UPSC CSE Mains 2020 — Complete GS (1–4) + Essay Pack

All 5 Merit Papers from UPSC Mains 2020 (87 questions & essay prompts) with syllabus micro-topics and word limits. Free from preplord.com.

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

1 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • History & Culture → Art & Architecture [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Rock-cut architecture as one of the most important sources of early Indian art and history

2 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • History & Culture → Art & Architecture [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Pala period as the most significant phase in the history of Buddhism in India

3 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • History & Culture → Freedom Struggle [Analyze | Current-Affairs Linked]
Policies of Lord Curzon and their long-term implications on the national movement

4 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Geography → Geophysical Phenomena & Climate [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Geophysical characteristics of Circum-Pacific Zone

5 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Geography → Geophysical Phenomena & Climate [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Process of desertification does not have climatic boundaries

6 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Geography → Natural Resources & Industrial Location [Analyze | Static / Evergreen]
Melting of Himalayan glaciers and far-reaching impact on India's water resources

7 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Geography → Natural Resources & Industrial Location [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Present location of iron and steel industries away from source of raw material

8 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Indian Society → Diversity, Secularism & Communalism [Critically Examine | Static / Evergreen]
Whether caste has lost its relevance in understanding multi-cultural Indian society

9 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Indian Society → Population, Poverty & Development [Discuss | Current-Affairs Linked]
COVID-19 pandemic accelerating class inequalities and poverty in India

10 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Indian Society → Diversity, Secularism & Communalism [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Regionalism in India as a consequence of rising cultural assertiveness

11 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • History & Culture → Literature & Culture [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Role of Indian philosophy and tradition in conceiving and shaping monuments and art

12 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • History & Culture → Art & Architecture [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Persian literary sources of medieval India reflecting the spirit of the age

13 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • History & Culture → Freedom Struggle [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
National movement acquiring various ideological strands and expanding social base since 1920s

14 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Geography → Geophysical Phenomena & Climate [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Interlinking of rivers as viable solution to droughts, floods and interrupted navigation

15 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Geography → Geophysical Phenomena & Climate [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Huge flooding of million cities including smart ones like Hyderabad & Pune; remedial measures

16 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Geography → Natural Resources & Industrial Location [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Immense potential of solar energy in India & regional variations in development

17 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Geography → Geophysical Phenomena & Climate [Analyze | Static / Evergreen]
Status of forest resources of India and resultant impact on climate change

18 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Indian Society → Diversity, Secularism & Communalism [Critically Examine | Static / Evergreen]
Whether diversity and pluralism in India are under threat due to globalisation

19 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • History & Culture → Literature & Culture [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Customs and traditions suppressing reason leading to obscurantism

PREPLORD.COM UPSC CSE Mains PYQ Analysis

20 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Indian Society → Globalization & Social Change [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
How digital initiatives in India contributed to functioning of the education system

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

1 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Polity & Constitution → Elections & RPA [Discuss | Current-Affairs Linked]
Simplification of disqualification procedure for corrupt practices under Representation of Peoples Act

2 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Polity & Constitution → Constitutional & Statutory Bodies [Analyze | Current-Affairs Linked]
Recent amendments to RTI Act and impact on autonomy/independence of Information Commission

3 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Polity & Constitution → Federalism & Centre-State Relations [Discuss | Current-Affairs Linked]
Cooperation, competition and confrontation shaping Indian federalism with recent examples

4 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Polity & Constitution → Judiciary & Judicial Activism [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Points of convergence and divergence between judicial systems in India and UK

5 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Polity & Constitution → Parliament & State Legislatures [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
'Once a Speaker, Always a Speaker' for Lok Sabha Speaker objectivity & parliamentary business

6 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Social Justice → Health & Nutrition [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Sound health care policies in geriatric and maternal health care for social development

7 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Governance → Civil Services & Accountability [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Institutional quality as driver of economic performance; Civil Service reforms for democracy

8 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Governance → E-Governance & Citizen Charters [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Fourth Industrial Revolution (Digital Revolution) initiating e-Governance as integral part of government

9 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Social Justice → Health & Nutrition [Discuss | Current-Affairs Linked]
Role of WHO in providing global health security during COVID-19 pandemic

10 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • International Relations → Indian Diaspora [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Decisive role of Indian diaspora in politics and economy of America and European countries

11 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Polity & Constitution → Federalism & Centre-State Relations [Discuss | Current-Affairs Linked]
Centralising tendencies of Indian Constitution via Epidemic Diseases Act 1897, DMA 2005 & Farm Acts

