UPSC CSE Mains 2026 — Complete GS (1–4) + Essay Pack

All 5 Merit Papers from UPSC Mains 2026 (87 questions & essay prompts) with syllabus micro-topics and word limits. Free from preplord.com.

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

1 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • History & Culture → Art & Architecture [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Importance of Ashokan inscriptions for reconstructing Mauryan history

2 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • History & Culture → Modern Indian History (1757–1947) [Analyze | Static / Evergreen]
Impact of Macaulay's Minute on colonial administration and education in India

3 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • History & Culture → Freedom Struggle [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Significance of Gandhian movements lying in the masses they mobilized

4 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Geography → Geophysical Phenomena & Climate [Analyze | Static / Evergreen]
Fujiwhara effect & its impact on movement and intensity of tropical cyclones

5 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Geography → Salient Physical Features [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Tundra regions as ecologically fragile but economically important

6 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Geography → Geophysical Phenomena & Climate [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Role of aeolian processes in desertification and land degradation

7 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Geography → Natural Resources & Industrial Location [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Water resources as both an asset and a source of conflict in South Asia

8 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Indian Society → Diversity, Secularism & Communalism [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Unity in diversity as defining feature of Indian society despite communalism and regionalism

9 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Indian Society → Population, Poverty & Development [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Understanding disability & substantiating need for inclusive policy framework in India

10 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Indian Society → Women & Social Empowerment [Critically Examine | Static / Evergreen]
Whether digital technology promotes social empowerment with examples

11 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • History & Culture → Art & Architecture [Discuss | Current-Affairs Linked]
Vijayanagara architecture exemplifying amalgamation of past traditions with contemporary practices

12 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • History & Culture → Post-Independence India [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Linguistic reorganization of Indian States driven by popular pressure from below

13 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • History & Culture → Modern Indian History (1757–1947) [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Model of planned economy adopted in India to address regional imbalances left by colonial rule

14 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Geography → Geophysical Phenomena & Climate [Compare | Static / Evergreen]
Compare Loo, Chinook and Foehn winds (regions of prevalence, nature, climatic impacts)

15 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Geography → Natural Resources & Industrial Location [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Role of satellite-based technologies in achieving climate-smart agriculture and food security

16 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Indian Society → Diversity, Secularism & Communalism [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Centre of global trade gradually shifting from the Atlantic region to the Indo-Pacific region

17 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Geography → Natural Resources & Industrial Location [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Major drivers of human-induced land-use changes in India and their geographical consequences

18 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Indian Society → Diversity, Secularism & Communalism [Critically Examine | Static / Evergreen]
Whether caste is disappearing in urban India with examples

19 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Indian Society → Population, Poverty & Development [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Challenges of demographic transition in contemporary India

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20 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Indian Society → Globalization & Social Change [Analyze | Static / Evergreen]
Impact of globalization on Indian youths across social, political, economic and cultural spheres

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

1 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Polity & Constitution → Judiciary & Judicial Activism [Discuss | Current-Affairs Linked]
Right to privacy & self-identity under Article 21: effect of 2026 amendment to Transgender Persons Act, 2019

2 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Social Justice → Vulnerable Sections [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Evolution of women's reservation from local bodies to Parliament ('neither minority nor backward class')

3 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Polity & Constitution → Parliament & State Legislatures [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Lok Sabha Speaker vulnerability to partisan politics under anti-defection regime & institutional neutrality reforms

4 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Polity & Constitution → Elections & RPA [Critically Examine | Static / Evergreen]
Whether right to vote is a fundamental right; ECI position in electoral roll revision & examining voter citizenship

5 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Polity & Constitution → Judiciary & Judicial Activism [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Enforcement powers of NCSC and NCST for substantive social equality & measures to enhance effectiveness

6 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Social Justice → Vulnerable Sections [Critically Examine | Static / Evergreen]
Whether India's tribal development policy reflects socially grounded and equity-based governance

7 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Social Justice → Health & Nutrition [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Malnutrition in India as a challenge of social equity, human development and effective welfare governance

8 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Governance → Civil Services & Accountability [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Advantages and limitations of the generalist structure of Indian Civil Services in contemporary governance

9 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • International Relations → Bilateral & Global Groupings [Discuss | Current-Affairs Linked]
IPMDA (Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness) bridging India's SAGAR vision & Quad strategy

10 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • International Relations → India & Neighbourhood [Discuss | Current-Affairs Linked]
BRICS as counterweight amplifying Global South & projecting itself as alternative to other groupings

11 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Polity & Constitution → Federalism & Centre-State Relations [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Position of Governor in Indian federalism, nature of bill assent power & binding aid and advice of Council of Ministers

12 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Polity & Constitution → Judiciary & Judicial Activism [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Judicial legislation & Supreme Court verdicts allowing 'passive euthanasia' and a 'living will'

13 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Polity & Constitution → Federalism & Centre-State Relations [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Indian federal framework accommodating regional/cultural diversities — asymmetric federalism & dispute resolution

