UPSC CSE Mains 2018 — Complete GS (1–4) + Essay Pack

All 5 Merit Papers from UPSC Mains 2018 (87 questions & essay prompts) with syllabus micro-topics and word limits. Free from preplord.com.

GS Paper 1 (History, Society & Geography) (20 Qs | Code: EGT-G-GSO)

1 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • History & Culture → Art & Architecture [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Safeguarding the Indian art heritage as the need of the moment

2 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • History & Culture → Literature & Culture [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Importance of Chinese and Arab travellers' accounts in reconstructing Indian history

3 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • History & Culture → Freedom Struggle [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Significance of Mahatma Gandhi's thoughts in present times

4 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Geography → Natural Resources & Industrial Location [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Need for Indian Regional Navigational Satellite System (IRNSS) & role in navigation

5 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Geography → Natural Resources & Industrial Location [Explain | Static / Evergreen]
Why India is taking keen interest in resources of Arctic Region

6 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Geography → Geophysical Phenomena & Climate [Explain | Static / Evergreen]
Define mantle plume & explain its role in plate tectonics

7 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Geography → Geophysical Phenomena & Climate [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Consequences of spreading of 'Dead Zones' on marine ecosystem

8 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Indian Society → Diversity, Secularism & Communalism [Explain | Static / Evergreen]
Caste system assuming new identities & associational forms; why it cannot be eradicated

9 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Indian Society → Population, Poverty & Development [Explain | Static / Evergreen]
Why poverty still exists despite government poverty eradication programmes

10 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Indian Society → Diversity, Secularism & Communalism [Compare | Static / Evergreen]
Indian concept of secularism vs Western model of secularism

11 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • History & Culture → Literature & Culture [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Re-orientation of the Bhakti movement with the advent of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

12 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • History & Culture → Post-Independence India [Critically Examine | Current-Affairs Linked]
Whether formation of new states in recent times is beneficial for India's economy

13 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • History & Culture → Modern Indian History (1757–1947) [Explain | Static / Evergreen]
Why British took indentured labour from India to other colonies & preservation of cultural identity

14 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Geography → Natural Resources & Industrial Location [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Water harvesting system as ideal solution for depleting groundwater & urban effectiveness

15 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Geography → Natural Resources & Industrial Location [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Defining blue revolution; problems & strategies for pisciculture development in India

16 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Geography → Natural Resources & Industrial Location [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Significance & main characteristics of Industrial Corridors in India

17 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Indian Society → Population, Poverty & Development [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Core strategies for transformation of aspirational districts: convergence, collaboration & competition

18 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Indian Society → Women & Social Empowerment [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Women's movement in India not addressing issues of women of lower social strata

19 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Indian Society → Globalization & Social Change [Compare | Static / Evergreen]
Globalization promoting cultural homogenization vs strengthening cultural specificities in India

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20 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Indian Society → Diversity, Secularism & Communalism [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Communalism arising either due to power struggle or relative deprivation

GS Paper 2 (Polity, Governance, Social Justice & IR) (20 Qs | Code: EGT-G-GSD)

1 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Polity & Constitution → Elections & RPA [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
EVM controversy & challenges before Election Commission of India to ensure trustworthiness

2 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Polity & Constitution → Constitutional & Statutory Bodies [Critically Examine | Static / Evergreen]
Whether NCSC can enforce constitutional reservation for SCs in religious minority institutions

3 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Polity & Constitution → Elections & RPA [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Circumstances & consequences of Financial Emergency proclamation by President of India

4 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Polity & Constitution → Parliament & State Legislatures [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Usefulness of parliamentary committees & role of Estimates Committee

5 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Polity & Constitution → Constitutional & Statutory Bodies [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Vital role of CAG reflected in method/terms of appointment and range of powers

6 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Governance → E-Governance & Citizen Charters [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Policy contradictions among competing sectors/stakeholders causing inadequate environmental protection

7 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Social Justice → Health & Nutrition [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Appropriate local community-level healthcare intervention as prerequisite for 'Health for All'

8 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Governance → E-Governance & Citizen Charters [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
E-governance about critical importance of 'use value' of information, not just new technology

9 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • International Relations → Bilateral & Global Groupings [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Depth and diversity of India's relations with Israel that cannot be rolled back

10 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • International Relations → Bilateral & Global Groupings [Analyze | Current-Affairs Linked]
Implications of India joining Ashgabat Agreement 2018 amid outside powers in Central Asia

11 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Polity & Constitution → Federalism & Centre-State Relations [Critically Examine | Current-Affairs Linked]
Whether Supreme Court Judgement (July 2018) settles political tussle between Delhi Lt. Governor & elected govt

12 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Polity & Constitution → Judiciary & Judicial Activism [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Tribunals curtailing jurisdiction of ordinary courts; constitutional validity & competency in India

