture and Heritage: www.nios.ac.in
- NCERT XII: India after independence.
- NCERT (IX n X): India and Contemporary World.
- Book by Normal Lowe

Salient features of Indian Society and its diversity should be covered in the books above. No special suggestion is required. But ensure that you make some list of points (sort, of notes making) from what you read, for

these topics. There is no need to go into Sociology books for such basic concepts. If you still want to specially read them, go for IGNOU notes for sociology.

In fact, each of the topics mentioned are so essential to understand that instead of suggesting books, we recommend you don't go further until you get a clarity of concepts, and also unless you write a few paragraphs about them in your own words. We are talking of the following topics:

- Communism, Capitalism and Socialism etc. (other economic models)
- Diversity in India
- Role of Women
- Poverty and Development Issues
- Urbanization, problems and remedies
- Globalization and Indian Society
- Social Empowerment
- Communalism
- Regionalism
- Secularism

Use Internet for browsing on all the topics above. A great amount of material and information is available online.

Preparation on these topics would be extremely useful for Essay paper as well.

The above plan for History looks huge, but the preparation has to be this vast as there are only two subjects covered in this paper (geography being the other), a full coverage of all topics is expected.

For the geography sections of GS Paper I, more stress should be given for understanding the natural phenomenon. Read about the natural calamities and disasters for their theoretical understanding. NCERT XI and XII would give good basic concepts on these topics. Make sure tables, diagrams, boxes etc. are included in your answer writing for geography related questions, they ensure decent marks, more often than not.

Websites would be most useful, including some videos from YouTube where the geographical processes are shown through animations or

otherwise. Follow Indian Meteorological Department's website and other resources to get an idea of the climate behaviors in the country, especially the Indian Monsoon and other phenomenon.

For World Physical Geography, NCERT should suffice. Don't go further. It is an endless topic.

Distribution of Key natural resources

Factors responsible for location of industries.

Paper III: General Studies II

For this paper, the main concentration is on Polity and Social Issues in the country.

This implies all the core topics of GS, which are very fundamental for understanding, and even to work on the ground. We have some very good and dedicated books for the subject and it is advised to read from these books.

Most of the polity aspects are very logical, and hence try to reason out all the aspects and other constitutional provisions.

DD Basu is one of the fundamental books for understanding the Indian Constitution, its historical underpinnings, evolution, features and other significant provisions. One always need to have a latest copy of the Constitution of India kept along with you, to know the exact wordings and the philosophy. Amendments need to be updated, and hence use Internet to find out the most recent of the copies.

PM Bakshi is one another book where lots of Supreme Court cases and other related information and discussions are included for each of the articles for deeper studies. This book comes after you get a basic idea of the subject either through DD Basu, NCERT or any other book. List of amendments can be collected (Laxmikanth is a good choice).

Also, Ravindran Sir's notes would be of immense help. He is a thorough expert in the subject and his notes go a long way in getting those minute details of the subject. Vajiram's printed material also has a very good collection of all the relevant information, especially for Polity (the famous Yellow books).

No more material is as such required apart from the above fundamental books, but if you prefer reading more, books by Subhash Kashyap would be very interesting (books on Parliament, Constitution and other related matters).

Make sure you cover all the topics mentioned in the syllabus with regard to Polity. They are very easy if properly and logically studied and even interesting.

Some important acts should also be covered (like the one mentioned in the syllabus, The Representation of People's Act), and all of these are very mentioned on PRSIndia.org (one of the best compilations of all the central acts in the country).

For social issues, magazines and other current affairs related material should be followed. Frontline, Yojana, Kurukshetra are some of the names that we come across. Take any one of them as per your choice and convenience and make sure you cover the topics, not the books/magazines. Selective reading is very tricky, whenever more books/magazines are suggested; it is not to read them from cover to cover, but only for the topics under discussion.

The only other section in this paper is the International Relations. Make a list of 25-30 countries with which we have good relations, and try to make a one page notes for each of these countries' relations in your own words.

Many institutes were able to come up with good compilations for the international relations and other international affairs, so it is recommended you take any one institute's material to cover all the countries that you made list of. All other NRI/PIO related issues are to be covered either from these materials or through magazines. Similarly, make a list of all the International Organizations, events, summits and pacts that are in the news. PIB is a great source to get all the pacts and agreements entered into by India.

Suggested Readings:

- Vajiram Notes and Material
- PM Bakshi
- DD Basu

- Laxmikanth
- Subhash Kashyap books
- 2nd ARC reports, Punchhi Commission report, Sarkaria commission reports and all other important reports (summary at least)
- NCERT (Contemporary and Democracy part)
- World Geography by Majid Hussain
- NCERT (XII): Indian Society and Social Change, Contemporary World Politics
- IGNOU chapters: Society and social problems in India
- NCERT XII
- Ministry of External Affairs (www.mea.gov.in)
- Pushpesh Pant's book on International Relations

Paper IV: General Studies III

By far, in terms of amount of syllabus, this paper is the largest. It covers Science and Technology, Economy, Ecology and Environment. Each of these need good amount of study.

Study Economy very carefully. Make sure you understand each and every small concept/definition accurately. Give the subject its time, and it does need lot of time, for all of those who are very new to the subject. We are not trying to scare but just trying to bring out the truth. Economics is easy, if the concepts are conceptually clear. Discuss a lot about the economics terminology and concepts with friends and seniors. NCERT textbooks would give initial inputs for the subject.

Most of the books and reference material remains the same as suggested for Prelims. Try to understand all the current affairs and economic decisions and events that are happening around through the subject you understood. Try to write lots of answers for the questions related to economy; it will improve your thoughts and how to process them in terms of economic angles.

Apart from general economy, many specific topics have been included in the syllabus. It will be nice if one can cover all those topics dedicatedly. For example, if we take Land Reforms in India, one can cover the topic in a detailed way, may be taking three to four hours and find all the

necessary inputs for writing a decent answer about the topic, with the new land bills and the history behind the land reforms and its implementation in the country.

Science and Technology is one of those areas where logic as such does not apply. One has to collect as much information as possible regarding the recent trends and advancements in the field. Keep a watch on all the related sections in The Hindu, Frontline, and Science Journals etc.

In fact, it would be better to take a compiled edition either by any publisher or by any of the institutes. It reduces a lot of time in trying to collect the data. It has been seen that most of the material from the institutes does cover a good deal of Science and Tech topics, both for the prelims and mains. But, please also make your own collection of information without totally relying on such material. But again, make a list of all the topics that you can think of under Science and Tech, and cover one by one. Again on similar lines, Internet would be the fastest way to obtain information especially for this subject. Make sure you follow the Indian science advancements, by CSIR, TIFR, CRL and all those other research and science laboratories. All of these have their websites showcasing their works, so follow the websites to get first-hand information about the updates.

Finally, Ecology and Environment. This is one of the most important subjects for both prelims and mains, no exam will be set without a considerable amount of questions from this area. One has to be really thorough with all the topics under this section to have a good attempt at the paper. On the other hand, having a good grip on these topics would give a deliberate advantage for one's fortunes in clearing the exam.

Collect all protocols, agreements and events/summits that relate to environment and ecology. Make note of all the advancements and amendments that come in this area. Try to dig into some background of their origins, their current issues and probable way ahead.

Next are Internal Security aspects, obviously directed towards Terrorism, Communal riots, and Naxalism, Maoists and border militancy. A thorough understanding of all these issues is necessary before going any further. Read extensively on naxalism and communal tensions, their historical origins, why we are unable to resolve the issues, need and effect

of new institutional setups for fighting these issues etc. Follow commentaries and opinions of various eminent persons to understand different perspectives. Read the government's stand on all these issues, follow their websites, like Ministry of Home Affairs etc. to get hold of any new reports or concepts.

Suggested Reading:

- NCERT XII (Political Science, Contemporary World Politics: Security in the contemporary World)
- NCERT: Our Environment (VII), Ecology (XII)
- NCERT Economy
- NCERT Geography
- Uma Kapila on Indian Economy
- Indian Meteorological Department website and all other geo/earth/environment related websites of the Indian Government (and it's various agencies/institutes etc.)
- Economic Survey of India (it is a must!), XII FYP, Budget Documents and all other documents by **RBI**, Economic Advisory Council for PM etc. Complement it with India Year book, Yojana and Kurukshetra.
- Ecology and Environment: PD Sharma
- 2nd ARC Reports (Public Order, Capacity Building for conflict resolution, Combating Terrorism, Crisis Management, Strengthening Financial Systems Management)
- Ministry of Home Affairs Reports (including annual report) (www.mha.nic.in)
- RBI Website for economy (www.rbi.org.in)

Paper V: General Studies IV

Best guess is that, most of you reading this would be very much worried about this particular paper. This paper is a completely new addition to the exam, changing the perception of the pattern as a whole. But we assure you there is really nothing to worry about. This paper might even turn out to be one of the easiest papers to attempt. No specific study is required to attempt any of the questions that are going to be asked.

Nevertheless, it requires a lot of brainstorming and a truly open mindset to be able to get decent marks in such subjective papers.

Since nothing is known about the structure of the paper, most of the suggestions below might seem to be invalid. Yet we assure you that following the suggestions below should help in approaching the paper better.

Get ready for problem solving in this paper. You will be given a set of scenarios or situations and expected to give your way of coming to the solution. It is almost like an extension of your interview process where they now have the chance of asking more behavior and issue based questions and giving you enough time for thought.

Remember that your answers in this paper will not be dealt with right or wrong. Such real world scenarios would not have white and black answers. Moral base of your thoughts, open attitude, confidence and courage, integrity and compassion are some of the aspects they look for, in the answer and if they are imbibed in to it, you might as well get a very good score. So, it is more of a mental preparation for the paper.

The topics essentially cover Psychology and public administration to a certain extent. IGNOU comes out as the best possible resource to read about such topics, especially Psychology. The topics in the syllabus are directly picked up from the IGNOU chapters for Psychology. So please go through the IGNOU material to find the relevant topics/chapters. For the public administration related topics, especially morality and integrity in civil services etc., the Second Administrative Reforms commission has dedicated chapters, so it is recommended you go through the 2nd ARC for these topics.

Topics such as Gender Sensitivity, Sexual Harassment, and Understanding Disability etc. are some of the topics, which should be prepared upon.

Read about Emotional Intelligence and understand it on a conceptual basis and try to browse Internet to solve some puzzles or problems

related to this. As long as you understand the topic, there is no need to go into specific subject/psychology books.

Suggested Reading:

- 2nd ARC Reports (Ethics in Governance, Refurbishing Personnel Administration, RTI, Citizen Centric Administration)
- Administrative Ethics (Public Administration topic, could be read from any good book). For example Paul Appleby wrote a masterpiece on ethics in Administration as early as in 1950's.
- IGNOU chapters (Ethical Concerns in Public Administration)
- Emotional Intelligence: by Daniel Goleman.
- Ethics and ethical dimensions chapters from IGNOU
- Global Competitiveness Report (take the latest) and other related reports, which detail the status of India in terms of Bureaucracy, Entrepreneurship etc.
- NCGC: Civil Services Survey 2010 (or anything more latest)
- Reports on flagship programs like NRHM, JNNURM, Private reports like McKinsey Reports etc. (All these reports provide insights into the working of the administration, the ethical questions and the perceptions about the integrity and the various challenges faced).
- IGNOU chapters uploaded in the repository (www.worthview.com/forum)

Update on Ethics Paper

Recently, UPSC has released a sample question paper of the Paper V: GS IV. A quick review of the paper shows how much that's written above (*written previous to the release of the sample paper*) is **spot-on**, apt and how nearer it is towards the expectations of the UPSC!

Please ensure the sample question paper is gone through thoroughly. But, just going through the question paper would not suffice. Try answering those questions, especially the case study related ones. Unless you practice writing answers to such questions, it will become very tough to 'invent' an answer in the examination hall. Some of the questions and possible suggestions are as below:

Q: Which great Indian personality has inspired you the most as a role-model and how have you been able to benefit in your own life by such an inspiration?

As mentioned and to repeat, such questions cannot be written on the spot. You have to be prepared. Ensure you read the writings of Indian thinkers and there would definitely be one towards whose ideas you will be attracted to. Make them your own ideas/ideals. If not already done, please do so. Read novels and other books written by such people (Kalam's books for example, his latest book *The Turning Points* give an internal perspective of decision making and bargaining within the higher echelons of Indian Government), by IAS officers and others, which can give a perspective of the happenings in the government.

