How to Express Yourself in IAS Interview

Description

The Civil Services Interview is a crucial part of the UPSC selection process, as it carries 275 marks. The marks obtained during the interview can vary significantly. For instance, one candidate may score 225 out of 275, while another may score just 125, impacting the final merit list.

Many aspirants neglect the importance of preparing for the interview, assuming that the knowledge they gained for the written exam is sufficient. However, the interview is actually a personality test. A personâ??s personality is not something that can be developed in a few days or months. It is shaped by a combination of upbringing, experiences, and knowledge acquired over time. Therefore, it is essential to invest time in refining and improving your personality through practice and hard work. Donâ??t wait for the mains exam results to start preparing for the interview. Preparation should begin early, as it may only give you a week or a month of time post-mains exam results to prepare.

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The Objective of the Interview (Personality Test)

The UPSC Civil Services Interview is conducted at the UPSC building in Delhi, where various Interview Boards are responsible for assessing candidates. Each board typically consists of one chairman and four other members. The goal of the interview is to evaluate the suitability of candidates for a career in civil services by assessing their personality, mental abilities, socio-practical qualities, and current awareness. The board seeks to test your logical thinking, communication skills, leadership qualities, integrity, and awareness of daily events, among other things. It is important to have a well-rounded personality, displaying maturity, a logical attitude, communication skills, a broad base of knowledge, and positivity.

Preparing for the Interview

It is advisable not to wait for the results of the mains exam to begin preparing for the interview. While it may seem that there is no need to rush before the results, it is important to start preparing well in advance. There is sufficient time after the mains exam to focus on interview preparation, so itâ??s better to use this time effectively.

Hereâ??s how to prepare:

1. **Review Your Detailed Application Form (DAF):** The Interview Board has access to the information you provide in the DAF, which includes your name, address, educational qualifications, hobbies, work experience, and preferences. Carefully go through each section of your DAF, making an outline for your preparation based on it. Prepare for questions related to your background, home state, education, and any other details mentioned in the DAF.
2. **Hobbies and Interests:** Itâ??s common for interview questions to focus on your hobbies or interests. Only include hobbies you are genuinely interested in, such as sports, reading, music, or

writing poetry. Make sure youâ??re well-prepared to discuss these hobbies, reading up on them daily for at least half an hour to feel more comfortable discussing them during the interview.

3. **Current Affairs:** Current affairs are crucial in the interview. Keep track of important national and international events that occur in the month leading up to the interview. Maintain a diary to record significant events and note down your views on them. The board may ask about controversial issues, such as the alcohol ban or homosexuality, so itâ??s important to be prepared with a balanced perspective on such topics.
4. **Mock Interviews:** Practicing with mock interviews can help identify areas of improvement. While some aspirants perform well without mock interviews, itâ??s still beneficial to simulate the interview experience with friends or mentors. Form a group of three or four friends to take turns conducting mock interviews. Feedback from peers can help refine your responses and overall presentation.

Just Before the Interview

In the final days leading up to your interview, hereâ??s what you should focus on:

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1. **Dress Properly:** For male aspirants, a light-coloured shirt, dark trousers, a tie, and formal shoes are recommended. Female aspirants should wear a simple and formal saree or salwar-suit.
2. **Stay Calm and Avoid Last-Minute Stress:** Do not stress about topics you havenâ??t prepared or get influenced by othersâ?? opinions. Some may ask if you have prepared certain topics, but donâ??t let their concerns unsettle you. If youâ??ve prepared well, stay confident. Avoid negative or pessimistic people during this time.
3. **Rest and Health:** Ensure you sleep well before the interview. A fresh mind will help you perform better. Eat light, easily digestible food, and donâ??t skip your breakfast.
4. **Organize Your Documents:** Keep all the necessary documents in order, as requested by the UPSC. Disorganization can lead to confusion and unnecessary stress at the last moment.

How to Face the Interview Board

The interview is conducted in two shifts: morning and afternoon. Upon arriving, your original documents will be verified. You will sit in a hall with other candidates; donâ??t engage in extensive discussions with them, but a casual introduction is fine to ease the nerves.

When facing the board:

1. **Be Comfortable:** Enter the interview room, take permission from the board, and sit comfortably. Avoid leaning too much or sitting too straight.
2. **Be Yourself:** Stay relaxed and answer questions honestly. Avoid bluffing or misleading the board. They are highly experienced, and trying to deceive them could result in you being caught in subsequent questions.
3. **Listen Carefully:** Always listen to the entire question before starting your answer. If you donâ??t understand a question, politely ask for clarification.
4. **Humility and Confidence:** While humility is valued, be cautious not to appear overly meek. If you are unsure about a question, admit it politely. However, if you know the answer, confidently provide it.

5. **Speak Clearly:** Maintain a calm and clear voice. Donâ??t rush to answer. Stay composed, even if the interview doesnâ??t seem to be going well. Many candidates have scored well despite feeling nervous during the interview.

In summary, consistent preparation, focused practice, and maintaining a calm, confident, and open approach during the interview are key to performing well. Your personality and overall attitude play a significant role, so take the time to refine them thoroughly before the big day.

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