UPSC CSE (Preliminary)

GS Paper 2:

Civil Services Aptitude Test (CSAT)

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GS Paper 2: Civil Services Aptitude Test (CSAT)

- ✓ Total Marks: 200
- ✓ Number of Questions: 80
- ✓ Marks per Question: 2.5 Marks
- ✓ Minimum Qualifying Marks: 66 Marks
- ✓ Negative Marking in CSAT: 1/3rd

Paper II-(200 marks)   Duration : Two hours

- ➢ Comprehension;
- ➢ Interpersonal skills including communication skills;
- ➢ Logical reasoning and analytical ability;
- ➢ Decision making and problem solving;
- ➢ General mental ability;
- ➢ Basic numeracy (numbers and their relations, orders of magnitude, etc.) (Class X level), Data interpretation (charts, graphs, tables, data sufficiency etc. — Class X level)

Note 1: Paper-II of the Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination will be a **qualifying** paper with **minimum qualifying marks** fixed at **33%**.

Note 2: The questions will be of multiple choice, objective type.

Note 3: It is mandatory for the candidate to appear in both the Papers of Civil Services (Prelim) Examination for the purpose of evaluation. Therefore, a candidate will be **disqualified** in case he/she does not appear in both the papers of Civil Services (Prelim) Examination.

Syllabus

1. Comprehension
2. Interpersonal & communication skills,
3. Logical reasoning & analytical ability
4. Decision-making and problem-solving
5. General mental ability
6. Basic numeracy
7. Data interpretation

CSAT Paper II Topic-wise Distribution (2020–2012)

Year	Comprehension	Interpersonal Skills	Logical Reasoning	Decision-Making & Problem-Solving	General Mental Ability	Basic Numeracy	Data Interpretation
2020	30 (75 marks)	3 (7.5 marks)	12 (30 marks)	5 (12.5 marks)	12 (30 marks)	12 (30 marks)	6 (15 marks)
2019	30 (75 marks)	2 (5 marks)	10 (25 marks)	6 (15 marks)	10 (25 marks)	12 (30 marks)	6 (15 marks)
2018	25 (62.5 marks)	3 (7.5 marks)	12 (30 marks)	5 (12.5 marks)	12 (30 marks)	12 (30 marks)	6 (15 marks)
2017	25 (62.5 marks)	3 (7.5 marks)	12 (30 marks)	5 (12.5 marks)	12 (30 marks)	12 (30 marks)	6 (15 marks)
2016	25 (62.5 marks)	2 (5 marks)	12 (30 marks)	6 (15 marks)	12 (30 marks)	12 (30 marks)	6 (15 marks)
2015	25 (62.5 marks)	3 (7.5 marks)	12 (30 marks)	5 (12.5 marks)	10 (25 marks)	12 (30 marks)	6 (15 marks)
2014	25 (62.5 marks)	3 (7.5 marks)	12 (30 marks)	6 (15 marks)	12 (30 marks)	12 (30 marks)	6 (15 marks)
2013	25 (62.5 marks)	3 (7.5 marks)	12 (30 marks)	6 (15 marks)	12 (30 marks)	12 (30 marks)	6 (15 marks)
2012	25 (62.5 marks)	3 (7.5 marks)	12 (30 marks)	6 (15 marks)	10 (25 marks)	12 (30 marks)	6 (15 marks)

📈 Trend Insights

➢ **Comprehension** consistently receives **30 questions** (75 marks), forming the highest weightage every year.

➢ **Basic Numeracy** and **General Mental Ability** usually range from **12 questions (30 marks)**, although the **General Mental Ability** topics occasionally dip to **10 questions (25 marks)**.

➢ **Logical Reasoning** consistently holds around **10-12 questions (25-30 marks)**.

➢ **Decision-Making & Problem-Solving** generally holds **5–6 questions (12.5–15 marks)** across all years.

➢ **Interpersonal Skills** remains a smaller section with around **2–3 questions (5–7.5 marks)**.

➢ **Data Interpretation** appears **5–6 questions** every year (12.5–15 marks), showing its steady presence.