Try as much as possible to give a genuine answer, which comes out of your actual experiences and not something you made up for the sake of the examination. **Be truly inspired.**

But on an analytical tone, these type of questions are hardly new. Many a times we get such topics in the essay papers, isn't it? So it is an extension of the basic essay preparation into a full-fledged one.

Read the views and opinions of some of the great philosophers of the world on ethics, integrity etc. This will be your material for writing arguments over a certain topic in the examination. Starting from Socrates, Plato and till the recent of the statesmen, read their writings and life's work. It would be important to even concentrate on the Indian philosophers and Indian way of thinking more than anything else. Starting from Arthashastra (and even beyond), Buddhist and Ahoka's views on Dharma, Upanishads, and the general Indian Philosophy etc., all these would be very much useful in understanding these abstract concepts better. The list above does not mean that you should read all the Upanishads, the idea is just to get the essence of these writings. All the political thinkers and freedom fighters and their views are to be understood (we hope you would cover these as a part of other papers as well). Gandhi, Nehru, Patel, Kalam and everyone else had/has their own perspectives on some of these concepts and it is important to understand

their differences, relevance and applicability in the contemporary Indian scenario.

Q: You have been working with your team for almost a year. One of your Subordinates Mr. A is very effective and hardworking, he takes responsibility and gets things done. However, you have heard that Mr. A makes loose comments about women. Mrs X who is working under A, comes to you, she is visibly disturbed. She tells you that Mr. A has been making undue advances towards her and has even asked her to go out for dinner with him. She wants to give a written complaint seeking action against Mr. A. what would you do and why?

This question directly refers to Gender Sensitivity. To repeat what we wrote already, topics such as Gender Sensitivity, Sexual harassment and understanding Disability should be prepared fully. Also remember that, there is no right and wrong answer to the above case study. If you are the decision making authority, what is going to be your call. Your answer shows whether you are sensitive towards women's issues and how tough it is to work for them, or it shows how much work oriented you are (even at the cost of people's comforts) and etc. Yes, **a balance approach is what is expected but that should not be confused with non-decision making!** You are supposed to take a decision ensuring that you follow the principles of natural justice.

The case study question on health and hospitals is a known scenario to most of you who prepare. Ensure you practice a good answer for such questions, starting from this one.

Aspirants who couldn't clear Main (written) Examination

There will be multitude of reasons for not being able to make to the interview stage of the examination. We understand that it would be highly disappointing, yet, please recoup yourselves, it is time to do some serious retrospection. We try to discuss some of them.

Language papers: There are instances when prospective aspirants have not cleared the mains because they failed in one of the language papers. Do not take the mandatory papers lightly. Take them seriously, they do

not take great preparation, just the basic practice of language paper of the X level.

One of the Optional Papers goes wrong: In the 2012 mains examination, we have seen bad scores in some of the first papers of the optional subjects (like Public Administration, Sociology etc.), with as much less as 30 out of 300 marks. Though there are valid questions raised how such less marks could possibly be obtained, yet it is important to revisit the preparation for the papers.

Do not try to re-read the topics from scratch again. There won't be any improvement you can find. One needs to do selective reading of all these topics of which one was unable to write good answers. Answer writing is the mantra. Practice writing answers from all the topics that you were unable to write well in the previous examination. If there are any topics that you couldn't cover, please do so now. Ensure the full syllabus is covered and practiced. Take all the previous papers and start solving them with time limitations (for each question). Take mock tests or any other test series, and have your answers evaluated well ahead of the mains.

Less marks in GS: Please ensure you take a thorough review of your GS paper attempt. Mark all those areas/questions which you could not attempt, and all those areas which you could not attempt well or completely. Give more preference to these areas and practice more through discussions and answer writing.

If there are issues with finishing the paper(s) in time, try to limit yourself to the word limit so that you save time on each question, reduce time taken for answering long questions and use that time to attempt more questions.

One might not need to get very high marks in the papers, average marks in all the papers would be the best possible combination to clear the mains in a thumping way.

Once you worked upon your weaknesses, give equal priority to all the papers. Try to cover the full syllabus of all the papers even if it's not an in-depth preparation from each of these. A sure slot in the Interviews awaits you.

ESSAY

The essay paper in the civil services main examination, of course, like any other paper, is crucial in determining the final outcome / selection and ranking. It is decisive because there is no specialization in an essay and so no aspirant can claim expertise, unlike the optional subjects.

There is no singular source from which one can prepare for the essay paper, nor there any syllabus. The expectation is more on how to present the ideas than the ideas per se. Both the above points pose a definite challenge. It is vital to understand that an essay is a reflection of one's personality: ideas, views, analysis, assessment and inferences, values, attitude, aptitude, orientation and communication abilities, all the expected personality qualities that the selection process looks for!

Simple English and short sentences are suggested; they make your writing work easier as well as the work of the examiner before giving marks. Writing ideas into small sentences is not so easy. We keep writing long sentences with lots of commas and many ifs and buts. Please practice to avoid these and come up with short and lucid sentences.

Characteristics of a good essay:

- Unity - the subject must be clearly defined in the mind. Irrelevant points should not be written in the essay. At the same time, the subject might be treated in a variety of ways and from different points of view.
- Order - the essay should follow a certain ordered line of thought and come to a definite conclusion. It should not consist of haphazard points. Every point should reflect on the subject in a direct sense.
- Personal touch - an essay should reveal personal feelings and the opinions of the writer. It should have his individuality in it. So don't be afraid to express your own views
- Simple - the essay should be written in simple language.
- Direct and clear - the style of the essay should be simple, direct and clear.
- Avoid spelling mistakes and grammatical errors, as these mistakes will take a toll on your final marks.

Some patterns and root topics observed and suggested for preparation:

- Women empowerment
- Environment, S&T, Energy Security, Sustainable development
- Democracy, Judiciary and related topics
- Education, Indian Culture (including Cinema)
- Current events

General trend is the essay paper will contain either four or five topics out of which, one topic is to be chosen. It is important to analyze previous year essay papers, to find out the kind of topics that are being asked to write upon. It is conspicuous to find some definite patterns and root topics in the previous essay topics.

The aspirants should look for more such patterns and make a list of them. Try practicing writing essay on each of the items in the list to get to the best levels of preparation.

The duration of the essay paper is three hours and the word limit is not mentioned. Hence, it is up to the student to choose his word limit! It is generally said that 1500-2000 words should make a good essay. One needs to judiciously divide the given three hours' time in doing the following:

Take not more than five to ten minutes in deciding which topic to write:

It would be utterly confusing to choose one topic out of the given four/five, but upon practice, it is always seen that one is inclined to a specific set of topics, often. So practice more and make sure not much time is taken for the topic selection. It is even more important to stick to your choice and believe in it! Don't think of changing the topic in the middle of the examination. That would do more harm than good.

One can also eliminate some topics with which one is not comfortable. Some topics, most of the aspirants cannot maintain a balance throughout the essay, so better opt them out as well. Finally, select the topic that you think can do justice. Sometimes one particular essay seems tempting from the first look and we decide to write that without even reading the other ones. The answer booklet of the main examination consists of 24 pages. The last 3-4 pages can be used for rough work. If you are sure that

you can complete the main booklet, then ask for one additional at the beginning of the exam and use it for rough work.

Take time to draft ideas and prioritize:

Once a topic is chosen, one of the better ways to approach the essay paper (though this cannot be generalized) is to start with a draft / rough version of your essay. Take some rough sheets or go to the backside of your answer sheet, and start jotting down everything and anything that gets in to your mind about the topic. We generally call such thinking green-light thinking. Don't stop on any negative annotations and keep collecting all the ideas that you can think of. It is easy to think of ideas, by thinking of questions (Please see the below example essay and how to form questions and ideas). Once you are sure that enough ideas are noted, think of a possible conclusion that you want to end the essay with. Your conclusion is the single most important item in making your essay. Take good time to think of it and form a conclusion. Now, from the points that you drafted before, prioritize and organize the ideas/points according to the conclusion you decided upon. Some of those points could be used in favor of the conclusion; others could be used against the conclusion. Use your conscience whether to include or exclude some of the ideas that are drafted. Next, think of a nice introduction that can really open up your ideas and subsequently the conclusion to the examiner. There is no set of rules as to what to be written for a good introduction, but it is good to have a grand opening (the way we expect for any match/movie). If you can think of any recent happenings / some anecdotes / phrases or some unique presentation, it would help in making a solid impression. The whole of this process of drafting the ideas, making the conclusion, organizing the ideas and providing an introduction would take a good amount of time, anywhere between 45 min to 90 min. It is important that one practices all these steps to get a thorough hold on the entire exercise.

Know your speed:

It is important to know one's speed of writing. If one can write around 1000 words in one hour, for example, all he needs is around one and half hours to finish writing the full essay. The rest of the time in the three-hour examination could be used for drafting the ideas and prioritizing them. The more time you take to write the essay, the less time you get for

the above step of drafting the ideas and organizing them. So, channelize your preparation to enable more time is provided for the thinking part and less time for the writing part. Improve your writing speed as much as you can, but the even important point is to know your speed, so that you can gear up your examination accordingly. More or less, this part of the discussion applies to other paper as well, in some part or the other.

Writing it, finally

Once you did the steps above, you are ready to write the essay in its final form. Elaborate the points that you have already written in the rear side of answer sheet, in the draft. Make it a logical flow. Even if you come across a very good point while writing, that you haven't noted in the draft, and if it is disturbing the flow of essay, then **avoid writing it**. It's not an issue if you miss one point but are writing twenty other points, but it is very important to maintain the logical flow of ideas in your essay! If you know your speed correctly, you will know how much time you can afford for drafting and prioritizing the ideas and how much time you need for writing them down. If you are a slow writer, make sure you give yourself enough time to write (implying, you will get less time to draft your ideas, which in turn means, you need lots of practice than others) so that you can finish the essay in time, or with some 10-15 minutes left, so that you can make some final corrections. Rectify grammatical mistakes if you can find them, it is important there are no spelling mistakes, so use the last minutes to correct these all. Give a quick reading of the essay for making these corrections, **underline** as you read any of the sentences you want to highlight or want the examiner's concentration to be upon.

Let's see how the above brainstorming would work, by taking an example.

Essay topic: "Terrorism and global Peace (CSE-2005)"

Drafting the ideas and questions:

- What is terrorism, its aims, methodologies and its origin?
- What is global peace?
- What is the relation between terrorism and global peace?

- How is it affecting global peace?
- Any recent incidents that I can think of, that threatened global peace? (This could be useful for introduction).
- What are the different ways or types of terrorism and how each one is a threat to global peace?
- What are the causes of terrorism to flourish?
- How global peace can be maintained (remedy and a global approach in fighting terrorism because of its spread to all countries)?
- What is the relevance of terrorism to India and affect on Indian ways of living?
- Should terrorism be fought against? What is the outcome of the war on terror?
- What should be the conclusion? Ex: Terrorism is affecting global peace and it is a fact, so the solution is to make it disappear. Whatever form it may be, it should be condemned because it involves loss of precious lives and living of many.

On such lines, many more questions and ideas can be thought of. While thinking on your ideas (words or sentences), try also to find answers for some/all of your above questions. This will form most of the content matter for your essay.

Important points to remember:

- Good introduction and good conclusion are a must. Introduction should guide the examiner to what you intent to convey in the subsequent paragraphs. The conclusion should be appropriate to what you discussed and must be proactive, balanced and positive in approach.
- There should be flow / link between paragraphs.
- Clarity of expression is very important. Use simple English to express your points clearly. One need not use flowery language. Simple logical presentation is sufficient. Please remember that, the essay paper is not expected to examine your talent about the topic. It is expected to example your talent of essay writing, how you can present the ideas of the topic in to an essay.
- Practice is essential for getting a good score.

- Main focus should be on giving a good analysis of the topic.
- Do not drive into areas, which are irrelevant to the topic, even though you know a lot about it.
- Make sure that you have sufficient understanding and material to write, before choosing the topic.

More on Introduction:

The introduction is the opening part of the essay and should be confined to a paragraph. This is expected to put the topic in front of the examiner, and wherever necessary, explain the central theme or idea, basic or core concepts and definitional criteria. The introduction should arouse the interest and general curiosity in the mind of the examiner/reader. Spend good amount of time for introduction.

Main Content:

The main text of the essay must develop, support and explain the main ideas stated in your introduction. This essentially is a systemic organization of information based on a consistent methodology. It deals with the topic and related issues to be addressed, the correlation of facts, figures, ideas, views, concepts, in-depth, systematic, coherent analysis based on the topic leading to logical interferences, as well as making plausible projects and providing necessary solutions (wherever expected/required).

