Subject-Wise Strategy for CDS I 2026: English, GK, and Mathematics

Victor Growth

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The **Combined Defence Services (CDS) Examination I 2026** is one of the most prestigious opportunities for aspirants aiming to join the Indian Armed Forces through the IMA, INA, AFA, or OTA. Conducted by UPSC, the exam is highly competitive, demanding smart subject-wise preparation strategies in **English, General Knowledge (GK), and Mathematics**.

In this guide, we will break down a **subject-wise strategy for CDS I 2026** that will help you streamline your preparation, maximize your scores, and clear the cut-off in your very first attempt.

□□ English Preparation Strategy for CDS I 2026

The English section of CDS carries **100 marks** and primarily tests your **grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, and usage**. Unlike school-level English, UPSC focuses on clarity, accuracy, and application of language skills.

Important Topics:

- **Spotting Errors** (Grammar-based)
- **Fill in the Blanks / Cloze Test**
- **Synonyms & Antonyms**
- **Idioms and Phrases**
- **Sentence Improvement**
- **Reading Comprehension**
- **Ordering of Sentences/Para Jumbles**

Preparation Tips:

1. **Strengthen Grammar** – Revise **basic rules of tenses, prepositions,**

articles, subject-verb agreement, active-passive, and direct-indirect speech.

2. **Enhance Vocabulary** – Maintain a **word list of 10–15 new words daily** with synonyms, antonyms, and usage.

3. **Practice Reading** – Regularly read **newspapers (The Hindu / Indian Express)** to improve comprehension and vocabulary.

4. **Solve Previous Year Papers** – Identify the trend of error spotting, sentence improvement, and comprehension questions.

5. **Mock Tests** – Attempt timed tests to develop accuracy and speed.

Pro Tip from Victor Growth: Focus more on **error spotting and comprehension**, as these are scoring sections that can give you an edge over others.

General Knowledge (GK) Preparation Strategy for CDS I 2026

GK is often considered the **most unpredictable yet decisive section** of the CDS exam. With **120 questions for 100 marks**, it tests your awareness of history, polity, geography, science, defense, and current affairs.

Key Areas to Cover:

1. **History** – Freedom struggle, medieval India, modern India, culture & heritage.

2. **Geography** – Physical, Indian, and world geography; important features like rivers, mountains, monsoons.

3. **Polity** – Constitution basics, fundamental rights, parliament, judiciary, governance.

4. **Economics** – Basic concepts, budget, planning, and current economic trends.

5. **Science** – Physics, Chemistry, Biology (up to Class 10 level).

6. **Current Affairs** – Defense exercises, awards, summits, sports, international relations, and government schemes.

Preparation Tips:

- Read **NCERT Books (6th–10th)** for History, Geography, and Science basics.

- Refer to **Lucent’s GK** for revision.

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- Read **monthly current affairs magazines** (Yojana, Pratiyogita Darpan, or Victor Growth's current affairs capsules).
- Follow **daily news updates** to stay aware of defense-related issues and global developments.
- Revise consistently; GK is about **retention and recall**.

Pro Tip from Victor Growth: Start a **GK notebook** and write down 5–10 current affairs daily. Regular revision of this notebook before the exam will boost recall.

Mathematics Preparation Strategy for CDS I 2026

Mathematics is crucial for IMA, AFA, and INA aspirants (not required for OTA). It carries **100 questions for 100 marks** and tests conceptual clarity, accuracy, and time management.

Important Topics:

- **Algebra** – Identities, quadratic equations, inequalities.
- **Trigonometry** – Heights and distances, identities, ratios.
- **Geometry** – Properties of triangles, circles, quadrilaterals.
- **Mensuration** – Surface area, volume.
- **Statistics** – Mean, median, mode, bar graphs, pie charts.
- **Number System** – Divisibility, LCM, HCF, modular arithmetic.
- **Arithmetic** – Percentages, profit-loss, time-speed-distance, simple & compound interest, ratio-proportion.

Preparation Tips:

1. **Clear Basics** – Revise NCERT Mathematics (6th–10th) for strong fundamentals.
2. **Short Tricks** – Learn shortcuts for percentages, averages, and speed-distance problems.
3. **Formula Sheet** – Maintain a separate sheet for all formulas in trigonometry, algebra, and mensuration.
4. **Practice Previous Year Papers** – At least **10 years of CDS math papers** should be solved thoroughly.

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5. **Time Management** – Set a target of **30–35 seconds per question** during practice.

Pro Tip from Victor Growth: Focus on **Arithmetic and Trigonometry**, as they form the largest chunk of questions and can maximize your score.

Subject-Wise Daily Preparation Plan

- **English** – 1 hour (grammar + vocab + comprehension practice)
- **GK** – 2 hours (1 hour static + 1 hour current affairs)
- **Maths** – 2–3 hours (concept + practice + mock test)

Additionally:

- **Weekly Mock Tests** to analyze weak areas.
- **Monthly Revision** of all subjects.

Final Tips to Crack CDS I 2026

- **Start Early**: At least 6–8 months of dedicated preparation is needed.
- **Consistency Wins**: Study every day instead of cramming at the last moment.
- **Balance Subjects**: Don’t neglect English or GK while focusing on Math.
- **Use Victor Growth Coaching**: With **expert faculty, structured test series, and subject-wise guidance**, Victor Growth has helped thousands of aspirants crack CDS in their first attempt.

FAQs on Subject-Wise Strategy for CDS I 2026

Q1. Which subject is toughest in CDS?
A: Most aspirants find **GK toughest** because of its vast syllabus, but with consistent preparation, it becomes manageable.

Q2. How to score high in English for CDS?
A: Focus on **grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension**. Regular reading and error spotting practice are key.

Q3. Is NCERT enough for CDS Maths?
A: NCERT is essential for basics, but you also need **previous year papers and practice workbooks** for mastery.

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Q4. Can I clear CDS in first attempt?
A: Yes! With a **subject-wise preparation strategy and regular mock tests**, many candidates clear CDS in their first attempt.

Q5. Why choose Victor Growth for CDS Coaching?
A: **Victor Growth** offers **personalized mentorship, mock tests, current affairs capsules, and subject-wise classes**, making it the most trusted name for CDS aspirants.

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