14 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Polity & Constitution → Parliament & State Legislatures [Compare | Static / Evergreen]
Separation of powers in India vs US rigid presidential model; actual authority of Indian PM vs US President

15 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Governance → Pressure Groups, NGOs & Civil Society [Compare | Static / Evergreen]
Pressure groups, social movements & corporate lobbies deepening democracy vs corporate wealth threatening autonomy

16 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Governance → Civil Services & Accountability [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Transparency and accountability creating stakeholder trust via Rule of Law and Participatory Governance

17 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Social Justice → Poverty & Welfare Governance [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Realising constitutional mandate of rights-based welfare under non-integrated governance & minimal public investment

18 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Social Justice → Education & Skill Development [Compare | Static / Evergreen]
Education as welfare obligation of state vs strategic investment for a globally competitive knowledge-driven nation

19 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • International Relations → Indian Diaspora [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
India's global diaspora as living bridge, economic factor & knowledge network for geopolitical influence

20 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • International Relations → India & Neighbourhood [Analyze | Current-Affairs Linked]

China's BRI transforming South Asia into a theatre of great power competition — strategic implications for India

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

1 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Economy → Inclusive Growth, Poverty & Employment [Discuss | Current-Affairs Linked]
Digital Rupee: working and progress of India's Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC)

2 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Economy → Inclusive Growth, Poverty & Employment [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Financial inclusion as integral to social/economic inclusion & usefulness of RBI's Financial Inclusion Index

3 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Agriculture → Cropping Patterns & Farm Productivity [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Various Technology Missions initiated in Indian agriculture & their role in food security

4 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Agriculture → MSP, Subsidies & Marketing [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Factors responsible for inefficiency of agri-produce marketing & how e-commerce helps reduce it

5 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Science & Tech → Biotechnology & Health Tech [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Two examples of how biotechnology has helped Indian farmers in processing perishable crops

6 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Science & Tech → Nuclear & Clean Energy Tech [Compare | Static / Evergreen]
Fast Breeder Reactor (FBR) vs thermal nuclear reactor; 'criticality' at Kalpakkam PFBR & clean energy future

7 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Economy → Infrastructure, Energy & Investment [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Managing contradiction between 'rapid infrastructure development' and 'disaster-risk reduction' in eco-sensitive areas

8 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Environment & Disaster Management → Conservation, Biodiversity & Pollution [Discuss | Current-Affairs Linked]
Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework: aim, goals & India's commitments and initiatives

9 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Internal Security → Cyber Security & Money Laundering [Discuss | Current-Affairs Linked]
Fake news and disinformation threatening Internal Security & Public Order; IT Rules 2021 amendments

10 • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Internal Security → Border & Maritime Security [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Ladakh strategic location: BADP, Army civic actions & demand for Sixth Schedule provisions

11 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Economy → Infrastructure, Energy & Investment [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Key challenges for India's energy security & measures balancing economic growth and sustainability

12 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Economy → Inclusive Growth, Poverty & Employment [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Startups promoting entrepreneurship, innovation & employment — global/domestic challenges & remedies

13 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Agriculture → Cropping Patterns & Farm Productivity [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Transformation of Indian agriculture from food scarcity to food surplus & policies for agricultural diversification

14 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Agriculture → MSP, Subsidies & Marketing [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Types of agricultural subsidies/supports in India & issues pertaining to WTO Agreement on Agriculture

15 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Science & Tech → Space & Defence Tech [Explain | Current-Affairs Linked]
'Mission Drishti' (satellite launched May 3, 2026): salient features, imaging techniques & why world's first of its kind

16 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Science & Tech → AI, IT & Emerging Tech [Discuss | Current-Affairs Linked]
Agentic Artificial Intelligence (AI): working, applications, advantages, risks and challenges

17 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Environment & Disaster Management → Conservation, Biodiversity & Pollution [Compare | Static / Evergreen]
Solid waste management challenges, governmental policy framework & Delhi vs Indore success/failure cases

18 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Environment & Disaster Management → Disaster Management [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Community participation as cornerstone of effective disaster management — Indian examples, challenges & strengthening

19 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Internal Security → Extremism, Insurgency & Terrorism [Analyze | Static / Evergreen]
Separatist movements in J&K, pre/post abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A & positive impacts on mainstreaming

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20 • 15 Marks • 250 Words • Internal Security → Cyber Security & Money Laundering [Discuss | Current-Affairs Linked]
Counterfeit currency and money laundering as terror funding sources, international actions & FATF compliance

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

1(a) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Ethics Theory → Ethics & Human Interface [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
University professor generating Ph.D. evaluation report using AI due to paucity of time — accountability & integrity

1(b) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Ethics Theory → Foundational & Civil Service Values [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Ethical challenges for district administrative officer when business house project could displace forest community

2(a) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Ethics Theory → Foundational & Civil Service Values [Critically Examine | Static / Evergreen]
Endangered tribe with skeletal deformity: whether DM should use un-trialed mineral supplement (medical & admin ethics)

2(b) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Ethics Theory → Foundational & Civil Service Values [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
How national security can be balanced with concerns of human rights