12 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Polity & Constitution → Judiciary & Judicial Activism [Compare | Static / Evergreen]
Judicial Legislation vs separation of powers; justifying PILs seeking guidelines to executive

13 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Polity & Constitution → Federalism & Centre-State Relations [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Local institutions shifting from 'Functions, Functionaries & Funds' to 'Functionality' — challenges

14 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Polity & Constitution → Parliament & State Legislatures [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Rajya Sabha transformed from 'useless stepney tyre' to most useful supporting organ

15 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Polity & Constitution → Constitutional & Statutory Bodies [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Steps for constitutionalization of a Commission; constitutional status to NCW for gender justice

16 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Social Justice → Poverty & Welfare Governance [Compare | Static / Evergreen]
Incidence and intensity of poverty vs income alone — latest UN Multidimensional Poverty Index Report

17 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Social Justice → Poverty & Welfare Governance [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Micro-Finance & Self Help Groups for asset creation, income security & rural women empowerment

18 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Social Justice → Education & Skill Development [Discuss | Current-Affairs Linked]
National Education Policy 2020 in conformity with SDG-4 (2030) to restructure Indian education

19 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • International Relations → Bilateral & Global Groupings [Discuss | Current-Affairs Linked]
Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) transforming from military alliance into trade bloc

20 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • International Relations → Bilateral & Global Groupings [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Significance of Indo-US defence deals over Indo-Russian defence deals for Indo-Pacific stability

PREPLORD.COM UPSC CSE MAINS SYLLABUS

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

1 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Economy → Inclusive Growth, Poverty & Employment [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Intra-generational and inter-generational equity in inclusive growth and sustainable development

2 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Economy → Inclusive Growth, Poverty & Employment [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Potential GDP, its determinants, and factors inhibiting India from realizing it

3 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Agriculture → MSP, Subsidies & Marketing [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Main constraints in transport and marketing of agricultural produce in India

4 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Agriculture → Food Processing & PDS [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Challenges and opportunities of food processing sector & increasing farmers' income

5 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Science & Tech → AI, IT & Emerging Tech [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Nanotechnology and how it is helping in health sector

6 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Economy → Inclusive Growth, Poverty & Employment [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Science interwoven in our lives & striking changes in agriculture via science-based technologies

7 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Environment & Disaster Management → Conservation, Biodiversity & Pollution [Discuss | Current-Affairs Linked]
How draft EIA Notification 2020 differs from existing EIA Notification 2006

8 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Environment & Disaster Management → Conservation, Biodiversity & Pollution [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Salient features of Jal Shakti Abhiyan for water conservation and water security

9 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Internal Security → Cyber Security & Money Laundering [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Different types of cyber crimes and measures required to fight the menace

10 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Internal Security → Border & Maritime Security [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Effective border area management: denying local support to militants & perception management

11 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Economy → Infrastructure, Energy & Investment [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Investment in terms of capital formation & factors in designing a public-private concession agreement

12 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Economy → Budgeting, Fiscal Policy & Taxation [Analyze | Current-Affairs Linked]
Rationale behind GST (Compensation to States) Act 2017 & COVID-19 impact creating federal tensions

13 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Agriculture → Cropping Patterns & Farm Productivity [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Factors making rice-wheat system a success & how it has become a bane in India

14 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Agriculture → Cropping Patterns & Farm Productivity [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Measures to improve water storage and irrigation system for judicious use under depleting scenario

15 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Science & Tech → Biotechnology & Health Tech [Discuss | Current-Affairs Linked]
How technology was sought to aid management of COVID-19 pandemic

16 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Economy → Infrastructure, Energy & Investment [Compare | Static / Evergreen]
Benefits of deriving electric energy from sunlight vs conventional generation & Govt initiatives

17 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Environment & Disaster Management → Conservation, Biodiversity & Pollution [Discuss | Current-Affairs Linked]
Key features of National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)

18 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Environment & Disaster Management → Disaster Management [Discuss | Current-Affairs Linked]
Recent measures in disaster management departing from earlier reactive approach

19 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Internal Security → Extremism, Insurgency & Terrorism [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Determinants of left-wing extremism in Eastern India & strategy for Govt, civil admin & security forces

20 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Internal Security → Border & Maritime Security [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Internal security threats & transborder crimes along Myanmar, Bangladesh & Pakistan borders (incl. LoC)

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

1(a) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Ethics Theory → Foundational & Civil Service Values [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Role of ethics & values in enhancing Comprehensive National Power (human capital, soft power, social harmony)

1(b) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Ethics Theory → Foundational & Civil Service Values [Discuss | Current-Affairs Linked]
Examine NEP 2020 in light of education as effective tool for all-round development & social transformation