Conclusion:

As the text draws to a close to the conclusion, the essay should have reached the stage of critical mass, a sort of climax. The conclusion, a summary, should express the essence of the essay, it should not contain any fresh evidence, facts of figures.

Suggested readings for preparation:

- *Yojana* Issues
- *Frontline* (especially the cover stories)
- *The Hindu* Sunday magazine

WEB LINKS

The following are some of the web sources we could gather. These are useful for various aspects of the examination, which are mentioned next to them.

These websites give an idea what kind of web resources could be searched for. The list is definitely not exhaustive, and some of the links might have changed, so please check for their working status. One must also constantly look for new resources and update their own list of websites to follow.

In fact, the very purpose of this document is at stake, when one looks at some of the websites mentioned in this list. Some seniors have been maintaining portals as well where a huge amount of information and guidance is available, already, for everyone. Through this document, we are also doing a very similar effort, nothing more. So, **make best use of these sources and convert them into resources.**

We thank all of their efforts in making these websites and providing for all aspirants a free and best accessible information about the civil services examination.

Website	Link	What to read	Useful for
Amnesty International	http://amnesty.org/	Annual Report	Social Issues
UNESCAP	http://www.unescap.org/sdd/	Population Policy of India	Social and economic issues
NASSCOM	http://www.nasscom.org/	General coverage	Science n Tech
Down to Earth	www.Downtoearth.org.in www.cseindia.org	General coverage	SnT, Environment and

			ecology
Science Mag	www.sciencemag.org	Superficial Coverage	S n T
MOEF	http://moef.nic.in/index.php	Reports and updates	
MEA	www.mea.gov.in	Reports and news	IR
ORF	http://www.orfonline.org/cms/sites/orfonline/home.html	Foreign Policy	IR
MHA	www.mha.nic.in	Annual Report and news	
Law Ministry	http://lawmin.nic.in		Polity
Social Justice Ministry	www.socialjustice.nic.in	Annual Report and news	
Economic Advisor to PM	http://eac.gov.in	Economic policies and reports	Indian Economy
RBI	http://www.rbi.org.in/home.aspx	All reports, policies, economics fundamentals	Indian Economy
PMO	http://pmindia.nic.in	General updates	
Constitution of India	http://indiacode.nic.in/coiweb/welcome.html	Constitution, Supreme Court judgments	Polity

Indian Central Acts	http://www.prsindia.org http://indiacode.nic.nin	Laws, Bills, Analysis and summary	Polity
Planning Commission	http://planningcommission.nic.in	12 th FYP, reports and policies	Economy
PPP and Infra	http://infrastructure.gov.in/index.html	PPP policies and reports	Economy
EPW Magazine	http://www.eperf.res.in	Recent articles	
National Stats	http://www.nationmaster.com/index.php	Statistics, data	Economy
Word Atlas	http://www.worldatlas.com/aatlas/world.htm	Atlas	Geography
Indian Maps	http://projecttiger.nic.in/map.htm	Maps	Geography
Physical Environment	http://www4.uwsp.edu/geo/faculty/ritter/geog101/textbook/contents.html	General Info	Geography
CSGSIndia	http://www.csgsindia.com	Questions to solve	GS (pre)
NCERT Textbook	http://www.ncert.nic.in/index.html	NCERT downloads	
Current Affairs	http://indiacurrentaffairs.org	CA	GS
Sample Papers	http://www.indicareer.com/competitive-exams/civil-services-ias-sample-question-paper-set.html	Sample Papers	GS (pre and mains)

UPSC Portal	http://www.civilserviceindia.com/about-civilservices.html	Total coverage	GS (pre and mains)
Blogs by seniors	http://swapsushias.blogspot.in/	Discussions and subject explanations	GS (pre and mains)
Mrunal's Blog	http://mrunal.org	Comprehensive preparation portal	GS (pre and mains)
Prince Dhawan's Blog	http://princethawan.wordpress.com	General guide	GS and optional subjects
Newsfile	http://www.gsnewsfile.blogspot.in/	Newspapers collection	GS (pre and mains)
IGNOU material	www.egyankosh.ac.in	IGNOU downloads	Sociology, PA, Psychology etc.
Current Affairs	http://www.allcurrentaffairs.org	Current Affairs	GS (pre and mains)
Competition Master	http://competitionmaster.com/index.aspx#	General Coverage	GS (pre and mains)
Wikipedia	http://en.wikipedia.org	Total Coverage	Everything
Questions for Pre	www.gktoday.in	Mocks, Multiple Choice Questions,	GS (pre)

PREPARING FOR THE CIVIL SERVICES EXAMINATION

		Synopsis	
Press Information Bureau	http://pib.nic.in	Indian Current Affairs	GS (pre and mains)
IAS100	www.ias100.in	General Help	GS (pre and mains)
Half Mantra	http://www.halfmantr.com	General Help	
ARC reports	http://arc.gov.in/	ARC reports, all of them	PA, GS (Ethics Paper) and more
Indian Diplomacy FB page	https://www.facebook.com/IndianDiplomacy	International Relations	GS
Indian Mirror	http://www.indianmirror.com/	GS	GS (pre and mains)
Environment Agreements	http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_international_environmental_agreements	Environment Ecology	GS
UNEP	www.unep.org	Environment Ecology	GS
Economy Articles	http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/columns/Chandrasekhar/	CP Chandrasekhar articles	GS
Institute for Defense studies	http://idsa.in/	Defense reports	GS
Best	http://www.indiagovernance.gov.in/map.php	Public Administration	GS and

Practices		ation practices	Pub Ad
Indian Council for World Affairs	http://www.icwa.in/	International Relations	GS
Institute of Peace Studies	http://www.ipcs.org/	International issues	GS
Forum IAS	http://forumias.com/	General Discussions	GS
IAS Passion	www.iaspassion.com	General Discussions and Help	GS
IAS Cracker	www.iaskracker.com	Help for exam	GS
Discussion Forum	http://www.worthview.com/forum	Repository	Civils Exam
English for students	http://www.english-for-students.com/Synonyms.html	English	
English language root chart	http://www.prefixsuffix.com/rootchart.php	English	
Vocabulary Tips	http://www.englishleap.com/vocabulary	English	

There is a necessity for making a permanent repository of material online. All those notes/scans and other documents could be uploaded for the benefit of all aspirants at a single place. Especially for the GS Paper IV, presentations and other documents related to gender sensitivity etc. were collected, and they need to be shared in an effective/efficient way. We would try and come up with such repository, hopefully soon and

strong. As of now, we would use the existing setup to host some of the files that we were able to collect. Please access the files @ <http://www.worthview.com/forum>

There used to be good discussions happening on Orkut communities few years back, I do believe some of these must still be going on, nevertheless, the coverage has reduced considerably. These communities used to bridge an important gap and it is now required to be filled by some other discussion forum. Make sure some of you can come together and form such a thing, for everyone's benefit.

ENGLISH AND INDIAN LANGUAGES

The objective of these papers is to test the candidate's ability to read and understand serious discursive prose, and to express his ideas clearly and correctly in English and one Indian language. Standard of these papers is of matriculation.

These papers are only of qualifying nature, but at the same time cannot be ignored or taken in light vein. If you do not qualify then your other mains papers will not be evaluated. Note that every year there are some candidates who get disqualified for not qualifying the language papers! So ensure that you have minimum knowledge about the languages. The score should only be above 40% and the questions are also set in such a manner that it is not difficult. There is no need for any separate preparation. Do see the previous years papers to gain familiarity.

English:

Those from non-English medium schools might face some difficulty in the English paper. Then the preparation should be made from some standard book. Note that the grammar is not much tested, but only the functional knowledge of the language. The pattern of questions is as follows:

- Short essay
- Reading comprehension
- Précis writing
- Translation from English to the Indian language and vice-versa

- Usage and vocabulary

Reading comprehension:

There are two kinds of reading. One is when you read to educate yourself on some topic. Second is when you find answers to some questions in the content. In the first case, reading is slow, as you have to understand the content. But, in the second case, it is faster as you are only looking for answers to few questions. For reading comprehension, it is better to follow the second kind of reading. First read the questions and then read the passage to write answers.

- As you read, underline the lines, which contain answers.
- You should write answers in your own composition. Do not copy from the passage.

Précis Writing:

- The précis should be written in your own composition
- Examples, illustrations and quotations of the original passage should not be included in the précis.
- No idea or point should be elaborated
- You should not add your own comments or criticism.

Short Essay:

More stress should be on the English rather than the content. Sentences should have some grammatical construction.

Indian Language:

Similarly, some face difficulty with the Indian language paper. Ensure that you have functional knowledge in at least one Indian language.

OPTIONAL SUBJECTS

We will now take a look at some of optional subjects in detail. Not all the optional subjects were included as some of them require specialization in that field, especially the literature subjects. Still, we will try to include them at a later point of time if need be.

The first and the obvious question that comes up here, is how to choose one's optional subject. Given that, after the change of pattern, only one optional subject needs to be chosen, a good choice of the optional subject might even guarantee a more than cut off score (and beyond) in the Mains (written) examination.

Before selecting any subject for your optional, please find out whether the criteria below are applicable, for being a good optional subject.

- Availability of material and good books
- Limited syllabus
- Question papers are not dynamic and almost the same for the last 15 years (or more!)
- Availability of good coaching institutes
- Availability of seniors who can help with the subject
- Scoring
- The 'supposed' normalizing effects are 'comfortable'
- Useful for GS and Essay papers
- If one is from medium other than English, proper checkup of market to see availability of material.

Even when a subject is good in all the above respects, before or after the change of pattern, the primary criteria which should define what optional subject to choose must come from **one's interest towards the subject**. It's *you* who has to sit with those books for long hours and in course of time have to start living with that optional as well. Please go through the subject for a while, and then find out if it is within your tastes. Most of the times, it does interest you. Don't worry that time would be wasted in doing this exercise, all that you read would be useful for GS or Essay and may be even in the language papers.

You will also have to understand that any subject in itself is not scoring. *It is the student who makes any subject scoring.* If the same answer written by two or more students, one may get more marks than others due to systematic presentation and writing answer strictly according to question. Presenting just a general view of the analytical questions might not fetch good marks, and hence a little more in-depth analysis is required in your marks, for making it more scoring.

Of course, for those with specific background like Agriculture, Medicine, Management, Law etc., we don't see any need for any other optional subject except for what they opted for their degree. Choosing would be definitely easy. Here we intentionally did not go into the details of such optional subject information as it is highly specialized in to the respective domain(s). Only those subjects which are generic in nature, and are generally opted by students of various faculties are mentioned.

Even after such an exercise done to choose an optional subject, it must be the case that many of you are still confused which one to finally take for the exam. With just one subject to be opted for in the new pattern, the choices become tougher. This is either you are unable to choose between two equally placed social sciences (like geography versus sociology, public administration versus history etc.) or you are not sure whether to take social sciences or one of your graduation subjects (like MBA versus Public Administration etc.). Well, it is not going to be easy anytime. But always find that there will be some inclination, some bias within you towards one of the subjects. That's the only chance to bank upon. Choosing one out of geography, sociology, pub ad etc. would be very tough from a neutral perspective (which we, the compilers of this document, are in). If you have any inclination of geography, that's always a better option. These days Public Administration is on the backseat, it is being really taken for a ride, both in the toughness of the question paper as well as for evaluation. We do not want to discourage people from taking it just for this reason, yet the facts are on our face (the 2012 exam marks would be of great help to crosscheck). If you are an MBA graduate, it is better (than any time before) to go for your degree course than taking any other subject. Similar is the case for Law, Medicine and other specialized subject graduates. When it comes to history, it is generally seen only those who have a great liking for the subject would be willing to take it any day, but it is not a subject for all (especially because of its

vastness). In the end, we say, **be decisive**. This is one skill everyone has to develop, not just to clear the exam, but to do the job, later on the field. **Take a decision and stick with it**. There is no place for non-decision takers in the services. In fact, this can end up being the single most important factor for you on the job as a civil servant. So, why not start from this instance. We hope you will.

Anthropology

Anthropology is one those subjects which **pass** almost all the criteria for being a good choice of optional subject as mentioned above. Still, I request you to please go through it for a few days (at least, two) and then decide whether the subject interests you and if so, go for it.

A first look at the syllabus of Anthropology might scare most of you but, believe me when I say, the syllabus gives a **real wrong picture** of the efforts needed to prepare for this subject.