13 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Polity & Constitution → Elections & RPA [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Basic tenets of Indian and USA political systems as two large democracies

14 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Polity & Constitution → Federalism & Centre-State Relations [Discuss | Current-Affairs Linked]
Constitution of Finance Commission of India & Terms of Reference of recently constituted Finance Commission

15 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Polity & Constitution → Constitutional & Statutory Bodies [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Importance of Panchayat system & non-grant financing sources for developmental projects

16 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Polity & Constitution → Constitutional & Statutory Bodies [Compare | Current-Affairs Linked]
Multiplicity of commissions for vulnerable sections vs merging into umbrella Human Rights Commission

17 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Social Justice → Education & Skill Development [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Focus on lack of food availability as cause of hunger diverting attention from ineffective human development policies

18 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Governance → E-Governance & Citizen Charters [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Limitations of Citizens' Charter & measures for greater effectiveness

19 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • International Relations → Global Institutions & Treaties [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Key areas of WTO reform to survive 'Trade War', keeping India's interest in mind

20 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Polity & Constitution → Parliament & State Legislatures [Analyze | Static / Evergreen]
Impact of ongoing US-Iran Nuclear Pact Controversy on India's national interest & India's response

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GS Paper 3 (Economy, Agri, S&T, Environment & Security) (20 Qs | Code: EGT-G-GST)

1 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Economy → Infrastructure, Energy & Investment [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, modern energy as sine qua non for SDGs — India's progress

2 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Economy → Budgeting, Fiscal Policy & Taxation [Discuss | Current-Affairs Linked]
Union Budget 2018-19 changes in Long-Term Capital Gains Tax (LCGT) and Dividend Distribution Tax (DDT)

3 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Agriculture → MSP, Subsidies & Marketing [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Minimum Support Price (MSP) & how it rescues farmers from low-income trap

4 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Agriculture → MSP, Subsidies & Marketing [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Role of supermarkets in supply chain management of fruits, vegetables & food; eliminating intermediaries

5 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Science & Tech → AI, IT & Emerging Tech [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Prof. Satyendra Nath Bose's work on 'Bose-Einstein Statistics' revolutionizing Physics

6 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Environment & Disaster Management → Conservation, Biodiversity & Pollution [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Impediments in disposing discarded solid wastes & safe removal of toxic wastes

7 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Environment & Disaster Management → Conservation, Biodiversity & Pollution [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Wetlands, Ramsar concept of 'wise use', and two Ramsar sites from India

8 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Agriculture → Cropping Patterns & Farm Productivity [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Sikkim as first 'Organic State' in India — ecological and economical benefits

9 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Internal Security → Border & Maritime Security [Discuss | Current-Affairs Linked]
CPEC as cardinal subset of China's OBOR & reasons India distanced itself

10 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Internal Security → Extremism, Insurgency & Terrorism [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Downward trend in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) & Government of India's approach

11 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Economy → Budgeting, Fiscal Policy & Taxation [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
How principles followed by NITI Aayog differ from erstwhile Planning Commission

12 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Economy → Infrastructure, Energy & Investment [Analyze | Static / Evergreen]
Impact of protectionism and currency manipulations in world trade on India's macroeconomic stability

13 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Agriculture → Cropping Patterns & Farm Productivity [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Role of National Horticulture Mission (NHM) in boosting production, productivity & farmers' income

14 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Agriculture → Cropping Patterns & Farm Productivity [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Emphasis on certain crops changing cropping patterns; emphasis on millets production & consumption

15 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Science & Tech → Biotechnology & Health Tech [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Reasons for high activity in biotechnology in India & benefits to biopharma sector

16 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Economy → Infrastructure, Energy & Investment [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Expanding India's nuclear energy programme for growing energy needs — facts and fears

17 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Environment & Disaster Management → Conservation, Biodiversity & Pollution [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
How biodiversity varies in India & role of Biological Diversity Act, 2002

18 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Environment & Disaster Management → Disaster Management [Compare | Current-Affairs Linked]
India's DRR measures before/after signing Sendai Framework (2015-2030) vs Hyogo Framework (2005)

19 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Science & Tech → AI, IT & Emerging Tech [Discuss | Current-Affairs Linked]
Justice B. N. Srikrishna Committee Report on personal data protection — strengths & weaknesses

20 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Internal Security → Extremism, Insurgency & Terrorism [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Proximity to illicit opium-growing states, linkages with drug trafficking/gunrunning/money laundering/human trafficking & counter-measures

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GS Paper 4 (Ethics, Integrity & Aptitude) (19 Qs | Code: EGT-G-GSF)

1(a) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Ethics Theory → Foundational & Civil Service Values [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Three universal basic values in civil services & their importance