2(a) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Ethics Theory → Ethics & Human Interface [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Hatred as destructive of wisdom and conscience poisoning a nation's spirit

2(b) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Ethics Theory → Ethics & Human Interface [Critically Examine | Static / Evergreen]
Main components of emotional intelligence (EI) & whether they can be learned

3(a) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Ethics Theory → Ethics & Human Interface [Explain | Static / Evergreen]
Teachings of Buddha most relevant today and why

3(b) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Ethics Theory → Ethics & Human Interface [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Will to power tamed and guided by rationality and moral duty in international relations

4(a) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Ethics Theory → Ethics & Human Interface [Compare | Static / Evergreen]
Distinguish between laws and rules; role of ethics in formulating them

4(b) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Ethics Theory → Attitude & Emotional Intelligence [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Positive attitude of civil servant under extreme stress & what contributes to it

5(a) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Ethics Theory → Ethics & Human Interface [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Main factors for gender inequality in India & contribution of Savitribai Phule

5(b) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Ethics Theory → Ethics & Human Interface [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Current internet expansion instilling cultural values often in conflict with traditional values

6(a) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Thinker Quotes → Quote-Based Questions Vault [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Swami Vivekanand quote: Condemn none: stretch out a helping hand or bless your brothers

6(b) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Thinker Quotes → Quote-Based Questions Vault [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Mahatma Gandhi quote: The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others

6(c) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Thinker Quotes → Quote-Based Questions Vault [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Socrates quote: A system of morality based on relative emotional values is a mere illusion

7 • 20 Marks • 250 Words • Case Studies → Corruption, Probity & Conflict of Interest [Case Study | Static / Evergreen]
Rajesh Kumar (Head, Budget Division) facing ■6000 cr re-appropriation from National Housing Scheme to SEZ & PSU gas grid project

8 • 20 Marks • 250 Words • Case Studies → Tech, AI & Data Ethics [Case Study | Static / Evergreen]
Chairman of Bharat Missiles Ltd (BML) weighing ethics of arms trade & five ethical factors for exporting ATGMs to foreign govts

9 • 20 Marks • 250 Words • Case Studies → Disaster, Law & Order & National Security [Case Study | Static / Evergreen]
District Collector of tribal Rampura addressing child labour of minor girls sent to neighbouring state's Bt Cotton farms & district poverty

10 • 20 Marks • 250 Words • Case Studies → Corruption, Probity & Conflict of Interest [Case Study | Static / Evergreen]
Municipal Commissioner probing fatal mall roof collapse uncovering builder-official nexus, friend's approval, bribe offer & false POSH threat

11 • 20 Marks • 250 Words • Case Studies → Development vs. Environment & Displacement [Case Study | Static / Evergreen]
Amria Plastic Works (APW) in backward Parmal district — local employment, CSR, unauthorized excess power causing fire, lockdown pay

12 • 20 Marks • 250 Words • Case Studies → Disaster, Law & Order & National Security [Case Study | Static / Evergreen]
Migrant workers' crisis during nationwide lockdown — ethical issues, ethical care-giving state & civil society assistance

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

A1 • 125 Marks • 1200 Words • Philosophical / Epigrammatic → Self, Mind & Philosophy [Essay | Static / Evergreen]
Life is long journey between human being and being humane

A2 • 125 Marks • 1200 Words • Philosophical / Epigrammatic → Self, Mind & Philosophy [Essay | Static / Evergreen]
Mindful manifesto is the catalyst to a tranquil self

A3 • 125 Marks • 1200 Words • Philosophical / Epigrammatic → Self, Mind & Philosophy [Essay | Static / Evergreen]
Ships do not sink because of water around them, ships sink because of water that gets into them

A4 • 125 Marks • 1200 Words • Philosophical / Epigrammatic → Self, Mind & Philosophy [Essay | Static / Evergreen]
Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication

B1 • 125 Marks • 1200 Words • Philosophical / Epigrammatic → Society, Gender & Inclusion [Essay | Static / Evergreen]
Culture is what we are, civilization is what we have

B2 • 125 Marks • 1200 Words • GS / Policy-Driven → Governance, Ethics & Leadership [Essay | Current-Affairs Linked]
There can be no social justice without economic prosperity but economic prosperity without social justice is meaningless

B3 • 125 Marks • 1200 Words • GS / Policy-Driven → Society, Gender & Inclusion [Essay | Current-Affairs Linked]
Patriarchy is the least noticed yet the most significant structure of social inequality

B4 • 125 Marks • 1200 Words • GS / Policy-Driven → Governance, Ethics & Leadership [Essay | Current-Affairs Linked]
Technology as the silent factor in international relations

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