A small background about the subject settles the perspective. There is relatively very less research that happens (and happened) in the country on anthropology, only a handful of professors and PhDs are produced. Whatever little research happens has not been yet converted into academic material, in any of the institutes with prestigious anthropology faculties. Because of this all, there is **literally no change in the subject** as a whole in the last twenty years or so academically. The syllabus for the exam is a small subject of this unchanged academic material, and our syllabus too never changed substantially. Even further, there **were only around 150 questions** which are repeatedly asked in the subject!

Having said that, the Physical Anthropology part is relatively tougher than the rest of the syllabus as one has to go into the details of physiology of human and evolution. But as mentioned above, there are only a few set of questions (not even topics or concepts, just questions) that are going to be repeated, the toughness roughly evens out.

I hope, after the change in the pattern, with only one optional to take, anthropology does fit the bill perfectly. And I don't expect any drastic changes in the way the paper was being set all these years. A quick look

at the 2012 Anthropology paper gives a definite hint of change but that fits in the overall scope of what we are discussing here.

Some good points to keep in mind while preparing for Anthropology and while attempting the paper:

- Attempt physical anthropology and other theory based questions as much as possible. They are highly scoring.
- Use of diagrams for physical anthropology would fetch definite brownie points, which includes anatomical-prehistoric man (skull, vertebra, bones and teeth diagrams) and modern man, prehistoric stages (tools used, artifacts).
- Flow charts are also very effective in this subject. They save the time of explaining a big concept in words.
- Please go through the yearly/recent reports on Tribals (provided by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs)
- Some of the topics from tribal affairs part of the syllabus would be very useful for GS and Essay papers.

To give an idea on how much time it takes for a good coverage of the subject, with a decent effort of around three hours per day, and with decent speed of studying, one should be able to cover the syllabus in around three months.

Suggested Reading:

- Physical Anthropology: BM Das or P. Nath
- Social anthropology; Majumdar and Madan or Ember and Ember (selective reading) and newspapers.
- Theories and miscellaneous topics: Any coaching center material
- Tribal India: Tribal India by Nadeem Hasnain, LK Vidyarthi, Yojana tribal issue, Reports on tribals by NC Saxena
- Annual report on Tribals by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs
- Anthropology of India: Nadeem Hasnain
- Previous papers: important because 90% questions are repeated.
- NK Vaid's books and material

Remember you are not reading these books cover to cover, but very selectively, as per the syllabus. So, though it looks like a lot of work, it's

actually very little. If all the required contents from all the books were to be made into a single book, it would be a small book of 200 pages!

Let me also mention here that Anthropology requires a bit of **mugging up**. I know the whole of this document is totally against the idea of mugging up, nevertheless this is one such unfortunate exception that probably we all have to live with.

Try to re-read the textbooks to make my concepts clear and over a period of time you will start enjoying the subject very much. There were several questions like the one on impact of industrialization on tribals or Impact of Hindu religion on tribals -in such questions try to substantiate answers with some live examples (like the fact that tribal population in Jharkhand celebrate 'Sarhul' as well as holi/diwali with equal fervor so there has been beautiful enmeshing of customs and traditions) or relate them with some current issues. Over a period of time if you actually start "living" your optional, it no longer remains a mere study or exam's part.

English Literature

For literature, we feel that reading of the texts, plays and poems in a thorough manner is very important. Instead of emphasizing upon critical materials, it is more important to have an original opinion upon the texts. Try to be precise and try to provide a comprehensive view! You must be able to relate to the connections and similarities between various works and the social conditions in which they were shaped. To read a text in isolation with its prevailing social conditions is like not reading a text at all. You have to assimilate that sort of a view.

They usually ask very specific questions from the texts, so you should read the texts in a detailed manner, read the periods and topics specifically mentioned in the syllabus because usually direct questions are asked from these topics. Try and stick to the syllabus and be very precise in answering your questions, write what they have asked for and not what you know about that topic. Your answers should be relevant to the questions, do not meander needlessly, and come directly to the point. Do not try to be too ostentatious in writing your answers; do not use **highfalutin language or bombastic words** just for

the sake of it! Please write prose that is lucid and has clarity of thought, the arrangement of your answer should be orderly and logical. Think a little about your answer and its planning before you start writing! You must surely know now as to why we asked you to be precise, as you can already see, being a student of literature, here itself we have written more than that is required😊. Do not get flustered by the various do's and don'ts that were listed here because as you will start your answer writing practice, all these things will fall into place. Therefore, please practice answer writing, it is the key to your success in mains. The most important aspects are originality (your own analysis and opinions and how you relate texts and provide a comprehensive view), clarity and presentation. Critical materials or notes etc. are good but they should only be used as inputs towards manufacturing your own unique and original output.

Suggested Readings:

Texts in college that are common are useful, so are the college notes, the introduction pages and critical editions of texts by Norton and World View are also good. IGNOU BA and MA level booklets of English Literature and those of DU which are common to the UPSC syllabus can also be read as they are quite detailed and contain numerous viewpoints. Websites like [sparknotes](#), [gradesaver](#) etc. can also be consulted as they help in quick revision. Other than that, please focus on the texts and try to form your own opinions on the plot.

Economics

Economics as an optional subject requires a good grip on the subject and to a large extent, people from economics streams are the ones who prefer taking it as an optional.

It is suggested to utilize internet extensively for preparing economics. Also follow the updates and information from the most renowned Universities of the World (London School of Economics etc.). Covering a book on environmental economy is required. One book on history of economic thought should be read to get a broad overview of the subject

and its development.

Suggested Reading:

Paper I

- Microeconomics: Ahuja and Koutsyansis
- Macroeconomics: Ahuja, Mankiw
- International Economics: Salvatore (primary) and MC Vaish (supplementary) or HC Mannur's book.
- Public Finance: Lekhi, Dalton and KL Bhatia
- Money and Banking: SB Gupta, Ahuja
- Internet sources: RBI website (www.rbi.gov.in)
- Growth and Development: Mishra and Puri
- Development economics: Debraj Ray or Gerald Meier

Paper II

- Indian Economy: Dutt and Sundaram, Mishra and Puri, Uma Kapila
- Extensive study of Economic Survey of India
- Union Budget
- Economic and Political Weekly
- Business Newspaper (The Economist OR Economic Times)
- Kaushik Basu's oxford companion for economics

Material Suggested:

- Brilliant Tutorials
- Rau's IAS Academy

Geography

Geography as a subject, especially for UPSC examination, requires you to have a slightly scientific bent of mind. Since geography is a subject of locations, it is important to have an aptitude for understanding locations, understanding maps, processes and theories. Choosing this subject without liking it or just for the sake of scoring in the exam may prove costly.

First paper deals with World Geography and the second paper deals with Geography of India. While Paper I deals with Processes and Theories, Paper II deals with application of Paper I purely from India's perspective. For both papers, NCERT books of Class XI and Class XII form the basic foundations. Also refer to NCERT books from Class VI - X if you feel the need.

The syllabus is vast and requires you to know the concepts in depth. One book to suggest is Spectrum Geography by Rajiv Ahir IPS for some selected topics and diagrams.

Paper I:

Coverage of syllabus: The structure of the paper has changed over the time. So the demand is that the candidate is required to cover the entire syllabus, short notes have become compulsory too. So it is always advisable to know something about everything rather than everything about something. If somebody knows 2/3rd points about a topic, it is good enough to write a 12 marker short note. So don't leave any chapter or topic. At least have some basic knowhow about all the subtopics written in the syllabus.

Paper II is totally based on India and the questions are generally open ended. Hardly any questions would be direct. There is no single material, which can be referred to as source. Since they are application oriented, understanding of concepts is most important. Reading extensively will help. Everybody will know the answer to these questions, but do keep mind that to make any answer geographical, drawing maps, diagrams and referring to locations is important. Yojana and Kurukshetra may help. That will make the difference between a normal answer and a geography answer.

The most important approach to studying geography is through maps. You may study weather, rainfall, soils, vegetation, and agriculture. Draw them with another pen than that you used for writing your answers and use free hand as much as possible while drawing, to save time. Make sure you study them and understand them through maps. Try to overlap them and understand how they are all related. Put up huge maps in your room

and whatever you study, mark them on it.

Paper I:

- Geomorphology: Savindra singh and Strahler & Strahler
- Climatology: D.S.Lal
- Oceanography: Vatal and Sharma
- Biogeography: Savindra Singh, Rupa made simple
- Environment: ICSE books of 9th and 10th class
- Human and population Geography: Rupa made simple, Leong and Morgan

Paper II:

Books and references:

- Physical Geography - Savindra Singh
- Human Geography - Majid Hussain
- Models and Theories - Majid Hussain(this book has good compilation of diagrams)
- Indian Geography – Khullar (Unit 1 has to be thoroughly read. Unit 2 can be avoided. Unit 3 is good, some chapters like water resources, multipurpose projects can be read)
- Dictionary by K Sidhartha
- Any institute's notes can be supplemented for timely revision.
- Geography and You for case studies
- Newspapers and Yojana for other related matters.

Start preparation before one year of the prelims. Make a strategy to complete the syllabus topic wise. The basic concepts of each topic should be clear so that one can write in his language in examination. Try to incorporate maximum figures in your answers. Geography is the subject where one can make answers crisp and attractive by figures. Wherever map is required draw it. Between two questions of choice in exam attempt the question in which chances of drawing figure are more. The most important fact which one should keep in mind in geography is time management. Each aspirant feels difficulty in attempting all questions in geography. What I suggest is continuous writing practice.

We have to solve the question paper of 300 marks in 3 hours i.e. 180 minutes. Thus we get 0.6 minutes for one mark. It can easily be calculated that ideally for 15 marks question we get 9 minutes and almost 150-200 words and for 30 mark question we get 18 minutes and almost 300-350 words. So what one can do, pick a question randomly from last year question papers start stop watch and try to complete the answer in above time limit and word limit. After time limit stop writing and then check the answer yourself as well as show it to your friends or guide. Make sure that answer should be legible as well as of good quality. Practice 3-4 questions daily. You will be amazed to see that there is a drastic improvement in your writing skill and time management skill. This type of writing practice will help you not only in geography but in other optional and G.S. also.

Mapping has come out to be a real challenge in recent years. The strategy to handle India map question is again practice. What one should do is to practice map every day for one hour. Start from mountains first day, then rivers, then waterfalls and then important cities and so on. Also mark important places which are in news from newspaper. Regular practice of mapping will make you more confident.

In recent past it is also being seen that second paper is evolving as a challenge for aspirants. Its applied nature is responsible for making it uncertain. So one should be careful in preparation of second paper. For effective preparation one should be able to incorporate current topics in geography. Thus while reading newspaper mark the topics which may be important for geography and try to search material for those topics from internet. Start writing on those topics. Read each and every issue of 'magazine Geography and you'.

Law

The first paper of law comprises of Constitutional law, International law and Administrative law.

The second paper comprises of law of crimes, law of tort, mercantile law (Contract Act, Partnership Act, Sale of Goods Act, Negotiable Instruments Act), Intellectual Property Rights (Patent, Copyright, Design, Trademark, Geographical Indicators) , Right to Information, Environmental Law,

Cyber/IT law , Media trial, Competition law and Contemporary legal developments.

Papers, which **need to be** studied in detail (with conceptual clarity):

- Constitutional and International law
- Law of crimes
- Law of tort
- Mercantile law

The questions are more in the nature of examining the conceptual clarity and analytical ability of the aspirant.

Answers should *preferably* have the following structure:

1. In first sentence, make an impression that you have understood why the question has been asked. If possible, connect or identify it with any of the jurisprudential thought/concept/thinker(s) or problems.
2. Try to explain the law or the case or the concept, at issue. Same part of the answer should explain the historical progression of the concept/law. For example, law commission reports or any committee emphasizing upon the rationale of the concept/law (in case of a question of sedition), law commission reports can be referred to. The benefits or underlying principles behind the law/concept(s) need to be mentioned as well.
3. Explaining all the important case laws, mostly leading or well known cases. Try to cover one case in one sentence; it is not necessary to describe the issue or the facts of the case. Only the legal proposition that was laid down has to be mentioned or any observation of importance by any the court.
4. Problems pertaining to the Law/Act/Provision which need to be addressed and how to address any such problems, as well as the contemporary developments (here, newspapers, legal journals and current legislative initiatives are relevant)
5. In case some comparative practices from other countries are relevant, the same may be mentioned in the answer.
6. Conclusion, try to give an opinion or observation which should be

balanced and wherever possible, optimistic.

It is perfect to end or start your answer with any quotation(s) by any jurist, philosopher or any judge. However, it should not appear out of place and you must connect it to the question at hand by one supporting statement of your own.