Basic Numeracy

- Number System
- HCF and LCM
- Percentage
- Profit and Loss
- Simple Interest
- Compound Interest
- Ratio and Proportion
- Ages and Partnership
- Data Interpretation
- Time and Work
- Pipes and Cistern
- Time, Speed, and Distance
- Boats and Stream
- Average
- Alligation and Mixture
- Mensuration 2D
- Mensuration 3D
- Permutation & Combination
- Probability

Reasoning / GMA

- ➤ Alphabetical Series
- ➤ Alphanumeric Series
- ➤ Coding and Decoding
- ➤ Syllogism
- ➤ Direction Sense
- ➤ Ranking and Order
- ➤ Blood Relation
- ➤ Letter Series

- ➤ Analogy
- ➤ Clock
- ➤ Calendar
- ➤ Dice
- ➤ Venn Diagram
- ➤ Counting Figure
- ➤ Cube and Cuboid

Comprehension Passages: Themes

- Economic Issues

- Social Issues

- Science & Technology

- Rural Issues

- Healthcare

- Climate & Environment

- Current Burning Issues

✅ Purpose of Asking Such Questions in UPSC CSAT

These passages and questions aim to **evaluate** whether candidates can:

1. **Comprehend complex socio-educational or ethical issues.**

2. **Interpret implications or assumptions logically.**

3. **Distinguish between fact, opinion, and inference.**

4. **Grasp the tone, intent, and central idea behind dense or nuanced writing.**

🎯 Skills, Qualities, Traits Being Tested

Skill / Trait	Explanation
Critical Thinking	Can the candidate understand deeper implications, like systemic issues in education or policy?
Inference Drawing	Can they read between the lines — for example, deducing implicit assumptions or unstated conclusions?
Ethical & Social Sensitivity	Especially relevant for public service — recognizing the social responsibility of institutions (like science).
Decision-Making Judgment	Choosing the **best reflection** of a passage, not just a true statement — mimics real-life policy evaluation.
Reading Precision	A small misread can lead to incorrect assumptions — testing focus and accuracy under time pressure.
Ability to Prioritize Ideas	Required to grasp the *central idea* or *main concern*, not peripheral facts.

🧠 **Question Analysis:**

Q1 – Assumption Testing:

- Tests if the candidate can tell what **unstated beliefs** underlie the passage.

- A civil servant often reads reports that imply assumptions — this skill ensures they **don't take everything at face value**.

Q2 – Central Idea:

- Trains the candidate to **cut through noise** and grasp the real concern: educational disconnect vs. aspirations.

Q3 – Author's Thinking:

- Goes beyond what's stated. It checks for **ethical evaluation** — should science be value-neutral or socially responsible?

📌 **Relevance for a Civil Servant**

In governance:

- You'll read **policies**, **research**, **stakeholder views** — often in **abstract** or **politically nuanced** language.

- The job requires **nuanced reading, ideological neutrality, and thoughtful interpretation**.

- Misunderstanding the *central concern* or failing to spot a **flawed assumption** can lead to **poor judgment** in policy or implementation.

🎯 **Objectives** 👦🏫

1. Improve ability to differentiate between **fact, opinion, and inference**

2. Build skill to **recognize assumptions**

3. Strengthen capacity to **identify main idea** and **eliminate distractors**

✍️ STRATEGY

Step 1: Understanding Passage Types

- Content: *informative, analytical, philosophical, satirical*

- Tones: *critical, neutral, cautionary, reflective*

Step 2: Inference Skills

- Practice: "What can be **concluded**?" vs "What is **merely stated**?"

- **Daily inference warm-ups** from PYQs, short editorials or op-eds

Step 3: Assumption Identification

- Learn to ask:

  - "What must be true for this argument to work?"

  - "Is this statement essential or just additional?"

Step 4: Main Idea Spotting

- Use PIE strategy: *Purpose, Intent, Essence*

- Reverse method: Eliminate options that are either **too narrow** or **off-topic**

Step 5: Option Elimination Techniques

- Train through practice to spot:

  o *Extreme language* (always, never, only) – usually incorrect

  o *Unsupported generalizations*

  o *Distractors with emotional appeal or tangential facts*

Let's begin...

📜 **Read the Passage (5 mins)**

Despite India's consistent economic growth over the last two decades, the benefits have not been equitably distributed. Urban areas flourish, while rural regions lag in infrastructure, education, and healthcare. Government schemes have targeted these gaps, but implementation is often patchy. Experts suggest that economic planning must be reoriented to address regional disparities if the country aims for inclusive growth.