3(a) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Ethics Theory → Ethics & Human Interface [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Dr. B. R. Ambedkar warning on civil disobedience as 'anarchy' in constitutional democracy — navigating social justice protests

3(b) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Ethics Theory → Ethics & Human Interface [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
How an IAS officer can apply Gandhi's notion of 'trusteeship' to ensure fairness in governance

3(c) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Thinker Quotes → Quote-Based Questions Vault [Analyze | Current-Affairs Linked]
Shakespeare (Henry IV): 'The arms are fair when the intent of bearing them is just' — ethical implications in governance

4(a) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Ethics Theory → Ethics & Human Interface [Compare | Static / Evergreen]
Doctor convincing family to push reluctant female patient into surgery over medication — paternalism vs beneficence

4(b) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Ethics Theory → Foundational & Civil Service Values [Compare | Static / Evergreen]
Efficiency ('doing things right') vs effectiveness ('doing the right thing') — balancing both to enhance productivity

5(a) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Ethics Theory → Ethics & Human Interface [Compare | Static / Evergreen]
Balancing strict enforcement of government rules vs children's educational rights for remote schools

5(b) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Ethics Theory → Ethics & Human Interface [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Ethical considerations subjugated to strategic interests of nation-states in international relations

6(a) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Ethics Theory → Ethics & Human Interface [Compare | Current-Affairs Linked]
DM stopping transfer of schoolteacher tutoring PA's learning-disabled daughter — empathy vs compliance with rules

6(b) • 10 Marks • 150 Words • Ethics Theory → Ethics & Human Interface [Discuss | Static / Evergreen]
Distinction between moral duty and charity in spending surplus resources to help severely suffering people

7 • 20 Marks • 250 Words • Case Studies → Workplace Ethics, Medical & Administrative Integrity [Case Study | Static / Evergreen]
Dr. Mansi removes uterus of anaesthetized patient Lata during laparoscopy with sister-in-law Sujata's written consent (without Lata's consent) — informed consent & medical ethics

8 • 20 Marks • 250 Words • Case Studies → Tech, AI & Data Ethics [Case Study | Static / Evergreen]
SP Ravi's AI predictive policing software (crowd biometrics) improves order but targets immigrant/low-income neighbourhood — AI bias & civil rights backlash

9 • 20 Marks • 250 Words • Case Studies → Corruption, Probity & Conflict of Interest [Case Study | Current-Affairs Linked]
DC Seema in Surinder Nagar discovers touts and subordinate Collectorate staff taking bribes to selectively clear farmers' Change of Land Use (CLU) applications

10 • 20 Marks • 250 Words • Case Studies → Tech, AI & Data Ethics [Case Study | Static / Evergreen]
DC Vikas in hilly Nainipura faces PDS biometric failures (children, labourers, seniors, poor WiFi) vs leakage risks — fiscal probity vs Article 21 & tech as gatekeeper

11 • 20 Marks • 250 Words • Case Studies → Disaster, Law & Order & National Security [Case Study | Static / Evergreen]

DM Rajan in border district Rajapuram handling violent ethnic conflict between Jhara and Biru communities where bias has seeped into local admin/police

12 • 20 Marks • 250 Words • Case Studies → Development vs. Environment & Displacement [Case Study | Static / Evergreen]
Ajit (Head, Dept of Weapon Sales, MDP) choosing single arms export order between Country A (R&D partner, self-defence, long-term loan) vs Country B (superpower ally, FTA bloc, non-NPT nuclear, backs guerrillas)

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

A1 • 125 Marks • 1200 Words • Philosophical / Epigrammatic → Self, Mind & Philosophy [Essay | Static / Evergreen]
Oxymorons reflect the ironies of life.

A2 • 125 Marks • 1200 Words • Philosophical / Epigrammatic → Self, Mind & Philosophy [Essay | Static / Evergreen]
A grateful mind is very beautiful.

A3 • 125 Marks • 1200 Words • Philosophical / Epigrammatic → Self, Mind & Philosophy [Essay | Static / Evergreen]
A thorn is a changed bud.

A4 • 125 Marks • 1200 Words • Philosophical / Epigrammatic → Governance, Ethics & Leadership [Essay | Static / Evergreen]
When two elephants fight, it is the grass that gets trampled.

B1 • 125 Marks • 1200 Words • Philosophical / Epigrammatic → Environment & Nature [Essay | Static / Evergreen]
Nature is the symbol of the spirit.

B2 • 125 Marks • 1200 Words • Philosophical / Epigrammatic → Self, Mind & Philosophy [Essay | Static / Evergreen]
A well-educated mind will always have more questions than answers.

B3 • 125 Marks • 1200 Words • Philosophical / Epigrammatic → Governance, Ethics & Leadership [Essay | Static / Evergreen]
Shelving hard decisions is the least ethical course.

B4 • 125 Marks • 1200 Words • Philosophical / Epigrammatic → Governance, Ethics & Leadership [Essay | Static / Evergreen]
A good leader is one who follows the followers.

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