

INSTRUCTIONS

- The essay must be written in the medium authorized in the admission certificate which must be stated clearly on the cover of this question-cum-answer (QCA) booklet in the space provided
- No marks will be given for answers written in the medium other than authorized one
- Word limit, as specified, should be adhered to
- Any page or portion of the page left blank, must be struck off clearly
- Write two essays, choosing one topic from each of the following Sections A and B, in about 1000-1200 words each $125 \times 2 = 250$

ESSAY Question Paper – UPSC Civil Services IAS Mains 2025

SECTION – A

1. Truth knows no color.
2. The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting.
3. Thought finds a world and creates one also.
4. Best lessons are learnt through bitter experiences.

SECTION – B

5. Muddy water is best cleared by leaving it alone.
6. The years teach much which the days never know.
7. It is best to see life as a journey, not as a destination.
8. Contentment is natural wealth; luxury is artificial poverty.

ESSAY Question Paper – UPSC Civil Services IAS Mains 2024

SECTION – A

1. Forests precede civilizations and deserts follow them.
2. The Empires of the future will be the empires of the mind.
3. There is no path to happiness; Happiness is the path.
4. The doubter is a true man of Science.

SECTION – B

5. Social media is Triggering ‘ Fear of Missing Out ‘ amongst the youth , precipitating depression and loneliness.
6. Nearly all men can stand adversity, but to test the character, give him power.
7. All ideas having large consequences are always simple.
8. The cost of being wrong is less than the cost of doing nothing.

ESSAY Question Paper – UPSC Civil Services IAS Mains 2023

SECTION – A

1. Thinking is like a game, it does not begin unless there is an opposite team.
2. Visionary decision-making happens at the intersection of intuition and logic.
3. Not all who wander are lost.
4. Inspiration for creativity springs from the effort to look for the magical in the mundane.

SECTION – B

5. Girls are weighed down by restrictions, boys with demands – two equally harmful disciplines.
 6. Mathematics is the music of reason.
 7. A society that has more justice is a society that needs less charity.
 8. Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school.
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ESSAY Question Paper – UPSC Civil Services IAS Mains – 2022

SECTION – A

1. Forests are the best case studies for economic excellence
2. Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world
3. History is a series of victories won by the scientific man over the romantic man
4. A ship in harbour is safe, but that is not what ship is for

SECTION – B

5. The time to repair the roof is when the sun is shining
 6. You cannot step twice in the same river
 7. A smile is the chosen vehicle for all ambiguities
 8. Just because you have a choice, it does not mean that any of them has to be right.
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Essay Paper – UPSC Mains Question Paper (2021)

SECTION – A

1. The process of self-discovery has now been technologically outsourced.
2. Your perception of me is a reflection of you; my reaction to you in an awareness of me.
3. Philosophy of wantlessness is Utopian, while materialism is a chimera.
4. The real is rational and the rational is real.

SECTION – B

5. Hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.
 6. What is research, but a blind date with knowledge!
 7. History repeats itself, first as a tragedy, second as a farce.
 8. There are better practices to “best practices”.
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Essay Paper – UPSC Mains Question Paper (2020)

SECTION – A

1. Life is a long journey between human being and being humane
2. Mindful manifesto is the catalyst to a tranquil self
3. Ships do not sink because of water around them, ships sink because of water that gets into them
4. Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication

SECTION – B

5. Culture is what we are, civilization is what we have

6. There can be no social justice without economic prosperity but economic prosperity without social justice is meaningless
 7. Patriarchy is the least noticed yet the most significant structure of social inequality
 8. Technology as the silent factor in international relations
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Essay Paper – UPSC Mains Question Paper (2019)

SECTION – A

1. Wisdom finds truth.
2. Values are not what humanity is, but what humanity ought to be.
3. Best for an individual is not necessarily best for the society.
4. Courage to accept and dedication to improve are two keys to success.

SECTION – B

5. South-Asian societies are woven not around the state, but around their plural cultures and plural identities.
 6. Neglect of primary health care and education in India are reasons for its backwardness.
 7. Biased media is a real threat to Indian democracy.
 8. Rise of Artificial Intelligence: the threat of jobless future or better job opportunities through reskilling and upskilling.
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Essay Paper – UPSC Mains Question Paper (2018)

SECTION – A

1. Alternative technologies for a climate change resilient India.
2. A good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge.
3. Poverty anywhere is a threat to prosperity everywhere.
4. Management of Indian border disputes – a complex task.

