

UPSC Prelims Syllabus & Preparation Strategy

The **UPSC Civil Services Preliminary Examination (Prelims)** is the first stage of the **IAS exam** and serves as a screening test for the **UPSC Mains**. It consists of **two papers: General Studies Paper I and the CSAT (General Studies Paper II)**.

Understanding the syllabus thoroughly and preparing strategically is essential to clear this stage.

UPSC Prelims Exam Pattern

Paper	Subject	Marks	No. of Questions	Duration	Negative Marking
Paper I	General Studies (GS)	200	100	2 Hours	Yes (1/3rd per wrong answer)
Paper II	CSAT (Aptitude Test)	200	80	2 Hours	Yes (1/3rd per wrong answer)

- **Paper I (General Studies I)** is **counted for merit** and determines selection for Mains.
- **Paper II (CSAT)** is **qualifying** (33% or 66 marks required to pass).
- Both papers are **objective type** (MCQs) and conducted on the **same day**.

UPSC Prelims Syllabus

1. General Studies (Paper I) - 200 Marks

The General Studies paper covers a wide range of topics:

1. History of India & Indian National Movement

- Ancient, Medieval, and Modern Indian History
- Important Indian Dynasties and Cultural Heritage
- Freedom Struggle & Major Personalities

2. Indian & World Geography

- Physical, Social & Economic Geography of India and the World
- Key Geographical Features, Climate, Resources

3. Indian Polity & Governance

- Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj
- Public Policy, Rights Issues

4. Economic & Social Development

- Sustainable Development, Poverty, Inclusion
- Government Schemes & Economic Policies

5. Environment & Ecology

- Biodiversity, Climate Change, Environmental Issues
- Conservation Efforts & International Agreements

6. General Science & Technology

- Basics of Physics, Chemistry, and Biology
- Space & Defence Technologies, IT, Biotechnology

7. Current Affairs & General Awareness

- Important National & International Events
- Reports, Indices, and Summits

2. CSAT (Paper II) - 200 Marks (Qualifying Paper)

CSAT is an **aptitude test** designed to assess a candidate's reasoning and analytical skills. The syllabus includes:

1. **Comprehension** (English & Hindi)
2. **Logical & Analytical Reasoning**
3. **Basic Numeracy (Class 10 level Maths)**
4. **Decision Making & Problem-Solving**
5. **Interpersonal Skills, Communication Skills**

How to Prepare for UPSC Prelims?

1. Understand the Syllabus & Previous Year Papers

- Download the **official UPSC syllabus** and analyze **previous years' question papers** to identify trends.

2. Follow a Structured Study Plan

- Cover all subjects in a **balanced manner** and focus more on **high-weightage areas**.

3. Best Books for Prelims Preparation

Subject

History

Polity

Geography

Economy

Environment

Science & Tech

Current Affairs

Recommended Books

NCERT (6th-12th), Spectrum Modern India

M. Laxmikanth - Indian Polity

NCERT (6th-12th), G.C. Leong

Ramesh Singh, Economic Survey, Budget

Shankar IAS Environment

NCERT Science (6th-10th), Current Affairs

The Hindu, PIB, Yojana, Monthly Magazines

4. Focus on Current Affairs

- Read **The Hindu or Indian Express** daily.
- Follow government websites like **PIB, PRS, and Economic Survey**.
- Make short notes on important issues.

5. Practice Mock Tests & Revise

- Attempt **full-length mock tests** from **October to May** (at least 50).
- Revise NCERTs and standard books **multiple times**.

6. CSAT Strategy (Paper-II)

- Since it is **qualifying**, practice **basic maths, comprehension, and reasoning** regularly.

7. Time Management & Smart Guessing

- Avoid negative marking by eliminating wrong options first.
- Solve **80+ questions** in GS Paper I to maximize scoring chances.

Final Thoughts

The UPSC Prelims exam is all about **precision, speed, and conceptual clarity**. A solid strategy with **regular revision, mock tests, and current affairs preparation** will boost your chances of success. Stay consistent, stay focused, and keep practicing!

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