

Booklet-1: Introduction to CSAT

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1) CSAT IN CSE

- In 2011, UPSC changed the pattern of examination wherein optional papers in prelims were replaced by CSAT paper
- Objective was:
 - Test candidate based on innate abilities (aptitude) and intelligence rather than knowledge – which is tested in mains
 - To have common test for all – rather than different optional
- It was introduced considering expert opinions which held that, aptitude is more important for a potentially good civil servant rather than domain specific knowledge
- Aptitude tests are aimed at evaluating innate ability and intelligence of students to assess their suitability towards skills like analytical ability, comprehension skills, abstract thinking, sense of patterns and rhythms, linguistic skills and thinking on the feet – all are important in career of a civil servant
- In 2015 – CSAT was made qualifying requiring 1/3rd marks to pass
- Since 2019, UPSC has significantly increased difficulty level of CSAT paper. Comprehension passages are complex, have only 1-2 questions per passage and options are confusing. Moreover, quant questions involve application of multiple concepts which require conceptual clarity.
- Thus, despite being a qualifying paper, CSAT requires specific attention to gain the confidence and surety of passing prelims.

2) WHAT IT ENTAILS: SYLLABUS

- **Comprehension**
- **Interpersonal skills including communication skills**
- **Logical reasoning and analytical ability:** Include – arrangements, rankings, sequence-series, blood relations, clocks, calendars, directions, puzzles, cubes and dice, non-verbal reasoning
- **Decision making and problem solving** – No question asked after 2014 (since CSAT became qualifying). Questions like which option is best course of action in given situation are asked.
- **General mental ability:** Include – syllogisms-Venn diagrams, statement – assumption – conclusion, assertion – reason, routes and networks, probability, combinatorics
- **Basic numeracy** (numbers and their relations, orders of magnitude, **etc.**) (Class X level),
- **Data interpretation** (charts, graphs, tables, data sufficiency etc. — Class X level)

3) HOW MUCH TO PREPARE: WEIGHTAGE OF TOPICS

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Comprehension	32	27	31	26	30	25	27	27	27
LR + AR	14	18	13	10	9	6	14	13	13
General Mental Ability	9	8	8	14	9	8	5	11	10
Basic Numeracy	20	27	25	16	29	38	26	22	24
DI	5	0	3	14	3	3	8	7	6

- Comprehension questions will be around 25-30
- Basic Maths will have around 30 questions
- Reasoning will have around 15 questions
- If you get 40 questions right out of 45 of Maths + Reasoning – you’ll pass prelims with 100% surety
- Or if you get 20 right from comprehension and 20 from LR+DI+ some basic numeracy – you’ll pass

4) CHANGING PATTERN

1. 2011-2015
2. 2015-2019
3. 2019-2022
4. 2023-??

What exactly is changing?

- Focus on basic concepts especially: Arithmetic, Geometry, Mathematization, Counting etc.
- Mixing of concepts like calendar with division – need clarity
- Statement based questions like paper-1
- Comprehension – tougher language and questions

2023: Some change but mostly continuity

- Change was with regard to lengthiness of questions rather than difficulty
- Comprehension was on similar lines
- Focus seemed much more on Arithmetic, PnC, Linear equations
- Even traditional questions were mixed with Arithmetic

5) SKILLS NEEDED: DECIPHERING FAQs AMONG PYQS

Most important skills:

1. Basic understanding & clarity in arithmetic – from number system, place values to operating with fractions
2. Basic understanding of Geometry – basic shapes, area-volume etc. – get used in quant as well as reasoning questions.
3. Mathematisation – ability to convert given word problem into equations
4. Understanding different mathematical concepts like percentage, ratio, average, HCF-LCM etc. and ability to use them with clarity
5. Basics of reasoning – standard questions get asked
6. Put values in question/equation to get answer quickly
7. Ability to use options given to get quick answer without calculation
8. Comprehension skills – Understand the context and assumptions the author has made; Understand the vocabulary used; Understand the core message and inference of the author; Choosing the correct option from similar looking alternatives; Reading speed
9. Choice of questions becoming crucial
10. Balance between comprehension and other questions
11. Reading speed
12. Thinking on the feet and analytical ability – not enough to mug up formulae
13. Lots of practice to gain confidence

6) PLAN OF ACTION:

What to prepare

- We've to prepare everything mentioned in the syllabus but some areas we can focus more
- From our above analysis of areas where questions are getting asked, we know that we cannot avoid understanding basic mathematics.
- Moreover, it is linked with reasoning, data sufficiency, data interpretation as well as general mental ability
- Hence, that will be our priority number one.

- Apart from that, comprehension has the largest chunk of questions – while it is tougher to master in short time, we'll have to practice

Course plan

- We shall begin with basic arithmetic, basic geometry and mathematisation: as these are the basic skills required for all topics to be discussed in the course
- It will be followed by a lesson on basics of comprehension – where we shall understand what it is all about and what kind of questions get asked
- Quantitative aptitude and Reasoning will go together so that you don't get bored with one section
- In every lecture we shall discuss 1/2 comprehensions at the end – to ensure continual practice. We shall preferably discuss some passage from editorial of the day or some previously asked passage by the UPSC
- Every class sheet will have some assignment problems