

## How to Prepare for IAS Exam?

### Description

The first step towards journey to success in the Civil Services Examination begins with your dream to succeed. From a dream it takes the form of a mission. When it becomes a mission, we pull together all available resources to make our dream turn into a reality with a single minded devotion. And that's what really matters!

Besides a reasonable level of intelligence, firm determination, dedication, positive frame of mind, of the essentials for success in Civil Services Examinations, can be summed up as under:

### Begin early, stay ahead

The best time to start preparing for Civil Services is from the school stage itself because the UPSC expects the candidates to have cumulative knowledge. For example, the level of questions related to Mathematics and English, asked in the Preliminary stage of CSE, are of tenth standard. Similarly, if you have studied calculus at the school stage it would be helpful in enriching your analytical powers. Besides, one also must develop the power of comprehension and assimilation for which one can prepare right from the senior classes of school.

For those who decide to go for Civil Services Examination (CSE) after completing school studies or graduation, in general, the CSE requires a concentrated study of 8-10 hours for at least one and a half years.

Ideally, one should start preparation one year the Preliminary examination.

Preparation for the IAS Mains should start immediately after, preferably before, the results of Prelims are announced.

Your preparation strategy should be such as not to result in paucity of time for Mains preparation. Preparing late will not allow you to utilize your time in an optimum manner. In fact, you need at least 8-10 months for preparation before the preliminary examination.

### Know your syllabus thoroughly

Thorough knowledge of the syllabus is the first requirement before you start your preparation. It is only the syllabus which spells out the details of the areas of subject from which questions would be asked in the Civil Services Exam. Periodic reference to the syllabus would avoid wastage of time and effort by skipping topics which are not covered in the syllabus. It makes you aware of what precisely is to be studied. This is important because time at your disposal is limited. It can help you to plan your study in a better way by marking areas of study where you are comfortable and where you have problems.

## No single formula for success: Evolve your own strategy

It is said that man is the best expert of himself. No one can understand you better than you yourself. You can take suggestions as well as criticism to apply these constructively, but these are never binding on you. Rely on your own method of study believing that this is the only right method. For Example, if you like to study silently, do accordingly. If you prefer a spot for your study, it is better to sit there. Also, you may develop habit of reading fast.

The best thing one can do is to have access to all the relevant facts, study them and plan one's own strategy for preparing for the IAS exam. As each one of us differs in strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes so does the strategy for this exam. However, some most popular general points that help the readers to decide things for themselves are given below:

### Plan Early

Plan early and to start early is a well-recognized funda of any winning strategy. It requires at least one year covering the prescribed syllabus. Ideally one-year span period is adequate for preparation. With growing career consciousness, now there is an increasing trend even to begin planning after passing 10th or 12th exam. It can really prove helpful if a student, while choosing his stream keeps in mind the likely optional he will choose for the civil services examination. Then pursue the same subject in graduation and study the subject in depth. It always pays to collect more information about the subject and keep oneself updated with the developments that occur while studying the subject academically.

Planning towards a right direction would be of immense help in this regard. Your planning should take into consideration of your strong and weak points. You must know in which papers you have a strong base and which are the areas where you must study hard. Good planning really implies maximum results with the minimum of efforts. And effective planning means that you work out your own mechanism for checking whether you are spending your time effectively or not.

### Adequate Study hours

Often aspirants ask how many hours per day should one devote to study? In the initial stage of your preparation 6 to 8 hours of study is adequate. What more important to crack the CSE is to put in efforts in right direction. After the initial stage, you may start studying for 8 to 10 hours per day. However, how many hours one needs to study also depends on person to person because one may be able to completely cover a topic in 2 hours whereas another may manage to cover the same double or triple amount of time.

### Continuous Testing

Periodical testing forms a crucial part of successful preparation strategy. In other words, it is basically like taking Mock Test. Attempting the previous year papers is one of the ways to test oneself and this exercise can continue till the end. This helps in identifying one's weaknesses and areas where one needs to pay more attention and spend more time. Once you have covered a topic, refer the past five

yearsâ?? question papers on that topic.

## Plan your study subject wise

Planning plays a crucial role. It has been rightly said, â??If you have no plan, you are planning to fail.â??

- A systematic and planned approach always helps. Planning in terms of preparation means to frame a sound and feasible study plan. It should work around the three pillars of success: conceptual clarity, contextual familiarity, and application expertise. It requires continuous effort.

A good planning involves consulting your seniors, dividing your entire time into periods of one month each and plans to complete a block of lessons by the end of each period, setting study goals for each day, each week, and each month. Remember, your plan should not be too detailed or too sketchy but it should be a balanced one.

Each subject must be given proper and regular time. Instead of preparing one subject at the cost of other subjects, all the three subjects i.e. Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics must be given proper consideration. It will also help in breaking monotony. Prepare good notes during self-study. If you want to make the concept clearer, then, while preparing notes of lectures, leave some space, and just after the lecture fill up the space with clarifications.

## Study the trend of previous year question papers

Study the trend of previous year question papers and draw marks distribution of each subject to find out which topics are most and which are least important. Give priority to important topics and try to put them in early stage of your preparation to avoid any possibility of these being left. Review your plan periodically to find out if there are any lapses and how they can be covered up.

## Keep your study kit ready

Study kit refers to text books, classroom notes, tutorials, practice books, help books and guides. All the relevant study material should be ready with you to successfully prepare for the exam. It saves your time. If things are well organized, you need not waste your precious time for searching the required study material.

Your study kit should have 10 years solved papers of CSE for which you are going to appear. Dictionary to look for difficult or unfamiliar words/phrases.

Always keep extra pens, pencils, and eraser with you.

## Selection of books

Which books you select and read plays a crucial role. Great care is needed while choosing books. The more number of books you read, the more confused you may become and waste a lot your time. Instead of going through many books, try to read only one quality book on each topic which makes the basic concepts clear to you. Procure the books you need well in advance to avoid the last minute

---

hassle.

## Reference books and coaching

Most of the questions are based on fundamentals and their applications. Establish a solid base by becoming an expert in the fundamentals. Don't refer to too many books. Decide about the books after discussing with your seniors or tutor.

many questions are directly framed from there which is evident from analysis of previous year papers.

Select a coaching institute meticulously. It plays an important role in helping you crack the exam. The simple reason being continued guidance throughout the year and perpetual tests that keep you in touch with the course all the time.

SHRI RAM IAS