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UPSC Main Exam Syllabus 2026

The **UPSC Civil Services (Main) Examination 2026** is the second stage of the selection process after the Preliminary Examination. It assesses a candidate's academic depth, writing ability, and understanding of complex issues. The Main Exam comprises **9 papers**, of which **2 are qualifying in nature**, and **7 are considered for merit**.

Qualifying Papers on Indian Languages and English

The aim of these papers is to test the candidate's ability to read, understand, and express ideas clearly and correctly in both English and an Indian language.

Pattern of Questions:

1. Comprehension of given passages
2. Precis Writing
3. Usage and Vocabulary
4. Short Essays

Indian Languages Section:

1. Comprehension of given passages
2. Precis Writing
3. Usage and Vocabulary
4. Short Essays
5. Translation from English to the Indian language and vice-versa

Note 1: These papers are of *Matriculation or equivalent standard* and are qualifying in nature. Marks obtained are **not counted for ranking**.

Note 2: Candidates must answer the English and Indian Language papers in the respective languages, except where translation is required.

Paper I – Essay

Candidates will be required to write essays on multiple topics. They are expected to:

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- Stay close to the subject of the essay.
- Arrange ideas in an orderly manner.
- Write concisely with clarity and precision.

Credit will be given for effective and exact expression.

Paper II – General Studies I

Indian Heritage and Culture, History, and Geography of the World and Society

- Indian culture – salient aspects of art forms, literature, and architecture from ancient to modern times.
- Modern Indian history from the mid-18th century to the present – significant events, personalities, and issues.
- The Freedom Struggle – stages, contributors, and regional movements.
- Post-independence consolidation and reorganisation.
- World history from the 18th century: Industrial Revolution, World Wars, redrawing of national boundaries, colonisation, decolonisation, and major political philosophies (communism, capitalism, socialism, etc.).
- Salient features of Indian society, diversity of India.
- Role of women and women's organisations; population, poverty, and urbanisation issues.
- Effects of globalisation on Indian society.
- Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism, and secularism.
- Physical geography of the world and distribution of key natural resources.
- Location factors for industries (primary, secondary, tertiary) across the world and in India.
- Important geophysical phenomena: earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic activity, cyclones, etc.
- Changes in geographical features, flora, fauna, and their impacts.

Paper III – General Studies II

Governance, Constitution, Polity, Social Justice, and International Relations

- Indian Constitution – historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, and basic structure.
- Functions and responsibilities of the Union and States; federal structure; devolution of powers and finances to local levels.
- Separation of powers and dispute redressal mechanisms.
- Comparison of the Indian constitutional scheme with other countries.
- Parliament and State Legislatures – structure, functioning, powers, and privileges.
- Executive and Judiciary – organisation, functioning, and roles.
- Salient features of the Representation of People's Act.
- Constitutional and statutory bodies – appointment, powers, and responsibilities.
- Government policies and interventions for development; design and implementation issues.
- Role of NGOs, SHGs, and other stakeholders in development.
- Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections and mechanisms for their protection.
- Issues related to health, education, and human resources.
- Poverty and hunger – causes and mitigation.
- Governance – transparency, accountability, e-governance, citizen charters, and institutional reforms.
- Role of civil services in democracy.
- India and its neighbourhood relations.
- Bilateral, regional, and global groupings involving India.
- Effects of policies of developed and developing nations on India.

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- Role of international institutions, agencies, and forums.

Paper IV – General Studies III

Technology, Economic Development, Biodiversity, Environment, Security, and Disaster Management

- Indian Economy – issues related to planning, resources, growth, development, and employment.
- Inclusive growth and related challenges.
- Government budgeting.
- Major crops, cropping patterns, irrigation systems, agricultural marketing, and e-technology for farmers.
- Farm subsidies, MSP, PDS, food security, and technology missions.
- Food processing industries – scope, significance, and supply chain management.
- Land reforms in India.
- Effects of liberalisation and industrial policy changes.
- Infrastructure – energy, ports, roads, airports, and railways.
- Investment models.
- Developments in science and technology and their applications.
- Achievements of Indians in science & technology and indigenisation of technology.
- Awareness in IT, space, robotics, nano-technology, biotechnology, and IPR issues.
- Conservation, environmental pollution, degradation, and impact assessment.
- Disaster and disaster management.
- Linkages between development and extremism.
- Role of external and non-state actors in internal security.
- Cyber security, social media, and money-laundering challenges.

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- Border security and organised crime linkages.
- Role and mandate of various security forces and agencies.

Paper V – General Studies IV

Ethics, Integrity, and Aptitude

This paper tests a candidate's attitude, ethics, and approach to integrity and public service through both theoretical and case study questions.

Syllabus Highlights:

- **Ethics and Human Interface:** Essence, determinants, and consequences of ethics in human actions; ethics in private and public relationships; lessons from great leaders and reformers.
- **Attitude:** Content, structure, and function; influence on thought and behaviour; moral and political attitudes; social influence and persuasion.
- **Aptitude and Foundational Values:** Integrity, impartiality, non-partisanship, objectivity, empathy, tolerance, and compassion.
- **Emotional Intelligence:** Concepts and application in administration and governance.
- **Moral Thinkers and Philosophers:** Contributions from India and the world.
- **Public/Civil Service Values and Ethics in Public Administration:** Ethical concerns, accountability, moral governance, and corporate governance.
- **Probity in Governance:** Information sharing, transparency, RTI, codes of ethics, citizen charters, work culture, service quality, use of public funds, and anti-corruption measures.
- **Case Studies:** Based on real-life ethical dilemmas and governance challenges.