Once you are a candidate from law optional, the interview panel also expects you to have specialized knowledge in the field and would even ask a few questions. So, use this preparation for your advantage and always brush up your legal knowledge with important events in legal development and current discourse

Suggested Reading: (Books in bracket are optional)

1. Constitution: Bare Act+ M P Jain (Seervai (for Fundamental Rights)+ A G Noorani: Constitutional Problems in India (For Parliament)+ Judicial Activism by S P Sathe)
2. International Law: S.K. Kapoor (Malcom Shaw+ Starke+ [Brierly + D J Harris for first chapter only], Nutcases in International Law by Rebecca Wallace, Oppenheimer (for sources of International Law only) and Mary S McDougal (Functional Approach, nature and importance of International Law).
3. International Criminal Law: Cryer (only the Rome Statute part with some cases on the crimes defined under statute. Also questions as to why India is not a party, should India be a party to Rome Statute.) Also see questions pertaining to relation, nature and scope of Humanitarian and International Human Rights Law along with refugee law. One book compiled by SAHRDC on Human Rights and Humanitarian law is very relevant for these topics and considering the importance being assigned to these topics nowadays, it is certainly helpful
4. Law of Crimes: O P Srivastava (General Principles)+ Pillai/K D Gaur (Offences)+ Bare Act (Essays on IPC by ILI)
5. Mercantile law -Avatar Singh+ Bare Act
6. Torts- Bangia (Fleming)
7. Admin. Law: I P Massey
8. IPR: P S Narayana+ Bare Act (Patent manual)

Cyber law, Environmental law, ADR, RTI: Bare act.

Recent Legal Developments- Internet and legal journals like JILI, Supreme Court Journal, etc.

History

This is a subject where strategizing becomes paramount since the expanse of the syllabus itself appears insurmountable. Since you are preparing for exam purposes here and your primary objective is not, presumably, the 'love of learning', it becomes important to prepare highly selectively.

It's best to analyze the question papers spanning at least a decade. Questions before that are too simplistic to have a fair chance of appearing in the same form again. So, I would suggest compartmentalizing questions based on chronology. That gives us a fairly expansive scale of topics to focus on. When preparing a particular topic from a book or notes, it's important to cover it in entirety-- i.e. think of all possible aspects of a situation that you can be questioned upon. Apart from facts, focus on 'whys'-- why civilizations crumbled, how different was their end to another's end, 'How' religious policies contributed to administration, art and architecture, etc. Only when there is clarity of facts relating to different periods can you handle a question that seeks to highlight the differences and similarities therein. The suggestion is to have a panoramic view of history along with some microscopic treatment.

Suggested readings:

- Modern India by Bipin Chandra
- India's Struggle for Independence by Bipin Chandra, Mukherjee and Panikkar
- Spectrum Books on Modern India
- Ancient India by R.S.Sharma (for ancient India)
- The Wonder that was India by A.L.Basham (supplementary reading for Ancient India)
- Indian Historiography by Romila Thapar (especially, the veneration of Ashoka)
- Medieval India (two volumes) by Satish Chadra for Medieval India.

- An Advanced History of India by Majumdar, Raychaudhuri and Dutta
- Modern World by K Krishna Reddy

Material Suggested:

- History notes from Hemant Jha

Remember to set targets and achieve daily goals! Anything left over tends to add up dangerously in History. Remember you will be writing 4-5 page answers, and when you have covered one 'aspect' of a question that satisfies that word limit, move on. You're not here to do specialized research on one particular area. While answering questions, your introduction and conclusion should be impressive.

Management

Management is one of the 'not-so' popular optional subjects for the UPSC Civil Services Examination. It is widely believed to be very tough and low scoring. But this particular myth stems from the fact that it is one of those that can either reward you highly or punish you badly.

However, if you are clear with your concepts you can sail through the subject.

Paper 1 is largely theoretical and consists of the following topics – **Managerial Function and Process, Organizational Behavior and Design, Human Resource Management, Accounting for Managers, Financial Management and Marketing Management**. This paper, by and large, contains only conceptual questions and problems are few and far between. But the questions typically tend to have a practical tinge and are not run off the mill text bookish questions.

Paper 2 is the one which has the potential to boost your overall score since it mostly consists of problems and theoretical questions are minimal. **Quantitative Techniques in Decision Making, Production and Operations Management, Management Information System, Government Business Interface, Strategic Management and International Business** are the subjects that make up Paper 2.

A word of caution – Work out all kinds of problems if you want to score highly in Paper 2.

Now to the more important part of how to prepare. This optional essentially combines what is typically done over a span of two years in a typical MBA course. Choose standard text books for each of the topics in both the papers and cover them comprehensively. Alternatively, there is one institute in Chennai (Brilliant Tutorials) that comes up with consolidated material for all the subjects. Please note that this is not an endorsement for the institute. I had used the material and found it to be useful and thought I should mention it here.

As with any other optional, dedication and practice would help you score significantly in this subject. It is a myth that this paper is not highly scoring. So, do not go by popular perception. If you feel, that you are comfortable with the subject, then by all means go for it.

Electrical Engineering

Paper – I

1. **Circuit Theory:** This topic requires continuous practice. One should solve as many numericals as you can from A. Chakrabarti. Even though I couldn't do it due to paucity of time but solving IES papers may help.
2. **Signals and systems:** In this topic, one must remember the formulas by making a formula sheet. As Prakash Sir has mentioned, for DFT/FFT, refer to Oppenheim's book on DSP.
3. **E.M. Theory:** Read chapter 6(till 6.29), 7 and 8 from K.D. Prasad. Practice some numerical examples. Sometimes the book solves them in a long way, but you must do them in the shortest way possible. For Smith chart and impedance matching refer Jordan & Balmain. Make the list of formulas and practice all the derivations.
4. **Analog Electronics:** Diode, Transistors and Amplifiers can be done from any book. Topics that are to be covered from JB Gupta are: Oscillators, Op Amp, Wave shaping circuits, Multivibrators, Waveform Generators and Power supplies. You will have to

practice numerical from IES papers since JB Gupta doesn't have many numerical. Also, in this chapter practice derivations well and make sure you do not do mistakes in symbols.

5. **Digital Electronics:** I referred to R.P. Jain for this topic. It is a very good book that covers all the concepts and also provides sufficient numerical practice. Please stick to the syllabus while reading this book.
6. **Energy Conversion:** Try to cover everything given in the syllabus from Ashfaq Hussain and make good command over all the numerical given in the book. It covers topic from IES point of view. Do all the questions asked in the IES exams thoroughly.
7. **Power Electronics and Electric Drives:** Topics to be covered are Chapter 2(characteristics of diode, BJT, MOSFET, IGBT), chapter 4-Thyrister(complete), chapter 5 – Thyrister commutation techniques (complete), chapter 6 –Phase controlled rectifiers(Leave dual converters), chapter 7- Choppers(Leave Thyrister Chopper circuits and multiphase choppers) , chapter 8 – Inverters(Leave force-commutated thyrister inverters, current source and series inverters) and chapter 12-electric drives(complete). Cover all the derivations (like deriving expressions for particular type of rectifier or inverter) as well as working of circuits. Note that this book can be difficult to read at first due to extensive coverage of topics. But you must nevertheless go through it. At first, focus on the concepts. You may leave the numericals at the back of the Chapters since there are sufficient solved examples in the book. Do not just read the examples, solve them yourself.
8. **Analog Communication:** Cover chapter 4(AM) and Chapter 5(on FM and PM) from BP Lathi. Random process (chapter 1) can be covered from Haykin. And Noise (chapter 4) can be covered from Singh and Sapre. Also cover AM AND FM practical modulation and demodulation circuits from Singh and Sapre.

Paper II

1. **Control Systems:** Nagrath and Gopal is sufficient for all the topics. Practice from previous year IES and CSE papers. Please stick to the syllabus. There is no need to read the entire book.

2. **Microprocessors and Microcomputers:** Cover chapters 1 to 7 and 9, and parts of chapter 8 and 10 (from which questions have been asked in IES exams), In peripherals cover 12, 14, 15, 16 (Focus more on whatever has been asked in IES papers).
3. **Measurement and Instrumentation:** Cover all the instruments given in the syllabus thoroughly from the Sawhney. Here also guide will be IES questions. In this book, you may skip the numericals at the end of the Chapter if you have less time because it has sufficient solved examples. Focus on derivations of different formulae. Also note the drawbacks of each measuring instrument. For oscilloscope, please do not forget to practice making schematic diagrams.
4. **Power Systems:** I did this topic from Ashfaq Hussain. It covers the entire syllabus. You may have to read a bit more on the last Chapter. Solve all examples and questions at the back of the Chapters. Do not forget to practice the flowcharts of optimization schemes for load distribution.
5. **Power System Protection:** Chapters of Protective relays and circuit breakers (from Wadhwa) cover large part of the syllabus in much better way. For microprocessor based relays refer to TMH book. You may also refer to the TMH book for other parts of the syllabus too in addition to Wadhwa. Do solve the questions at the end of the Chapters.
6. **Digital Communication:** For PCM, DPCM, DM refer to chapter 6 of Lathi. ASK, PSK and FSK are covered much better in Haykin. Information theory and codes can be covered from either of them. Chapter 1 and 2 of Forouzan are to be covered for data networks and 7 layered architecture.

Basically in Electrical Engineering, practice numericals and revise your derivations well. Do not forget to memorize the advantages and disadvantages wherever relevant for answering theoretical questions. When you write answers always, mention which symbols stand for what and express your answers in correct units.

Medicine

If you are a medicine graduate or post-graduate, the choice should be obvious. You have already studied almost the entire prescribed syllabus during your graduation years. All that you need now is a finishing touch to your existing knowledge base according to the Civil Service Examination.

Since the syllabus is fully laid out, it appears long at the first glance. But careful analysis shows topics mentioned are 'marked ones' /important ones from our UG days so we have gone through them thoroughly earlier.

Being a Science subject, there is always a great degree of objectivity during the evaluation process. So you can be sure of not losing any marks on the grounds that your line of arguments / interpretation did not match with that of the examiner. Therefore, with Medical Science you can be fairly sure of your score being in accordance to your examination hall performance.

There are many apprehensions about MS as optional due to which many doctors don't go for it like:

- Lengthy syllabus
- No coaching / no compiled stuff
- Highly volatile nature of optional
- Level of questions asked (like- Tough clinical questions may of PG standard.
- Fear of inadequate study of foreign author books during UG days.

Careful planning and strategizing your preparation makes difference. There is no doubt that syllabus for MS is lengthy but much can be done for it.

- Start your one clinical and one non clinical part simultaneously to keep you in constant revision of basics.
- Combining physiology and medicine topics: Studying topics under one heading will give you a detailed grasp like, while doing Excretory system topics for physiology one can discuss clinical aspects of it under medicine. This gives you more confidence and deeper understanding of subject

- Cover those areas first which are shorter and carries similar chances to appear in exam with longer ones like Dermatology, Forensic Medicine, Biochemistry, and Pediatrics.

Notes Making - Considering the vastness of syllabus it's always tedious to make personal notes of subjects but strategized note making is HIGHLY USEFUL while revision.

While going through those books one see that references are made from higher foreign authors which tackle your apprehension about inadequate reading from higher level books. For example, for surgery from individual PG preparatory book which took around 8-9 days but references for those topics covered include Love and belly, Sebastian etc which are sufficient to tackle higher level questions.

Whole Pharmacology I have compiled in 30-40 odd handwritten pages from PG preparatory book. This gives me enough confidence and revision was easy at the end.

But I would say this note making exercise should be started as early as possible to spare sufficient time for their revision at end. But this gives you immense help while revising things and better understanding of subjects. I made notes for most of clinical subjects, rest you can decide your grey areas and work accordingly. Another benefit is in tackling tough clinical questions as asked for Pediatrics and other subjects (as Differential diagnosis are well explained in those books). You need not make notes for all subjects just select your areas so that it saves your time to prepare other areas.

Mathematics

Mathematics optional is one of the favorite subjects preferred by Engineers and Math graduates. Syllabus and difficulty level of Math paper is quite similar to what it is at graduate level but this optional has been punished by UPSC via scaling/moderation in the last decade. However we are seeing the revival of this subject in last 2-3 years. This year also Mathematics result has been good with 5-6 people getting 400+ scores. However to get such a good score, one must go for exhaustive study with proper revision plan.

Paper 1

1. Linear Algebra and Matrices: For linear Algebra, follow Schuam's outline series
2. "Linear Algebra" by 'Seymour Lipschutz' and 'Marc Lipson'.
3. For Matrices Krishna Publication book "Matrices" by Vashishtha is good.

