



# UPSC Civil Services Exam 2021 | Preparing for IAS Exam from School/College Days

The Civil Services Examination is a nationwide competitive examination in India conducted by the Union Public Service Commission for recruitment to various Civil Services of the Government of India, including the Indian Administrative Service, Indian Foreign Service, and Indian Police Service. The Preliminary Exam (Prelims) is the first stage of UPSC Exam. This exam is objective in nature (answers are to be marked in an OMR sheet).

Every year, UPSC conducts Civil Services Examination for various services such as IAS, IPS, IFS, etc; the competitive examination comprises three successive stages:

- UPSC Preliminary Examination (Objective Type) for the selection of candidates for Main Examination;
- UPSC Mains Examination (Written) for the selection of candidates for the personality test or Interview and
- UPSC Interview (Personality Test) for various Services and posts.
- The Preliminary Examination consists of two compulsory Papers of 200 marks each.
- The General Studies Paper-I of preliminary exam is a general studies paper that consists of 100 questions and is counted for merit.
- The General Studies Paper-II of the UPSC (Preliminary) Examination will be a qualifying paper with minimum qualifying marks fixed at 33%.

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There are many students who aspire to be an IAS officer right from their school days. They are always inquisitive to know, how should they start their preparation for the IAS exam keeping in view the subjects to be selected in the future. Here are some tips for such our young aspirants:

## **Understanding:**

Firstly, you need to understand the civil services or IAS exam. You need to go through its pattern, eligibility criteria and prelims syllabus, understand it, what is it all about. As you prepare for your school or college semesters and unit tests, in the same way, you should be preparing the Civil Services Exam. Develop curiosity about it and understand what UPSC demands from its aspiring civil servants.

## **Pattern:**

Always keep checking the latest trends and changes in the pattern. UPSC expects high integrity, sound judgment, and good knowledge of current issues from the IAS aspirants. It does not want any rote learners. In order to avoid rote learners, the concept of optional paper

in prelims has been completely removed. Weightage of general studies paper has been increased significantly. Now there are two GS papers common to all in Prelims and four compulsory GS papers in the Mains along with one optional subject.

### **Score pad:**

GS commands huge importance in prelims up to 100% and for mains 70 %. It is advisable that you should start your GS topics when in schools and colleges. It will help you to have proper knowledge beforehand and will prove to you as a benefit when you start your preparation. You will find the topics very familiar while preparing for an exam.

### **What to read:**

Before indulging yourself into books, you should make it a regular practice to read a newspaper like the Hindu or Indian Express, Times of India is not so very important. Supplements your habit with a good magazine like Pratyogita Darpan. This habit will help you to develop an interest in current issues happening around you.

Build up your General Knowledge very well and make it strong. Go on expanding your general awareness. Manorama Yearbook will be very beneficial for this book. Its language is simple to understand, the data and facts are highly reliable and most importantly it's trusted by UPSC paper setters since many questions are routinely asked in the Prelims from this book.

Move step by step. Next comes the preparation for Prelims, properly focus only on this first stage as it is the first gate.

You should focus on the books for prelims for your [IAS preparation](#) in the right earnest. But do not forget your school or college studies. Don't put the burden on yourself by getting all the books. You might not have enough time to go through all the books at this time.

### **Subject selection:**

According to the new pattern, optional subjects come only in the Mains and not in Prelims. If you're still in school then you should not think about the optional subject at this stage. Just focus on the Prelims and follow the tips given above.

If you are an undergraduate or a Postgraduate student then you need to check whether your subjects have been offered as optional subjects in the UPSC Mains or not. If it is given, then again even after that you have a wide range of options. It is not necessary that who should stick to only those subjects which you have in your Graduation or in post-graduation.

You can also choose some other subject which you are confident about, that it will gain you good marks. Subjects of graduation class are more advisable as it is the subject for which you have already prepared and have good knowledge of it. Still, the choice of an optional subject depends upon person to person.

After selecting your optional subject so through its syllabus and so you can stress on the part that overlaps with the [UPSC syllabus](#). This way you can save significant time during your actual preparation.

In case if you select the subject, which is totally new and you are unable to prepare it along with your college subjects and not to worry wait till the time you can devote your full concentration for it. Don't be too fast. After that, you can worry about selection and preparation.

IAS exam and its preparation are a layered process that requires constant effort and patience to complete. You have made the right choice by selecting the civil services as your career option early on during your school or college itself.

Now you need to channelize your enthusiasm and make the best use of your time by following the strategy listed in this post. This way you will get a head start over others when you appear for your first attempt.