- ✓ Answer the questions below.
- ✓ **Justify** your answers using **phrases or clues** from the passage.
- ✓ **Identify** what **was not said but can be inferred**.
- ✓ **Debate** why one option is **better than the others**, not just "correct."
- ✓ *"Is the correct answer always the most obvious one?"*
- ✓ *"What makes one option **better than the rest**?"*
- ✓ *"How can we train ourselves to **catch tone, assumption**, and **implication** quickly?"*

❓ Answer the following questions.

1. **Which of the following assumptions can be inferred from the passage?**

   A. Economic growth does not guarantee equitable development.

   B. Urbanization is the root cause of India's rural problems.

   C. Government schemes have successfully eliminated regional inequality.

   D. Inclusive growth is not a feasible goal.

2.   What is the central idea of the passage?

A. Urban development in India has outpaced rural development.

B. Economic planning must focus on reducing inequality.

C. Government implementation is ineffective.

D. Rural areas are underdeveloped because of poor policies.

3.   What tone does the author adopt?

A. Apologetic

B. Critical yet constructive

C. Neutral and disinterested

D. Aggressive

What is Reading Comprehension?

- The ability to read a text, understand its meaning, and analyze or interpret the information presented in it.
- In exams like UPSC CSAT, it goes beyond understanding what is said — it also tests what is implied, assumed, or concluded.
- A section of CSAT that tests your ability to understand, interpret, and analyze passages.
- Focuses on your ability to extract information and make inferences.

Why It's Important:

➢   Around 20–25% of the CSAT paper is dedicated to RC.

➢   Helps build your **ability to read quickly** and **understand complex information**, a **crucial skill** for UPSC and beyond.

Tips to Improve RC Performance:

- ✓ **Practice regularly** to increase reading speed and comprehension.

- ✓ Focus on **key ideas** and **context** rather than getting caught up in difficult vocabulary.

- ✓ Try to understand the **structure** of the passage — introduction, argument, conclusion.

Skimming and Scanning Techniques

Skimming:

- Read the passage quickly to get a general understanding of the main idea.
- Focus on the first and last sentences of paragraphs to identify the key points.

Scanning:

- Look for specific facts or keywords directly related to the questions.
- Don't try to understand everything; focus on what's directly relevant to answering the MCQs.

Types of Comprehension Questions

- **Inference-Based Questions:**
  - **Example:** "What can we infer about the author's attitude towards modern technology?"
  - These questions test the ability to read between the lines and understand deeper meanings.

- **Factual Questions:**
  - **Example:** "According to the passage, what year did the event take place?"
  - Directly asks for facts or information explicitly stated in the text.

- **Tone & Attitude Questions:**
  - **Example:** "What tone does the author use in the last paragraph?"
  - Focus on the emotional or rhetorical tone of the passage.

- **Main Idea Question:**
  - ○ **Example:** "What is the central theme of the passage?"
  - ○ Identifying the overall purpose or theme of the passage.

Inference & Tone Identification

- **Inference:**
  - **What does the author imply?**
  - Understand underlying meanings, assumptions, and intentions.

- **Tone:**
  - **What is the author's attitude towards the subject?**
  - Examples of tones: Sarcastic, Optimistic, Critical, Neutral, Formal, Persuasive.

Sample RC Questions from PYQs

1. Which of the following statements best reflect the most logical and rational inferences that can be made from the passage?

2. Based on the above passage, the following assumptions have been made… … Which of the assumptions given above is/are valid?

3. Which of the assumptions given above is/are valid?

4. Which of the following is/are emphatically conveyed by the author of the passage?

5. Which one of the following statements best reflects the central idea of the above passage?

6. Which one of the following statements best reflects the crux of the above passage?

7. Which one of the following statements best reflects the most logical, rational and practical message implied by the passage?

❓ TYPES OF QUESTIONS❓

Grouped broadly into **three** categories:

1. Inference-Based Questions

- Require logical conclusions not explicitly stated but strongly implied

- *E.g.,* "Reduction in food loss leads to lower carbon footprint"

- Common Verbs: "Best inference", "logically follows", "reflects"

2. Assumption-Based Questions

- Demand understanding of *unstated premises* that must be true

- *E.g.*, "Curriculum reform is necessary to improve planning in India"

- Common Verbs: "Assumptions made", "valid assumptions"

3. Understanding/Theme-Based or Central Idea Questions

- Ask for main message or crux of the passage

- *E.g.,* "Science must pursue truth but be responsible for social welfare"

- Common Verbs: "central idea", "crux", "message"