In Linear Algebra, one must do all the important derivation. Also be sure of what a specific term means e.g. difference between a space and subspaces. Matrices part is more date intensive and one must be fast in calculation and use of calculator advance features.

2. Calculus: for calculus either buy Krishna Publication or the S. Chand publication book.

3. Analytic Geometry: Book by P.N. Chaterjee of Rajhans Publications is must. UPSC has taken direct examples from this book in last few years.

4. ODE: book by M.D. Raisinghania of S. Chand publication is best book for this part. Differential equations is an important topic in this preparation and must be done thoroughly. It find useful application in many other subject like in vectors, fluid dynamics, partial differential, numerical analysis etc. Students should complete this module before moving to these above topics.

5. Dynamics and Statics: Follow Krishna Publication book for both. There are lots of solved examples given. If you have less time, then you can selectively choose the questions of each type and do it. Although UPSC asks solved example of these books.

6. Vector Analysis: Krishna Publication book; easy topic and one must target full attempt from this module

Paper 2

1. Modern Algebra: Achilles heel for many of the aspirants esp. engineers. This is a pure mathematics subject and would need patience and hard work. It is a very important module in point of view of scoring in the exam and one must try to get mastery of this subject.

For theory part one can consult book by 'I. N. Herstein' or alternatively by 'John B. Fraleigh'.

Also Krishna series book is good in view of solved examples.

2. Real Analysis: "Elements of Real Analysis" by M.D. Raisinghania and Shanti Narayan is the best book for this module. Do it thoroughly.

3. Complex Analysis: Krishna series book is very good book.

4. Linear Programming: Engineering students will find it a cakewalk however other student must practice a lot in this topic. Speed and accuracy is of prime importance here.

5. PDE: 'Advance Differential Equation" by M.D. Raisinghania is the book to be referred here. Special focus should be on Wave and Heat problem.

6. Numerical Analysis: I did it via "advanced engineering mathematics" book by Grewal. This book has some excellent solved examples and must be followed for other modules as well.

7. Fluid Dynamics: book by M.D. Raisinghania is sufficient. Questions are numerical and directly taken from this book.

One very important advice to all aspirants is that please give proper respect to this optional. You must practice a lot using pen and paper; Casual reading of question and answer is of no use. Also coaching is not necessary at all for this optional but one must join a good test series for self-evaluation.

Internet Links:

<http://prakashrajpurohit.wordpress.com/2010/06/05/mathematics-part-1/>

<http://kashishmittal.wordpress.com/2011/05/28/strategy-for-mathematics/>

Philosophy

Ever since the beginning of the IAS examination this optional has been one of the most rewarding subject in IAS (main) examination. It has given many spectacular, wonderful and even surprising result. Among the humanities subjects it has the potentiality of giving maximum marks. This subject is already established especially in Hindi medium, but in recent years it is fast emerging in English medium as well.

With the changed pattern, this optional proves to be more advantageous for all both Hindi and English medium aspirants. The syllabus is less and should be covered within a limited time.

We have observed most of the preparation for philosophy happens through class notes and material as there were few famous institutes and faculty who are good at helping with this subject. These are proven and tested and should be possibly suggested. Yet, the standard textbooks are equally effective in providing a thorough perspective about the subject. Now a days questions from this section are more practical than merely being theoretical. So, you need to understand the social and religious issues minutely and need to develop concept on the various related issues from the practical point of view.

For the first paper, the Greek Philosophy (Plato and Aristotle), Modern Western Philosophy and Contemporary Western Philosophy are the broad categories one can divide the syllabus into. Ensure proper and sufficient coverage is done for all the three categories. Similarly for the Indian Philosophy part, there would be nine categories including the Integral Yoga (of Aurobindo). So all these nine categories have been touched upon.

For paper II, the Section on Socio-Political have around ten categories on Socio political ideas, form of government, sovereignty, human ideologies, humanism, secularism, multiculturalism, crime and punishment, development, caste and gender discrimination. Each of the topics should be covered in depth, they are essential even for the GS and essay papers. These are very generic in approach, and even with a basic understanding

of these topics, one should be able to attempt almost, if not all, the questions.

Apart from the below books, please go through the previous question papers for at least the last ten years. Previous papers provide great insights into the kind of questions that are asked and in corollary, the kind of selective and directed preparation one has to do.

Suggested Reading:

- Introduction to Indian Philosophy by Dutta and Chatterjee
- A history of Philosophy by Frank Thilly
- Political Theory by OP Gauba
- Introduction to Religion Philosophy
- Printed material of some of the reputed faculty in Philosophy

Psychology

From last 3 year the average marks which are being scored by the students in this subject is very low, we cannot attribute this low scoring to any external factor, but the advice is that if you plan to take this subject you should not think that you will cram it and will be able to perform, but rather you should try to introspect whether you are creative, whether in your real life you have habit of connecting things, whether you enjoy reading fiction or psych thriller novel, if so then go ahead and take this subject. However for all those who are reading this, we believe each of us should give one chance to ourselves to learn this subject, you will have a lot of takeaways from this subject.

NCERT books of class XI and XII are the good source to begin with, one should remember it is these NCERT books from which few questions are being framed, and these books give us insight as how to write the answer in few words, given the present context where 10 marker are becoming the fate decider. We should read NCERT books thoroughly and only if we have done this then can we proceed for higher level studies, however we will not be wrong to say that if you have thorough grasp of NCERT books than you don't have to read any other book, each and every line in NCERT are a probable question in itself.

PATHAK sir's notes are also a good repository of knowledge as far as psychology is concerned however given the bulkiness of his notes, it is scary. We can say for sure that he has used the matter from almost all sources and has prepared a holistic notes but our advice is that please do not use the same example which sir has used in his notes to explain the event, rather using his examples it will be better if you create examples relating to your life events, this will not only add uniqueness to your answer but you will also be able to correlate with the subject easily.

Go through one textbook amongst Baron and ciccarelli. For paper II smarak swain or vajiram printed notes will do. Psychology is something which one needs to revise everyday so that it's retained. It does not require any skill to write the answer. You have to just write what is being asked. It's not about introduction and conclusion. It's about writing proper answers. Syllabus is vast so it requires constant revision.

The subject has 2 papers- paper 1 deals with the theoretical aspects and basic principles of psychology, while paper 2 talks about applied psychology and its use in various fields. After knowing this, the first step one should take is open the syllabus and go through it thoroughly. UPSC tends to limit itself to the syllabus and so should us while preparing for the exam. Also, knowledge of the syllabus gives us an idea of what is expected of us, and how much we have to cover.

Chapter 2 and 3 of paper one and chapter one of paper two can be combined together, this section is the toughest part of the psychology, as there are many mathematical models, research methodology are to be read. So these chapters should not be read in the beginning, they can at best be started in the mid of our preparation, however there are terminologies given in this chapter should be referred on and off.

Chapters on learning, memory and emotions and intelligence can be read along with one another.

Application of psychology in educational field, application of psychology with the disadvantaged group and the chapters of Psychological problems of social integration this combination of chapters will ensure that you will able to grasp as well as correlate. You will also start appreciating that the psychology is fun. While reading these chapter try

to ensure that you visualize your friends, family members and neighbors so that you have ready references.

The chapters of interest, attitude value and personality can be taken at the next stage. Make sure that once your earlier chapters are over don't try to scan through them as and when because you will now find their new relevance to the chapter you are studying later. You can combine the chapter of Work Psychology and Organizational Behavior, Psychology and Economic development and Application of psychology to environment and related fields for forming correlation and interlinking with these chapter this will ensure that your syllabus is also completed in time.

Main strategy for this exam is interlinking and more you interlink, more will be your understanding. However you should never forget the learning which you had from these chapters can also be used to make your essay flowery.

Similarly the remaining chapters can be taken at the third stage or fourth stage as you wish. Each chapter will give you unique understanding of the concepts. Try to use as many examples as possible from your real life.

In a nutshell, if you study the syllabus in these stages, then it will be easier to revise, make notes and also to answer applied questions. Most of the applied questions nowadays make use of such linkages and studying the subject in this fashion makes the job very easy indeed.

STUDY MATERIAL- Next come the most asked about questions- What books to study, whether to join coaching or not, which coaching? The approach towards this should always be to study one book multiple times, rather than multiple books one time. The usual books followed are-

- NCERT Psychology- class 11, 12
- Morgan and King- paper I
- Baron- paper I
- Ciccarelli- paper I
- Applied psychology by Smarak Swain- for paperII

PREPARATION PHASE- Ideally, one should start the preparation around one year before the prelims, and complete the syllabus by end of

December. Then one can start with revision of the subject right after prelims, and complete it in time for mains. Go through the syllabus topic wise, and try to complete one unit at a time. Refer to the standard books and notes and try to develop a basic understanding initially. Don't try to mug up the figures or names, focus should be on the concepts. After completing basic psychology for paper 1, start with applied psychology for paper 2. Try to develop a timeline and decide how you aim to complete your syllabus. I used to prepare broad frame, and then develop a monthly and daily schedule and would try to stick to that. It helps to maintain the focus and doesn't allow any deviation from the task at hand. One can also make use of various articles in the newspapers and magazines or the internet to gather more material, but this should come at a later stage. For many topics of paper 2 like gender psychology, military psychology, terrorist psychology, environmental psychology, work psychology, education psychology, social psychology etc, try to use contemporary examples from the Indian context to make the answers more relevant. This will highly enhance the value of the answer and fetch much more marks.

It is advisable to revise the same material multiple times. You can also make concise notes in your own language to help in easy revision later. Try to develop the gist of every topic in the form of a flowchart or diagram. This will save time later and help in making the answers more effective.

Practice answer writing to ensure that you can convey your answers in an effective manner. Every good answer has two components- content and presentation. First read the question thoroughly to understand the demands of the question- what is it asking about, whether the details of any theory, or its comparative advantages and disadvantages with another, or if it is asking about the application part. Just jot down the points you would want to cover in a few seconds and only then start writing. This will make sure that you don't lose track of the question and cover all the points asked. Most of the people do well on the content part but lack in presentation. Always try to put yourself in the examiner's shoes and then you'll realise what kind of answer you should write- it should be crisp and clear, in a legible writing, and preferably with some diagrams or flowcharts to make the same answer more effective. Try to highlight the important points and avoid repetition. Thus effective

answer writing is an art which can be only mastered by regular practice. Try to make such mind maps and diagrams while studying and recapitulating the information. One can either join the test series of any coaching institute for the same or practice writing answers at home. Go through the previous year question papers and test your knowledge and practice writing answers to those. It would be better if you can get these checked by a teacher so that you'll get a better idea of your mistakes and further improvements that can be made. I had joined the test series at Vajiram and Lufe institutes. This helps to analyse one's answers and improve them the next time.

Another thing to keep in mind is to make efficient utilisation of the exam time of three hours. Spend the first few minutes going through all the questions and deciding about the questions you know best and would attempt. This exercise should not take more than 5 or 10 minutes. Then divide the time equally amongst all the 5 questions, while keeping 10-15 minutes in the end as reserve or extra for revision or unseen situations. So you'll have approximately 30 minutes per question. Try to stick to the word limit, with some deviation on either side. These days in psychology, we don't generally get 60 mark questions, but 10, 20 or 30 mark questions. For a 10 marker, just stick to the points and give the information asked. For a 20 or 30 mark question also, first focus on the content required and then you can just supplement it with a brief introduction or conclusion with regard to word limit and time availability. This time management skill and speed improvement can also be developed with repeated practice.

EXAM TIME- The last few days before the exam should be spent wisely in revising the syllabus covered earlier. Don't try to learn new things in this time. One day before the exam, try to finish the revision on time and then relax for some time. A fresh mind will have a better memory recall and will help in writing fresh and innovative answers.

So, in the end, make sure-

- Go through the syllabus and collect the relevant study material.
- Make a long term plan and complete the syllabus in time, topic wise.
- Focus should be on understanding rather than rote learning.

- Do multiple revisions of the same material.
- Try to enhance the answers by including contemporary examples from newspapers, magazines and internet.
- Read the question carefully to understand the demands of the question.
- Practice answer writing and make use of flowcharts, graphs and diagrams to make your answers more effective.
- Make efficient utilisation of the time and stick to the word limit.

Political Science

Political Science is more of understanding completely and confirmedly some of the few most basic concepts like justice, equality, hegemony, rights, ideology etc. The more you get clarity on these foremost aspects of modern state (or any state or a congregation of people), the subject starts getting in your mind. OP Gauba should be able to explain these concepts, though it is not mandatory to just confine only to this book. Any good book that can explain such basic concepts so that you are thorough with them (and can reproduce in answer) should do the job.

