DETAILED GUIDE TO UPSC PRELIMS SYLLABUS & HOW TO COVER IT

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The **UPSC Civil Services Examination (CSE)** is one of the most prestigious exams in India. The first stage, the **Preliminary Examination (Prelims)**, serves as a qualifying test for the Mains. While the Prelims is objective in nature, it demands deep conceptual clarity, consistent revision, and smart preparation.

In this guide, we provide a **complete breakdown of the UPSC Prelims syllabus**, subject-wise insights, and **effective strategies to cover the syllabus comprehensively**.

UPSC Prelims Examination Overview

The UPSC Prelims consists of **two papers** conducted on the same day:

1. **General Studies Paper I (GS I)** – 200 marks
2. **General Studies Paper II (CSAT)** – 200 marks (Qualifying with 33% minimum)

- Both papers are of **2 hours each**.
- Paper I decides the cut-off for qualifying to the Mains.
- Paper II (CSAT) is only qualifying but cannot be ignored.

UPSC Prelims Syllabus in Detail

General Studies Paper I

1. Current Events of National and International Importance

- Daily newspapers (The Hindu, Indian Express)
- Monthly current affairs magazines (Yojana, Kurukshetra, PIB, etc.)
- Focus: Government schemes, policies, international summits, reports

2. History of India and Indian National Movement

- Ancient and Medieval India (culture, architecture, religion)
- Modern India (freedom struggle, reform movements, leaders)

- Sources: NCERTs, Spectrum’s Modern History

3. Indian and World Geography

- Physical Geography (landforms, climate, resources)
- Indian Geography (agriculture, industries, rivers, population)
- World Geography (continents, trade, climatic regions)
- Sources: NCERTs, G.C. Leong, Atlas study

4. Indian Polity and Governance

- Constitution, Rights, Duties
- Parliament, Judiciary, Executive, Panchayati Raj
- Important Amendments, Supreme Court Judgments
- Source: M. Laxmikanth’s Indian Polity

5. Economic and Social Development

- Basic concepts: GDP, inflation, monetary policy
- Government schemes (poverty, inclusion, health, education)
- Sustainable Development Goals
- Sources: NCERT Economics, Economic Survey, Budget highlights

6. Environment, Ecology, and Biodiversity

- Ecosystems, climate change, biodiversity conservation
- Environmental treaties and conventions
- Pollution and mitigation efforts
- Sources: NCERTs, Shankar IAS Environment book

7. General Science

- Basic science from NCERT (Physics, Chemistry, Biology)

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- Latest developments in space, biotechnology, IT
- Application-based questions

General Studies Paper II (CSAT)

1. Comprehension

- Reading passages and answering based on context

2. Interpersonal Skills and Communication

- Questions testing logical communication

3. Logical Reasoning and Analytical Ability

- Puzzles, statements and conclusions, syllogisms

4. Decision Making and Problem Solving

- Situational questions requiring judgment

5. General Mental Ability

- Basic aptitude and problem-solving

6. Basic Numeracy and Data Interpretation

- Class X level mathematics: percentages, ratios, averages, data charts

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How to Cover the UPSC Prelims Syllabus Effectively

1. Build a Strong Foundation

- Start with **NCERTs (6th–12th standard)** for History, Geography, Polity, Science, and Economics.
- Create concise notes for quick revision.

2. Use Standard Reference Books

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- Spectrum’s Modern History
- M. Laxmikanth for Polity
- G.C. Leong for Geography
- Shankar IAS for Environment
- Economic Survey and Budget for Economy

3. Current Affairs Integration

- Read newspapers daily for dynamic topics.
- Use monthly compilations for revision.
- Connect current affairs with static subjects (e.g., new space missions → Science & Tech + Geography).

4. Practice Mock Tests

- Solve previous years’ question papers (last 10 years).
- Attempt timed mock tests regularly.
- Analyze mistakes and revise weak areas.

5. Focus on Revision

- Multiple revisions are key to retention.
- Maintain **short notes** and mind maps for quick recall.

6. CSAT Preparation Strategy

- Practice comprehension passages daily.
- Solve reasoning questions from standard guides.
- Revise Class X level mathematics for numeracy questions.

Conclusion

The **UPSC Prelims syllabus** covers a vast range of topics, but with a structured

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strategy, it becomes manageable. Focus on **building strong basics, integrating current affairs, practicing mock tests, and revising consistently**. Remember, Prelims is not just about knowledge, but about accuracy, time management, and smart elimination techniques in multiple-choice questions.

FAQs on UPSC Prelims Syllabus

Q1. What are the two papers in UPSC Prelims?
A: General Studies Paper I and General Studies Paper II (CSAT).

Q2. Is CSAT qualifying?
A: Yes, candidates must score at least 33% in CSAT to qualify.

Q3. Which subject carries the highest weightage in Prelims?
A: Current Affairs, Polity, and History consistently carry significant weightage.

Q4. How should I prepare for Environment and Ecology?
A: Study NCERT Biology, Shankar IAS Environment book, and link current affairs with environmental topics.

Q5. How many months of current affairs should be covered for Prelims?
A: At least 12 months before the exam, though 18–24 months is safer for coverage.

Q6. Can Prelims be cleared in the first attempt?
A: Yes, with disciplined study, consistent revision, and practice of mock tests, many aspirants clear Prelims in their first attempt.

 SEO Keywords Included: UPSC Prelims syllabus, UPSC Prelims preparation, UPSC General Studies syllabus, CSAT syllabus, how to cover UPSC Prelims, IAS Prelims syllabus, UPSC Prelims subject-wise strategy.

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