1(b) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Ethics Theory → Probity & Corporate Governance [Compare | Static / Evergreen]
Distinguish between 'Code of ethics' and 'Code of conduct' with examples

2(a) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Ethics Theory → Foundational & Civil Service Values [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Public interest: principles and procedures to be followed by civil servants

2(b) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Ethics Theory → Probity & Corporate Governance [Explain | Static / Evergreen]
RTI Act essentially redefines accountability beyond citizens' empowerment

3(a) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Ethics Theory → Probity & Corporate Governance [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Conflict of interest: difference between actual and potential conflicts with examples

3(b) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Thinker Quotes → Quote-Based Questions Vault [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Warren Buffett quote on integrity, intelligence, and energy in hiring

4(a) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Ethics Theory → Foundational & Civil Service Values [Discuss | Current-Affairs Linked]
In doing a good thing, everything not expressly/impliedly prohibited is permitted — public servant context

4(b) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Ethics Theory → Ethics & Human Interface [Compare | Static / Evergreen]
Morality of actions: means paramount vs ends justify means

5(a) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Ethics Theory → Ethics & Human Interface [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Rational policy for unforeseen contingencies in dam construction in forested ethnic mountain valley

5(b) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Ethics Theory → Probity & Corporate Governance [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Process of resolving ethical dilemmas in Public Administration

6(a) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Thinker Quotes → Quote-Based Questions Vault [Compare | Static / Evergreen]
Abraham Lincoln quote on preponderance of good vs evil in governmental policy

6(b) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Thinker Quotes → Quote-Based Questions Vault [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Mahatma Gandhi quote: Anger and intolerance are the enemies of correct understanding

6(c) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Thinker Quotes → Quote-Based Questions Vault [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Tirukkural quote: Falsehood takes the place of truth when it results in unblemished common good

7 • 20 Marks • 250 Words • Case Studies → Workplace Ethics, Medical & Administrative Integrity [Case Study | Static / Evergreen]
District officer Rakesh & elderly childless couple meeting all criteria except reserved community for senior healthcare scheme

8 • 20 Marks • 250 Words • Case Studies → Corruption, Probity & Conflict of Interest [Case Study | Static / Evergreen]
Senior Ministry officer pressured by Minister to realign mega road project near Minister's 20-acre farmhouse + offer of cheap land in wife's name

9 • 20 Marks • 250 Words • Case Studies → Tech, AI & Data Ethics [Case Study | Static / Evergreen]
SP in a prohibition state tackling persistent illicit liquor distillation in backward district — new approach beyond raids/arrests

10 • 20 Marks • 250 Words • Case Studies → Development vs. Environment & Displacement [Case Study | Static / Evergreen]
Senior officer addressing closure of polluting chemical plant causing job losses in factory & ancillary units

11 • 20 Marks • 250 Words • Case Studies → Corruption, Probity & Conflict of Interest [Case Study | Static / Evergreen]
Tax investigation agency head weighing substantial vs purely technical tax defaults of Dr. X building charitable super-speciality hospital

12 • 20 Marks • 250 Words • Case Studies → Tech, AI & Data Ethics [Case Study | Static / Evergreen]
Edward Snowden whistleblowing case: ethical justification vs legal prohibition & national security

Essay Paper (Philosophical & Policy Prompts) (8 Qs | Code: EGT-G-ESSY)

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A1 • 125 Marks • 1200 Words • GS / Policy-Driven → Environment & Nature [Essay | Current-Affairs Linked]
Alternative technologies for a climate change resilient India

A2 • 125 Marks • 1200 Words • Philosophical / Epigrammatic → Self, Mind & Philosophy [Essay | Static / Evergreen]
A good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge

A3 • 125 Marks • 1200 Words • Philosophical / Epigrammatic → Society, Gender & Inclusion [Essay | Static / Evergreen]
Poverty anywhere is a threat to prosperity everywhere

A4 • 125 Marks • 1200 Words • GS / Policy-Driven → Governance, Ethics & Leadership [Essay | Current-Affairs Linked]
Management of Indian border disputes—a complex task

B1 • 125 Marks • 1200 Words • Philosophical / Epigrammatic → Self, Mind & Philosophy [Essay | Static / Evergreen]
Customary morality cannot be a guide to modern life

B2 • 125 Marks • 1200 Words • Philosophical / Epigrammatic → Self, Mind & Philosophy [Essay | Static / Evergreen]
'The past' is a permanent dimension of human consciousness and values

B3 • 125 Marks • 1200 Words • Philosophical / Epigrammatic → Self, Mind & Philosophy [Essay | Static / Evergreen]
A people that values its privileges above its principles loses both

B4 • 125 Marks • 1200 Words • Philosophical / Epigrammatic → Self, Mind & Philosophy [Essay | Static / Evergreen]
Reality does not conform to the ideal, but confirms it

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