If there are any concepts or details about a thinker that you cannot find in any of the books, Internet is the best source. Wikipedia and many other web sources must have written and compiled extensively about all of the literature and commentaries on Political Science.

For Indian Nationalism, the books that one uses for GS should suffice. India's Struggle for Independence, NCERT and IGNOU material are all suitable in this regard.

Similarly for the Indian Constitution and Polity, DD Basu, Subhash Kashyap's books would do justice. Please also refer to the Polity and History sections of GS Mains in this document to get a better list of books.

Social issues should be dealt directly from the reports (annual and otherwise) of the various committees and commissions. Download and read them, make quick summary points from these reports and now you can use these points in many papers.

Comparative politics is something that is slightly puzzling, one suggestion is to go for Cosmos book-hives (volume 3) for the topic. And for international relations, there won't be better source than the newspapers and following the current affairs, the various happenings around the world. But it is also good to get an idea of the background of the relations with the various countries. Hence, take some books on IR (any author would do, as long as you are comfortable with the subject) and then try to use Wikipedia to read about the history of the relations as well. The same holds for the India and the World part, international institutions and summits etc.

Books by Amartya Sen also would prove useful, even for overall development of personality. Economic Development and Social Opportunity, "The Idea of Justice" etc. are some books that could be suggested.

Specifically the following topics are to be covered:

- Ancient Indian discourses – Dharmashastra and Arthashastra
- Dalit Discourse – B.R. Ambedkar and Buddhist tradition
- Islamic Discourse – Sir Syed Ahmed Khan
- Hindu Discourse – Sri Aurobindo Ghosh
- Gandhian Discourse – M.K. Gandhi
- Humanist Discourse – M.N. Roy

Suggested Reading:

- Political Theory by OP Gauba
- International Relations by VK Malhotra
- Introduction to the Constitution of India by DD Basu
- Political Thought and Theory
- Books by Shashi Tharoor (Pax Indica etc.)

Public Administration

Public Administration is one such subject that everyone needs to know. And they will know sooner or later, in various capacities. For the exam, it is not to be treated as a scholarly study. Most of the paper should be dealt with fundamentals of the theories and other concepts postulated by the thinkers of the subject. It will be a joke but the real fact is that the subject is still under 'development' and it will be this way for some few more decades to come.

This subject was taken by the maximum aspirants as an optional so far. It will be tough to predict if that still holds in the new pattern, nevertheless the subject will stay as one of the favorites.

Going into the details, the first paper introduces the theoretical concepts that make the subject what it is now. Hence a full haul of all the theories and the thinkers behind them is the best starting point. For this, Prasad and Prasad would be the best possible book. Recently many more theories and contemporary thinkers are being asked in the questions, implying that it is very important to stay up-to-date with the subject. There won't be as much information available online as per these updates yet one can bet on Internet for some very useful info on contemporary inputs on the subject.

The first paper also contains many other legacy concepts of public administration all of them would have to be thoroughly understood. Go through the old papers to get an idea what kind of questions are being asked. As soon as you finish a topic/theory, try to answer questions from that area. That's how one know where he stands with regard to his understanding of the subject.

Second paper is the practical aspect. Highly selective reading is necessary, unlike for the first paper. Second ARC reports would go a long way in providing a valuable source of information for almost all the topics. Please give the reports their due time and efforts and read them thoroughly. All the aspects of Indian Administration need to be understood in their ground realities as well as in their ideological perspectives.

Some of the books mentioned below are only for reference or selective reading (like, Nicolas Henry). As suggested above, start with Prasad and

Prasad and IGNOU notes. They would give a good start with the subject. Mohit Bhattacharya books provides the depth to all the topics.

Suggested Readings:

- Prasad & Prasad and IGNOU Notes (for the start)
- Rumaki Basu
- Mohit Bhattacharya
- Fadia and Fadia (for complete coverage of syllabus)
- Nicholas Henry (for second round of study)
- Ignou notes
- Rajini Goyal and Arora
- Second ARC Reports
- IJPA Journals (for selected topics)
- Search some articles written by thinkers like Simon, Waldo, Dror and others on net and JSTOR.
- All other committee/commission reports (including the recent ones).
- 'Splendor in the Grass: Innovations in Administration' (sixteen cases on Public Administration by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Government of India)

There are some good material available from some of the reputed faculty, in the market. One can always go for them (Like, Bhawani Singh notes, Sunil Gupta's Notes, Sadana, Vajiram etc.). Read the notes for a day or two and then decide whether you can take it up for your preparation. Do not just go blindly on suggestions from others (including from us) without you being thoroughly convinced by that.

Remember that most of the aspirants opt for Pub Ad so you must make your answer unique by giving examples from current affairs, case studies and government schemes or some charts. And for that, the only way is to practice answer writing. Write all kinds of answers (long, short, medium etc. with trying to confine under the word limits) and get them evaluated either by seniors, friends or faculty.

In this optional, there is no dearth of information. Aspirants will have access to all kinds of coaching notes, books and other publications. One must be careful not to waste time in covering everything.

Rumaki Basu – The book is very precise and gives wholesome picture of the entire paper I barring some topics. Good thing about this book is that, after reading the entire book, we get a general picture of all the things and in a crunch situation we can write at least something about almost all the topics.

ARC Reports – At least go through summaries of all the reports and a detailed study on Ethics, Law and Order, District Administration as all this supplements in Paper II wherein we face crunch of relevant material. This is essential for GS and Essay as well.

Read minimum books and use your General Studies knowledge in pub ad. It is not possible to know each and everything on a given topic. You can only remember limited number of facts and events. So it is better to focus on a few things and go through them thoroughly and change the wordings/ presentation according to the question but state the facts that you know.

You have to link both paper 1 and 2. Also while preparing u can try to relate the topics beforehand. There are many topics such as financial administration which are in paper 1 as well as paper 2. You have to include facts about India always in both paper 1 and 2 answers.

Sociology

Many people, especially peers, may suggest you to refer multiple books to understand the syllabus. You should try to limit the sources while studying but make sure you do that extensively. The trick is that you study some basic stuff. The primary material should be the NCERT textbook. (Or some fundamental books like Harlemboss for paper 1 and Y.Singh and R.Ahuja books for paper 2). In addition, you buy the 'Secondary' material for reference. But, the secondary material should be used only to refer some difficult issues and for adding value to primary.

Adding value to primary means extracting some thinker's views, case studies etc. Once you have read the Primary material, you should search and add value from secondary material. You can simply look for any new information, cases and books and add it to your primary material notes. You should not read all the books deeply. Rather, one should read few with depth and then simply all new things from multiple sources. Like this, your answers shall be comprehensive, fresh and with diverse knowledge.

Writing style is pivotal in getting good score and writing nice answers. For sociology, the key is to keep the language simple and bountiful. By bountiful, it means that you should use extensively views of thinkers, case studies, book's names etc. Unlike a subject like Pub Administration, where you can express your views liberally, in sociology you should use the views and opinions of thinkers and sociologists, to a large extent. This makes the answers credible and scoring. But, there is one catch here. You should not add case studies for the sake of adding only. They should be relevant to the answer and should help it like good songs of a great Bollywood movie. Like the songs that take the story forward, your answer should flow naturally with the help of these references etc.

Reading List for Sociology (Main)

Shri. Upendra Gaur's class notes

Sociology-Tom Bottomore

Sociology-Michael Haralambos

Classical Sociological Theory-George Ritzer

Tribal India-Nadeem Hasnain

Modernization of Indian Tradition-Yogendra Singh

Changing India-Robert Stern

A few tips:

1. Refer to IGNOU notes for the new topics introduced in Paper II

Thinkers are the backbone of sociology, so understanding is very important rather than only specific terms. In fact, after studying individual thinker try comparing it with the views of other thinkers.

Paper-I

- 1) Haralambos (V edition, In my opinion, the most important book for conceptual clarity not only for paper I, but also for paper II).
- 2) UIES (Upendra Gaur Sir's notes): Entire paper I notes.
- 3) Sociological Theory by George Ritzer and Douglas J. Goodman (VI edition) (for chapter 4 only, to be read only if you have finished the above two).

Paper-II

Please note that there are standard text books available for Paper I but the study material for Paper-II is not found easily. Hence it becomes mandatory to refer to multiple sources.

- Primarily I relied on Sindhuri Madam's notes (UPSC 2008 AIR 43) which I got through the xerox shops in Rajendra Nagar (She has very meticulously collected material from various sources and prepared her own analyses as well)
- UIES class notes (Upendra Gaur Sir's class notes for Paper II)
- Newspapers (The Hindu and The Indian Express, select articles)
- Yojana (the monthly magazine)
- IGNOU MA Material (MSO Series, selective pages, details I have mentioned below)
- Contemporary Sociology by M Francis Abraham (Oxford Publications): Chapters 11, 14,15 and 17)
- Society in India by Ram Ahuja (Selective pages from Chapters 1, 2, 4, 8, 9 and 16)
- Handbook of Indian Sociology by Veena Das (very selective, only those topics which are not covered in the above)

Selective Reading:

- Indological Perspective by Ghurye (Lesson 8)
- Structural Functional Perspective by M N Srinivas (Lesson 10)
- Marxian Perspective by A R Desai (Lesson 14)
- Modernization of Indian tradition by Yogendra Singh (page 85 to 160, page 208 to 213)
- Caste its 20th Century Avatar by M N Panini
- The Political Economy of Caste by M N Panini (pp 28 to 63)

- Tribal India by Nadeem Husnain (selective pages)
- India's Population Policy by Bhende and Kanitkar (selective pages)
- Principle of Population Studies by Bhende and Kanitkar (Appendix C)
- Indian tribals and search for an indigenous identity by Walter Fernandes
- Slum problem in India: Magnitude, Genesis and Possible Solution by B K Chakraborty
- Sixty Years of Development induced Displacement in India by Walter Fernandes

IGNOU booklets:

- MSO 001 Book 1: Block 2, 3 and 4
- MSO 001 Book 2: Block 5, 6, 7 and 8
- MSO 003 Book 1: block 1 (all the 4 units), block 2 (unit 5), block 3 (unit 9 and 10)
- MSO 003 Book 2: block 6 (all the 4 units), block 7 (unit 24, 25), block 8 (unit 27 and 28)
- MSO 004 Book 1: Entire booklet
- MSO 004 Book 2: Block 5 (Unit 17, 19 and 20), block 6, 7 and 8
- MSOE 004 Book 2: Blocks 5, 6 and 7
- MPSE 007

Especially for paper II, stick very strictly to the syllabus and prepare your own pointers/ notes (from the above material coupled with newspaper articles) so that you can revise the syllabus just before the examination.

Besides, some online sources:

1) Rajiv Ranjan Singh's blog on Sociology (AIR 191, CSE 2009): <http://intellection-rajiv.blogspot.in>

2) Tanvi Sundriyal's (AIR 6, CSE 2009) blog: <http://thecivilservicesdream.blogspot.in/>

3) Anay Dwivedi's (AIR 5, CSE 2009) blog: <http://anaydwivedi.wordpress.com/>

Developing a conceptual framework for answer writing: For the

starting, a sincere request to all who are serious about this time Mains: Ensure that you spend adequate time with the Hindu and/ or Indian Express (IE). This is extremely important not only for GS, but also for Sociology and Pub Ad. I think Hindu is exceptionally good for Sociology and IE for Public Administration (especially the op ed page).

1) Before reading any major article (say the Centre article of 'the Hindu') think of the way you would have framed your thoughts if any topic related to it would have come in either Sociology Paper II, Pub Ad Paper II or for that matter Essay. Take a sheet of paper and draft a conceptual framework related to the article which means try and think of relevant points which you would have written if the same topic comes in the exam. While practicing, it should not take more than 5 minutes. (Of course, your answer in the actual examination will depend on various factors: marks allotted to the Question, time you have in your hand to answer it, exact demand of the question etc).

2) After making this conceptual framework, think of what information (facts and opinion) that you know of and try and scribble your thoughts very briefly in logically arranged paragraphs. There is no need to write entire sentences, but just important points/ pointers which should take not more than 10 to 15 minutes.

3) Then, compare the article with your sheet and yourself evaluate your performance. You will come to appreciate the thought flow, data, contemporary examples etc quoted in the actual article.

4) Preserve your sheets of paper and edit suitably, basis any new information that you come across (while reading any standard text, internet article, and newspaper / magazine article or while discussing with teachers/ friends).

Not only will you have a firm grasp on the newspaper, but also on the optional papers. Having said this, please understand that the importance of concepts/ standard texts is very much there. The above strategy is to embellish your answer with contemporary events and opinions.

