

# How to prepare for UPSC Civil Services Exam ?

## Get familiar with UPSC

First get familiar with the process of UPSC Civil Services Exam.

Generate interest and curiosity regarding the services and whole exam process.

You can visit toppers blog and see their open session available on youtube. But be cautious not to over indulge in following many videos. Take clues from select topper's experience and adopt a strategy effective & convenient to you.

It is important that you keep track of the learnings and strategy which you get from those blogs/sessions. Incorporate the ones which are most suitable to you.

## Pattern of UPSC Civil Service Examination

First go through the pattern of examination.

Preliminary Exam - conducted in last week of May. Prelims is objective in nature (MCQs). There are 2 papers of general studies and Civil services Aptitude Test (CSAT).

Main Exam- conducted in September. The Main Exam (written) is applicable only for those who qualify in the Prelims. Main Exam syllabus has nine papers in total. Two language papers(one regional and one english), one essay paper of 250 marks and four G.S. papers of 250 marks each along with two papers on optional subject containing 250 marks each. Language papers are only qualifying in nature but they need to be cleared, in order to get other answersheets of mains exam checked.

Personality Test- conducted during February-April. The interview round is applicable only for those who qualify the Mains. The duration of the interview would be around 30 minutes.

## Choose Optional Subject for UPSC Civil Services Exam:

Before starting your preparation, it is important is to choose your optional subject. It is an important decision and one must give a proper thought before choosing an optional as it creates major difference in final marks having weightage of 500/1750 in written exam.

**Criteria** to decide your optional subject.

1. Graduation subject
2. Inherent Interest
3. Availability of coaching/study material

4. Past results of that subject
5. In the end Popularity if still not decided

Read more about choosing Optionals in FAQ : How to Choose Optional Subject for UPSC Civil Services Exam ?

#### Process:

1. Make a list of subjects which you feel comfortable in or interests you and
2. Go through the syllabus and past-year question papers of various optional subjects.
3. You can also take advice from the selected/senior candidates and professional help.
4. Finally based on above criteria, choose a subject which you think can fetch you best score.

### UPSC Exam Preparation:

UPSC releases its exam calendar a year before the exam. A candidate should start his/her preparation at least a year before the prelims exam he/she is planning to appear in.

1. Before starting preparation you should through the Syllabus of both prelims and mains exam.
2. Further a candidate should go through the past few year's questions papers of both prelims and main exam.
3. Start reading a news paper( **The Hindu/ The Indian Express** ) regularly. Relevant articles can be identified with the help of syllabus. It is better to make short notes based on issues.
4. First go through the basic NCERT books and selected NIOS Materials as given in the AEON IAS website and then go through university- level standard text books.
5. It is important that you keep your preparation simple rather than going for multiple books. Only read bare minimum books and revise them multiple times.
6. You can make short notes(helps save time during revision) in whichever way you feel comfortable either online or in hard copy for both general studies and optional paper.
7. Make sure that you also are comfortable with CSAT paper and practice few past year papers to ensure that you can clear qualifying paper of CSAT. Otherwise also make plans for learning/practicing CSAT paper.
8. Make a timeline of objectives to be achieved. Both long term and of daily goals to complete the syllabus. These goals should be realistic and enough time should be accounted for other activities and exigencies also. Keep track of it and update and adjust with the new information and corrections as and when required.
9. After covering basics from NCERTs, go through standard books (As Mention on [Aeon IAS website](#) )and cover syllabus of mains exam of both general studies and optional subject with proper revision. Make sure that it covers your prelims syllabus also.

10. If you are attending coaching, then attend classes regularly and be ready for class session in advance as well as revise the content after class.
11. Make use of internet and social media for your preparation carefully and not waste time needlessly.
12. Start learning basics of answer writing as well.
13. Keep going through previous year question papers from time to time.
14. You can form discussion/answer writing groups to help each other.
15. Revise regularly the content you have been reading at least on weekly basis.
16. To keep abreast of your of preparation, join prelims test series and regularly attempt question paper under exam conditions.
17. Start focusing exclusively on prelims at least before 3 months before the prelims exam.

## UPSC Civil Services Timeline

Assuming - planning to appear in Civil Services Examination in May/June 2021 (Because of Corona Pandemic there is a change in timetable but generally its follow similar timetable. )

Month	GS-Prelims	GS-Mains
June '20 - Oct '20	NCERTs/ NIOS and Basic Standard books - one reading of every thing	Read books common to prelims & mains
Octo '20 - February '21	Revise the Basic Standard Books and start practicing mock prelims tests	Cover rest of the syllabus of main exam and start answer writing as well as mock prelims tests
March '21 - May '21	Exclusively for prelims (both GS and CSAT) and regular prelims test	
June '21 - Sep '21		Exclusively for Mains and regular answer writing as well as mock test for mains exam