

# Best Optional Subjects for UPSC Mains - What Kerala Toppers Recommend?

Choosing the right **optional subject for UPSC Mains** is a crucial decision that can significantly impact your final score. With the right strategy and subject selection, aspirants can maximize their chances of success. Many **Kerala UPSC toppers** have shared insights on the best optional subjects based on scoring potential, syllabus overlap, and personal interest.

## 1. How to Choose the Best Optional Subject for UPSC Mains?

Before diving into recommendations, it's important to consider the following factors while selecting your **optional subject for UPSC Mains**:

- **Interest & Background Knowledge:** Choose a subject you are comfortable with.
- **Scoring Potential:** Some subjects have a history of high scores.
- **Syllabus Overlap:** Subjects like History, Geography, and Political Science overlap with General Studies.
- **Availability of Study Material & Guidance:** Ensure enough resources and mentorship are available.

## 2. Top Recommended Optional Subjects for UPSC Mains by Kerala Toppers

Based on inputs from successful candidates, here are some of the best **optional subjects for UPSC Mains**:

### (a) Political Science & International Relations (PSIR)

- Highly preferred by Kerala toppers due to strong overlap with General Studies.
- Beneficial for candidates interested in current affairs and governance.
- Availability of coaching and study materials.

## **(b) History**

- Popular among candidates with a humanities background.
- Direct relevance to GS Paper I.
- Static subject with less unpredictability.

## **(c) Geography**

- A good choice for candidates with a science or engineering background.
- Conceptual subject with diagram-based answers.
- Strong linkage with General Studies (GS Paper I & III).

## **(d) Malayalam Literature**

- Ideal for candidates proficient in Malayalam.
- Consistently high scores reported among Kerala aspirants.
- Requires deep understanding and writing skills in Malayalam.

## **(e) Public Administration**

- Useful for aspirants interested in administrative concepts.
- Direct relevance to governance and policy-making.
- Concise syllabus compared to other subjects.

## **(f) Sociology**

- One of the highest-scoring subjects.
- Useful for General Studies and Essay writing.
- Easy to grasp, even for non-social science students.

## (g) Anthropology

- Science-based subject with good scoring trends.
- Suitable for candidates with a biology background.
- Short and predictable syllabus.

## (h) Economics

- Best for aspirants with a commerce or economics background.
- Directly linked to GS Paper III and Indian Economy.
- Conceptual clarity is key for high scores.

## (i) Law

- Ideal for aspirants with a law background.
- Covers Constitutional and International Law topics.
- Scoring depends on answer writing and case law knowledge.

## 3. What Kerala Toppers Say About Optional Selection

- Many toppers stress the importance of **interest and aptitude** over trends.
- **Syllabus manageability** is a key factor in long-term preparation.
- Subjects like **PSIR, Sociology, and Malayalam Literature** have been consistent high scorers in Kerala.
- Effective coaching can help with conceptual clarity and answer writing.

## 4. Conclusion: Which Optional Subject Should You Choose?

There is no 'one-size-fits-all' best **optional subject for UPSC Mains**. However, by considering syllabus overlap, personal interest, and scoring trends, you can make an informed decision. Kerala toppers recommend picking a subject that aligns with your strengths and preparation strategy to maximize your UPSC score.

## **FAQs on Choosing the Best Optional Subject for UPSC Mains**

### **Q1: Which is the highest scoring optional subject in UPSC Mains?**

Subjects like PSIR, Sociology, and Anthropology have consistently high success rates.

### **Q2: Which optional subject is best for engineers?**

Geography, Mathematics, and Anthropology are good choices for engineers.

### **Q3: How much does the optional subject contribute to UPSC Mains?**

The optional subject carries **500 marks**, making it crucial for ranking in UPSC Mains.

### **Q4: Can I choose an optional subject without a background in it?**

Yes, many aspirants have excelled in subjects outside their academic background with proper preparation.

### **Q5: Is coaching necessary for UPSC optional subjects?**

It depends on the subject. Some require coaching for conceptual clarity, while others can be prepared through self-study.

Choosing the right **optional subject for UPSC Mains** can make a significant difference in your overall performance. Research well, assess your strengths, and make an informed decision for your UPSC journey!

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