INTERVIEW

The interview stage has emerged as the most deciding phase of the exam. The range of marks awarded is a proof; which varies from 50 to 240, out of 300 (in the old pattern). If the UPSC board feels that a candidate is unsuitable for administration, then it generally awards very low marks. As a result, he/she may not get the desired service in spite of a good performance in the mains exam. So interview plays a very crucial role in the final selection.

The personality is something that cannot be developed in few days. It is a continuous process since your childhood. But, you can modify your personality to suit the expectations of the interview and get good score. Still it is a continuous process that should be carried out throughout your preparation timeframe.

Expectations of the Personality Test:

UPSC looks for some traits, which could probably be summarized as below (not in any order of priority):

- Suitability for a public career
- Mental caliber
- Intellectual and Social traits
- Interest in cultural affairs
- Mental alertness
- Critical power of assimilation
- Clear and logical exposition
- Balance of judgment
- Variety and depth of interest
- Ability for social cohesion and leadership
- Intellectual and moral integrity

One has to understand that the Board does not like artificiality. The members are looking for original thinkers who can express their opinions crisply and in as short as possible. Your personality should not be *overly-polished*. It should be a little *raw*. You should be original and logical in your thinking. Unlike in the written exam where you could get away by replicating the opinions mentioned in editorials, in the interview you will

be grilled for whatever stand you take because as a bureaucrat this quality of taking unbiased decisions that are logical and fair is extremely important. And most importantly please do not be desperate to get selected. Give your best but be patient- even if you do not make it, it is not the end of life. So please have an open-mind.

In the words of former UPSC chairman, an ideal civil servant should be:

“Firstly, an officer must be a gentleman. He should possess good character qualities. He should have courage of conviction, intellectual and moral capabilities, leadership qualities and capable of taking the right decisions at the right time. He should have in-depth professional knowledge, self-thinking, good communication skills, analytical in his thinking, flexible and not rigid, must be able to inspire and motivate his colleagues and his subordinates. There should be a balance of judgment in decision making”.

Preparing for the Interview:

Start full-scale preparation for the interview, immediately after the mains examination is finished (with a certain break to chill out, of course).

Be very careful while filling the mains application form. This application form (DAF: Detailed Application Form) is the basis on which the interview proceeds. Consult the seniors to fill the information carefully. Please also refer to the section on how to fill the application form in this document. Through this application form, you can direct the board to your strong areas. The interview will go on expected lines and you can give well-prepared answers. Do keep a copy of the application form.

The preparation should include both the subject matter preparation and importantly, the way you present yourself.

One should prepare for the interview with a group of 3-4 people, to have different perspectives and suggestions to improve your personality, and for pointing out the negative points which otherwise are invisible for oneself.

Use a handy cam or mirror to see how you speak, the facial expressions and mannerisms etc. Try to impress yourself with your answers while in front of the mirror. Observe whether you are showing a jovial/cheerful

face or being very serious in your outlook.

Keep visualizing the interview scenario and modify yourself accordingly. You are assessed right from the moment you enter the interview room. So the following aspects are important: the way you walk, the way you sit, the way you dress up, the enthusiasm and cheerfulness on your face, the coolness of your head/mind, the way you talk, your mannerisms, facial expressions, politeness and behavior, the way you approach and tackle the questions, the confidence you display, the way you think, and finally the way you take leave and walk out of the room. In all these dimensions, you should contemplate and put your best performance!

The best way to prepare is to sit in front of a mirror with a cool head, and do intensive brainstorming. Try to assess what type of questions could be asked and how you can give a simple and logical answer. **Rehearse the answers out LOUD**. For all those questions that are supposed to be asked, make sure you have the answers ready and rehearsed loud. For those questions, which are sort of, unknown, your loud preparation would help in approaching these new questions in a cool and logical manner without losing any of your personality traits that are expected.

Show a positive body language. Believe that you are suitable for the job. Believe it thoroughly and within you. Convey to them the message that you are the person they are looking for.

At this point, I want to mention that though reading previous interviews would help to a certain extent, they won't provide the actual scenario as how that interview went. For a question, one answer can be modulated and expressed in many different ways, depending on your personality. So it's not just the correct answer that is expected, but how it is conveyed. So, please make sure while going through previous interview questions, you keep this in mind, and modify the answers according to your personality type.

Questions asked in the interview:

- Relating to your name, any famous personality who has a similar or same name/surname, its meaning and etc.
- Career choice: why do you opt for the civil services
- Hobbies: why do you pursue such a hobby or questions related to

your hobby? So, research and collect information well on your hobbies.

- Current affairs: Keep following the news and all the headlines. Make sure you have some opinion or discussion around those topics.
- Questions on your domain expertise, such as IT, Doctors, Engineering etc. and how that knowledge be put to use in the services, if you join
- Situational and hypothetical questions, like, if you become the DM of your district, what steps you would take for disaster management? Etc.
- Choice of services
- About your educational qualifications/institutions etc.
- Local area information about your district, town/city and state. This is one of the most important areas that are being stressed thoroughly in the recent interviews. So, make sure you have all the information about the problems, issues and their probable solutions in your locality.
- Optional subjects: Not much stressed, but definitely a part of the questions that might be asked.
- Job experience

Prepare on all of the above aspects, and practice answers. To an extent, believe in your answers and make them your own.

Mock interviews and Practice:

One should form a group of 4-5 people, as the preparation for the interview cannot be all done in isolation.

Try having as many mock interviews as possible. Take the feedback of those mocks seriously and work on them to rectify. Keep your head very cool all through the mocks and the general preparation for the interview. If the mocks are discouraging or stressing, please be patient and stand up to yourself. It is important to tolerate the stress and still keep a cheerful face as well as a cheerful mind!

No training institute can develop or transform your personality in a few days. However, some of the tips may help in ironing out some weaknesses

and can provide an avenue for a well-planned preparation and group discussions.

Take mock interviews with your friends, even on phone if it is not possible to be present in person. Let your friends grill you and again, take their feedback in the positive earnest.

Dressing up:

Dressing is of some importance. The choice of dress should be according to the weather conditions. Try not to wear newly stitched clothes, as they might be uneasy.

Wear comfortable clothes. Men need to wear light colored shirt and a dark trouser with a tie. Women appear best in a sari or salwar kameez.

Pay attention to the details, ironed dress, polished shoes, hair accessories, trimmed nails etc. Use convenient footwear, black or brown leather shoes.

Women candidates should take care to avoid the hair falling over their face as it could annoy both you and the interviewer.

Do not wear anything that connects you with a religious or political group.

Do not use heavy perfume/deodorants.

In case you have a running nose or cold, carry a handkerchief, or sufficient stock of tissue. Tissue is preferable.

Some candidates take medicine to relax on the previous night of the interview; this should be avoided as the effect of medicine may decrease your alertness during the interview.

Have a light meal on the day of the interview. Do not overeat too. Do not go for the interview with an empty stomach. You need a working and alert mind that can tackle stress and logic.

First impression is the best impression!

For the Interview, please focus greatly on two things- Your Bio-Data (as

reflected in the Mains Form) and the Current Affairs. Bio-Data includes the following:

- State
- Schools, Colleges, Places of Schooling
- Mother's Profession and Father's Profession
- Your own previous professions and companies if any
- Reason for a long time gap after graduation without employment (if applicable to you)
- Date of Birth, Meaning of Name, any special occasion that coincides with your dob.
- Hobbies
- Awards and any extra-curricular activities.
- Optional Subjects
- Subject of graduation

Current Affairs includes basically current events that you should be familiar with.

Before I conclude, it is important to pen down a few words on a very important question-*Why you want to join the Civil Services?* This question may or may not be asked in the interview and it may be asked indirectly too (as to why you didn't continue with your previous profession, why you quit etc.). Nevertheless, the very act of thinking on this question will be an eye-opener for many of you. It is a good exercise to really question yourself as to why have you come so far? What exactly is it that attracted you to the Services? The reasons can be numerous- social service, personal ambition, job security, prestige in the society, contribution to the nation, some childhood inspiration etc. These answers may sound repetitive to the Board but the real point of testing is something else when the Board asks this question. The main purpose of this question is to evaluate your honesty and your conviction for this job. The answer to this question lies not so much in verbal communication as it does in the non-verbal communication. Whether you realize it or not, there is something about this question that just exposes your real self. The examiner can easily see whether you really believe in what you are saying. And you will only believe in what you are saying when you are honest. Be honest not just to the examiner but also to yourself. I am sure

each one of us has good intentions at heart but do we have the conviction to stick to them when the going gets tough. If you do, then you will not have a problem with answering this question.

Failing to find your name in the merit list

Superpower forbid, Coming this far to the Interview stage and not finding your name in the merit list is one of those toughest moments one might have to digest. It means, repeating the complete cycle of examination again. It needs more of a mental courage and attitude than changes or improvements in your preparation. You have done almost everything right except for some mistake somewhere which proved costly.

Either you can just keep the result aside and give the next attempt right away as you could not find any mistake as such in your preparation, or try to make improvements at each stage of your preparation. Try to win over yourself at every level, be it preliminary, mains or the interview.

If it is the interview that was the reason for your misfortune, you will have your chance with high fortunes soon. Make sure you can take along with you all the good work done so far and repeat it. Don't leave things to fate or luck. If you have cleared mains, ensure that you cleared it by your efforts so that they can be replicated.

The interview aspects have been dealt with in detail in this document. They would help you in getting those fateful extra marks. Follow and implement the suggestions mentioned, in letter and spirit.

Those of you who did get into the merit list, but are not happy with your result, well never mind, you still have to enjoy and cherish your efforts and results. There is nothing wrong in what you are doing, please keep up the good work if you are going to visit the exam again. A bit of luck, a bit of more coverage in your preparation would surely enable to get the merit rank of your choice. **You are on the right track**, we do not want to trouble you with more suggestions and guidelines. In fact, please do help other aspirants with your experiences and share your discussions. It helps you and everyone.

WHAT LIES AHEAD

We thought it would be encouraging to provide a peep in to what lies ahead after you clear the examination. What's awaiting you is a really exciting time.

At least till the time the next year results are announced, you are a celebrity, in your town/city, in your district, in your state probably and if you are on the top of the list, in the country.

Lot of offers would pour in, for engagements/marriages and any other offer that can be extended. Depending on your locality, the local politicians would come and meet, felicitation functions would be arranged frequently, and you are supposed to give speeches on how 'hard' you worked, what's your success strategy, how many hours did you read each day, and what do you want to tell to all those students and other aspirants to become 'as successful' as you are. Interviews in magazines, blogs and on TV become more or less a routine for some time. You are a hero.

Whether the above stuff happen or not, **you will be respected; people will see you and your family in high esteem.** That's something that will give a sense of pride. Cherish those moments; try to stand up to the respect showered upon you without piling up dirt in your mind. Let not the pride ride and rule you.

Make sure you help some more aspirants by sharing your experiences and any suggestions that you can provide.

In the month of September, the foundation course would start, and all of the IAS/IPS/IFS selected candidates would go the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie. Candidates selected for the rest of the services would go to their respective training institutes. It will be great fun, provides a sense of *esprit-de-corps* among the three services. For now on, you will be called Officer Trainees (OTs). Being just a three-month course, time flies fast and even before we get to know each other, the FC comes to an end. We do not want to reveal everything, let

there be some element of surprise (for good or bad😊), but one thing is sure, you will make some very great friends here.

The academy, especially LBSNAA, might not be as most of you imagine, the hectic schedule and constant climbing up and down of hills for classes and mess erases the fun of being in an exotic place like Mussoorie. Since we are under training, we are not yet Officers but Officer Trainees and we have not yet reached anywhere!

That's the singular message you will all be greeted with. Nevertheless, The Academy is a great place to be in, you will get to learn lots of new things, get to interact with the best of people from various domains and specializations, get to listen to some of the best experiences on field and if you are passionate enough, you will get to do a lot of work through village visits, various clubs and societies etc. Great sporting facilities and gym, it will be a nice evening every day (if you are relieved from your classes by that time, and you don't have any submissions/cultural programs to prepare for). But mornings won't be so nice, with our dearest PT Sir waiting for a daily dose of exercises/Aerobics (a.k.a sleep dance) and yoga, for which we have to go down a hill (and come up back, of course). And you miss any of these, you are again greeted impassionedly, this time with a show cause notice.

And the stories go on. We cannot tell you everything even if we wanted to. You have to see it for yourselves. **We are all waiting for you!**

Believe in yourself that you can make it. You will make it. And, Make it.

All the best!