

# How To Read News Paper Class

18th May, 2023 at 9:00 AM

## General Introduction (9:08 AM):

- Newspaper reading for Civil Services examinations is very different from usual reading.
- The Civil Services demand encompasses reading, remembering & understanding the facts.
- The "understanding " aspect makes the examination different from any other examination.
- No technical detail is required at any exam stage so that everyone is on a level playing field.
- The exam needs us to go beyond understanding the facts to analyze (why the event occurred), evaluate ( what should have been ), and create/recommend what should have been done.
- 

## Stages of Learning

Reading

Remembering

Understanding

Analyze

Evaluate

Create

- The examination has both static and dynamic parts in all the stages.
- Daily newspaper reading helps us to analyze the dynamic/application part of the topics critically.
- The examination also does not seek very high memorizing skills, but non-technical generic analytical skills.
- No newspaper has UPSC aspirants as their main target audience and all of them are written for all sections of the society.
- As aspirants, we are expected to pick up the topics that are relevant for any stage of the examinations.
- The preparation journey does not begin with memorizing the books, but with understanding what the exam seeks from the aspirants.

## Answer writing:

- An aspirant will get only 7-8 minutes to make sense of a question and write the answer.
- Due to this time constraint, daily reading practice is important and newspaper reading will help with that.
- We do not expect very factual questions in the subjective examinations, nor do we expect direct questions from the newspaper.

## Importance of the syllabus and Previous Years' Questions:

- Going through the syllabus tells us two things:
  - I. What to read?
  - II. How much to read?
- An idea of these two things(especially the second) helps us in the effective utilization of our time.
- Otherwise, we will waste much time remembering newspapers and other materials.

### **Stages of the examination:**

- **Prelims:**

- The Prelims stage is only a filtering stage, and its marks are not considered in the final merit.
- The stage is dynamic but is relatively easier because the correct answer is in front of us and we need to identify it from among the given options.
- There are two papers for this stage:
- I. Civil Services Aptitude Test(CSAT) I- General Studies.
- II. Civil Services Aptitude Test(CSAT) II- Quantitative Aptitude(Maths), Logical Reasoning, and Reading Comprehension.
- Just like in our school exams, Reading Comprehension is going to be the most helpful part of the paper.
- The Reading Comprehension section has had the same difficulty level since its beginning.
- The Logical Reasoning and Quantitative Aptitude portion is getting difficult.
- The cutoff for the exam remains in the 90-100 mark range.
- The highest cutoff in recent times has only been 116 marks in 2016.
- Avoiding silly mistakes and dealing with pressure are as important as knowing the correct answers.

### **Mains:**

- This is the most important part of the examination with a weightage of 1750 marks.
- This stage is difficult because we need to fill blank pages, with relevant material, under the word and time limits.

### **Interview:**

- This stage has a weightage of only 275 marks.
- The stage largely deals with the life experience of the aspirant, which is going to be different for all the aspirants.

### **ANALYSIS OF PREVIOUS YEARS' QUESTIONS(9:40 AM):**

- **2022 Prelims: Rapid Financing Instrument” and “Rapid Credit Facility” is related to the provisions of lending by which one of the following?**

- (a) Asian Development Bank
- (b) International Monetary Fund
- (c) United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative.
- (d) World Bank

- **Correct Answer: (b)**

- **Approach:**

- We regularly see questions from important international bodies- IMF, WTO, World Bank, G 20, G7, etc.
- **Rapid Financing Instrument” and “Rapid Credit Facility** terms were very common in the last year in the context of Sri Lanka and Pakistan.
- Even if anyone has glanced through the newspapers, it will be easy to mark the correct option.

### **Polity:**

- Any constitutional office in the news.
- Any political event( anti-defection, president's rule, etc.) in the news.
- Nowadays, due to initiatives like **Explained**, etc, students can revise the static portion of the related current affair then and there.

### **Economy:**

- Any government scheme in the news.

### **Geography:**

- **2022 Prelims: Among the following crops, which one is the most important anthropogenic source of both methane and nitrous oxide?**

- (a) Cotton
- (b) Rice
- (c) Sugarcane
- (d) Wheat

- **Correct Answer: (b).**

- **Approach:**

- Such questions are not directly sourced from any single material.
- These questions need analysis of editorials on the topic( global warming) and static knowledge.

- **Location questions:**

- They come from places(international and national) in the news.

- **2022 Prelims: Which one of the following lakes of West Africa has become dry and turned into a desert?**

- (a) Lake Victoria
- (b) Lake Faguibine
- (c) Lake Oguta
- (d) Lake Volta

- **Correct answer: (b)**

- Location questions may appear very difficult for a non-aspirant, but any serious aspirant knows that such questions are on the places that have been in the news very frequently.

- In most cases, such questions are the most expected and easiest questions on the paper.

- The difficulty level in location questions was raised by making the options difficult.

- **2022 Prelims: Consider the following pairs :**

- Wetland / Lake Location

- 1. Hokera Wetland – Punjab
- 2. Renuka Wetland – Himachal Pradesh
- 3. Rudrasagar Lake — Tripura
- 4. Sasthamkotta Lake – Tamil Nadu

- How many pairs given above are correctly matched?

