CDS I 2026 Exam: Syllabus, Pattern, and Complete Preparation Guide

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Are you preparing for the CDS I 2026 Exam?

The **Combined Defence Services (CDS) Examination**, conducted by the **Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)**, is one of the most prestigious defence exams in India. Every year, thousands of aspirants appear for CDS to join the **Indian Military Academy (IMA), Indian Naval Academy (INA), Air Force Academy (AFA),** and **Officers' Training Academy (OTA)**.

If you are serious about cracking **CDS I 2026**, this guide will provide you with **complete details of the syllabus, exam pattern, preparation strategy, and expert tips**.

□□ Overview of CDS I 2026 Exam

- **Conducting Body:** Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)
- **Purpose:** Recruitment into IMA, INA, AFA & OTA
- **Exam Frequency:** Twice a year (CDS I in April 2026 & CDS II in September 2026)
- **Mode of Exam:** Offline (Pen & Paper)
- **Medium:** English & Hindi (except English section)
- **Eligibility:** Unmarried graduates (both men & women for OTA)
- **Selection Process:**
    1. Written Exam
    2. SSB Interview (Intelligence & Personality Test)
    3. Medical Examination

□□ CDS I 2026 Exam Pattern

The exam pattern differs for **IMA, INA, AFA** and **OTA**.

For IMA, INA & AFA:

Subject	Marks	Duration

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English	100	2 hours
General Knowledge	100	2 hours
Elementary Mathematics	100	2 hours
Total	300	6 hours

For OTA (Men & Women):

Subject	Marks	Duration
English	100	2 hours
General Knowledge	100	2 hours
Total	200	4 hours

Negative Marking: 0.33 marks will be deducted for every wrong answer.

CDS I 2026 Syllabus (Detailed & Topic-Wise)

1. English Language

- Spotting Errors
- Sentence Improvement
- Fill in the Blanks
- Reading Comprehension
- Synonyms & Antonyms
- Idioms & Phrases
- Para Jumbles

2. General Knowledge

- **Current Affairs:** National & International Events
- **History:** Freedom Movement, Modern Indian History, Ancient & Medieval India
- **Polity:** Constitution, Fundamental Rights, Parliament, Judiciary
- **Geography:** Indian & World Geography, Climate, Resources
- **Economy:** Economic Development, Budget, Policies
- **Science:** Physics, Chemistry, Biology basics
- **Defence Awareness:** Ranks, Exercises, Important Commands

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3. Elementary Mathematics

- **Arithmetic:** Number System, Percentages, Ratio & Proportion, Time & Work, Profit & Loss, Speed, Distance & Time
- **Algebra:** Basic Operations, Linear & Quadratic Equations
- **Geometry:** Lines, Angles, Circles, Triangles, Quadrilaterals, Mensuration
- **Trigonometry:** Heights & Distances, Basic Identities
- **Statistics:** Graphs, Pie Charts, Bar Charts

□□Preparation Strategy for CDS I 2026

1. Subject-Wise Preparation Tips

- **English:** Read newspapers daily, practice error spotting, improve vocabulary.
- **GK:** Follow **The Hindu/Indian Express**, monthly magazines, and defence-related news.
- **Mathematics:** Revise NCERTs (Classes 6–10), practice daily, focus on speed & accuracy.

2. Time Management

- Solve previous year papers to understand the exam trend.
- Divide your preparation into **daily targets (2–3 hrs English, 3 hrs GK, 2 hrs Maths)**.
- Keep last 2 months for **revision & mock tests**.

3. Recommended Books

- **English:** Wren & Martin, Arihant Objective English
- **GK:** Lucent GK, Manorama Yearbook, Newspapers
- **Maths:** RS Aggarwal Quantitative Aptitude, NCERTs

□□ Importance of Current Affairs & Defence Knowledge

- Regularly follow PIB, Yojana, and India Year Book.

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- Cover **defence exercises (domestic & international), appointments, ranks, medals, and agreements**.

□□ SSB Interview Preparation

Cracking the written exam is just the first step. The **SSB Interview** tests your **officer-like qualities (OLQs), leadership, and personality**.

- **Day 1 (Screening):** OIR Test & PPDT
- **Day 2–4:** Psychology Tests, Group Tasks, Personal Interview
- **Day 5:** Conference & Results

□□ Stay confident, practice group discussions, improve physical fitness, and build leadership skills.

□□ Role of Physical Fitness

- Running (2–3 km daily)
- Push-ups, Pull-ups, Sit-ups
- Sports & Outdoor Activities
- Yoga/meditation for focus

□□ Why Choose Victor Growth for CDS I 2026 Preparation?

If you are aiming for **CDS I 2026 success**, the right guidance can make all the difference. **Victor Growth**, one of India's leading defence exam coaching platforms, provides:

- **Expert Faculty:** Experienced mentors for English, GK, and Maths.
- **Structured Courses:** Covering the entire UPSC CDS syllabus with test series.
- **Mock Tests & PYQs:** To help you practice like the real exam.
- **SSB Training:** Personality development, mock interviews, and physical guidance.

□□ With **Victor Growth**, aspirants get a **complete preparation package** – from written exam to SSB interview.

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□□ FAQs on CDS I 2026 Exam

Q1. When will CDS I 2026 exam be conducted?
The exam is expected in **April 2026** (exact date as per UPSC calendar).

Q2. What is the age limit for CDS I 2026?

- IMA: 19–24 years
- INA: 19–22 years
- AFA: 19–23 years
- OTA: 19–25 years

Q3. Is there negative marking in CDS?
Yes, **0.33 marks** are deducted for every wrong answer.

Q4. Can women apply for CDS I 2026?
Yes, women can apply, but only for **OTA (Officers' Training Academy)**.

Q5. How many attempts are allowed in CDS?
There is **no attempt limit**, candidates can apply until they meet the age and eligibility criteria.

Q6. Which coaching institute is best for CDS preparation?
Victor Growth is highly recommended for its structured approach, expert faculty, and SSB guidance.

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