- (a) Only one pair
- (b) Only two pairs
- (c) Only three pairs
- (d) All four pairs

- **Correct answer: (b)**

### **Science & Technology:**

- Development of any new technology in India or in the world.
- **2022 Prelims: In the context of vaccines manufactured to prevent the COVID-19 pandemic, consider the following statements:**
- 1. The Serum Institute of India produced a COVID-19 vaccine named Covishield using an mRNA platform.
- 2. Sputnik V vaccine is manufactured using a vector-based platform.
- 3. COVAXIN is an inactivated pathogen-based vaccine.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

• **Correct Answer: (b)**

• **Approach:**

- The question can be dealt with easily if we know that India has no capacity for manufacturing mRNA vaccines as it needs very cold conditions.
- We can see that the questions are sourced from very frequently covered topics and also from daily experiences (2017 had a question from UPI).

### **TERM BASED QUESTIONS(10:15 PM):**

- **The 2022 prelims** had questions about Greenwashing, Guccini, etc.
- Only a simple understanding of the topics will be enough and we are not supposed to get into details.
- We also need a basic understanding of events in the news, foreign dignitary visits, or visits of our Prime Minister.

### **Newspapers for Prelims:**

- We need to go through the newspapers daily.
- Our focus must be to understand and not memorize daily.
- Note-making is not advised at this stage because we do not have a proper idea about what and how much to study.
- **Current Affairs** as such is not a separate subject, but just a categorization of changes that happen in other areas.
- Along with the daily newspapers, students must also go through the monthly Current Affairs magazines.
- For revision, students can either revise the 12-15 monthly magazines or the **PT 365** document.

**GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS(10:45 AM):**

- We must start reading newspapers from the day we start our preparation.
- There is no point in getting behind, going after missed newspapers, or increasing pendency.
- Though we must not skip newspapers once we have started.
- We must not fall into the common perception trap that UPSC aspirants need to know everything, no matter how trivial the fact is.
- If anything is not from the exam point of view, it must not take our time.
- We must never fall into the debate-discussion traps, especially with non-aspirants.
- Such exercises will only increase our stress and our whole outlook for preparing might get derailed.

**Mains examination:**

- All the questions are strictly going to be from the mentioned syllabus.
- This is why around 80% of the mains paper is going to be predictable.
- Expressing the content in a timely manner is as important as knowing the content.
- **GS 1 2022:** Explore and evaluate the impact of 'Work From Home' on family relationships. (Answer in 150 words) 10
- **GS 1 2022:** How is the growth of Tier 2 cities related to the rise of a new middle class with an emphasis on the culture of consumption? (Answer in 150 words) 10.
- Almost all the aspirants will be having a general idea about the two questions above.
- But reading newspapers will broaden our horizons and help us with mentioning better dimensions than others.
- We need to approach all the topics in the framework:
- Background-Present Context-Issues- Way Forward-Case Studies.

**International Relations:**

- We need not cover all the events going on all over the world, but we must focus only on the events that can affect India in any manner.
- We need to focus more on our neighborhood (South East Asia).

**Note making:**

- We must not write anything until we are sure about how we will use them.
- To know how we can use the notes, command over the syllabus is important.
- Another thing that must be taken care of is that we can either have 150 marks or 250 marks questions for any topic.
- For that purpose, 4-5 pages on any topic mentioned in the syllabus would be enough.
- We must add certain points that will make our answers better than others.
- These can be examples, data, case studies, etc.
- Analysis can improve if we can read 2-3 newspapers, along with some magazines like Yojana, Kurukshetra, Frontline, Economic and Political Weekly, etc.
- The preparation must be syllabus-driven and not source-driven.
- We need to cover these sources only for the topics that we do not have content/understanding on.
- Notes must be made on an event basis and not on a date basis.

**News to be avoided:**

- Totally political news.
- City-specific news.
- Crime news.
- State government initiatives without national importance.
- Letters to the editor.
- Performances of individual companies.

**Editorial:**

- The most important portion of a newspaper.
- It will help us in getting different viewpoints(pros & cons) regarding various topics in the news.
- While evaluating the impacts of any scheme, judgment, or event, we must mention both the positive and the negative aspects.
- Any specific editorial, no matter how useful it is, won't be asked verbatim in the exam, nor are they written from an exam point of view.
- We must make the notes considering that we must add an introduction and conclusion to the actual answer.
- Only noting down keywords, making crisp notes of the editorial, or going through the summary would be enough.

**OTHER IMPORTANT ASPECTS (11:15 AM):**

- We need to properly grasp the concepts while reading a newspaper and just mechanical reading of the newspaper yields no benefit.
- For editorials on technical topics like Economics, students must not wait for topics like inflation, etc to be covered in our classroom before reading the related editorials.
- Though we will be timely covering all essential topics, it is much more beneficial for students themselves to take the initiative of having an overall idea about technical terms they encounter while reading newspapers than skipping editorials while waiting for the topics to be covered in the class.
- The 2021 prelims had three questions on sports after many years.
- So sporting events and new technologies of international importance get important.
- We can quote state government initiatives for relevant topics.
- Not the particular cases, but the basics and functions of regulatory bodies in the news.
- Reading both The Hindu and Indian Express is advisable, but any one newspaper must be done.
- The Hindu reading will also improve comprehension and vocabulary which will be useful for CSAT Paper II.
- No newspaper is "indoctrinating " as such, and it is better to have diverse opinions.

**No further class for newspaper reading will be held and students are expected to implement the learning from today itself.**