SECTION – B

5. Customary morality cannot be a guide to modern life.
 6. “The past’ is a permanent dimension of human consciousness and values.
 7. A people that values its privileges above its principles loses both.
 8. Reality does not conform to the ideal, but confirms it.
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Essay Paper – UPSC Mains Question Paper (2017)

SECTION – A

1. Farming has lost the ability to be a source of substance for majority of farmers in India
2. Impact of new economic measures on fiscal ties between the union and states in India
3. Destiny of a nation is shaped in its classrooms
4. Has the non alignment movement lost its relevance in a multi-polar world?

SECTION – B

5. Joy is simplest form of gratitude
6. Fulfillment of new woman in India is a myth.
7. We may brave human laws but can not resist natural laws

8. Social media is inherently a selfish medium

Essay Paper – UPSC Mains Question Paper (2016)

SECTION – A

1. If development is not engendered, it is engendered.
2. Need brings greed, if greed increases it spoils bread.
3. Water disputes between State in federal India.
4. Innovation is the key determinant of economic growth and social welfare.

SECTION – B

5. Cooperative federalism: Myth or reality.
 6. Cyberspace and Internet: Blessing or curse to the human civilization in the long run.
 7. Near jobless growth in India: An anomaly or an outcome of economic reforms.
 8. Digital Economy: A leveller or a source of economic inequality.
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Essay Paper – UPSC Mains Question Paper (2015)

SECTION – A

1. Lending hands to someone is better than giving a dole.
2. Quick but steady wins the race
3. Character of an institution is reflected in its leader.
4. Education without values, as useful as it is, seems rather to make a man more clever devil.

SECTION – B

5. Technology cannot replace manpower.
 6. Crisis faced in India – moral or economic.
 7. Dreams which should not let India sleep.
 8. Can capitalism bring inclusive growth?
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Essay Paper – UPSC Mains Question Paper (2014)

SECTION – A

1. With greater power comes greater responsibility.
2. Is the growing level of competition good for the youth?
3. Are the standardized tests good measure of academic ability or progress?
4. Words are sharper than the two-edged sword.

SECTION – B

5. Was it the policy paralysis or the paralysis of implementation which slowed the growth of our country?
 6. Is sting operation an invasion on privacy?
 7. Fifty Golds in Olympics: Can this be a reality for India?
 8. Tourism: Can this be the next big thing for India?
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Essay Paper – UPSC Mains Question Paper (2013)

INSTRUCTIONS

Write an essay on any one of the following topics, in not more than 2500 words. (250 marks)

Q1. Be the change you want to see in others-Gandhi ji.

Q2. Is the Colonial mentality hindering India's success?

Q3. GDP (Gross Domestic Product) along with GDP (Gross Domestic Product) would be right indices for judging the well-being of a country.

Q4. Science and Technology are the panaceas for the growth and security of the nation.

Essay Paper – UPSC Mains Question Paper (2012)

INSTRUCTIONS

Write an essay in about 3000 words on any one of the following:

1. Indian women in international sports
 2. Cultivation of organic foods
 3. Foreign Direct Investment in retail – boon or bane?
 4. How effective are our systems and institutions in dealing with disasters?
 5. Food security – legislation and implementation
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Essay Paper – UPSC Mains Question Paper (2011)

INSTRUCTIONS

Write an essay on any one of the following topics, in not more than 2500 words. (250 marks)

Q1. Creation of smaller states and the consequent administrative, economic and developmental implications.

Q2. Does Indian cinema shape our popular culture or merely reflect it?

Q3. Credit-based higher education system-status, opportunities, and challenges.

Q4. In the Indian context, both human intelligence and technical intelligence are crucial in combating terrorism.

Essay Paper – UPSC Mains Question Paper (2010)

Time Allowed: 3 hours

Maximum Marks: 200

Write an essay on any one of the following topics

Q1. Geography may remain the same; history need not.

Q2. Should amoratoriumbe imposed on all fresh mining in tribal areas of the country?

Q3. Preparedness of our society for India's global leadership role.

Q4. From traditional Indian philanthropy to the Gates-Buffett model – a natural progression or a paradigm shift?

Essay Paper – UPSC Mains Question Paper (2009)

Time Allowed: 3 hours

Maximum Marks: 200

Write an essay on any one of the following topics

1. Are our traditional handicrafts doomed to a slow death?
 2. Are we a 'Soft' state ?
 3. "The focus of health care is increasingly getting skewed towards the 'haves' of our society".
 4. " Good Fences make good neighbors"
 5. ' Globalisation' vs. ' Nationalism'
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Essay Paper – UPSC Mains Question Paper (2008)

Time Allowed: 3 hours

Maximum Marks: 200

Write an essay on any one of the following topics

1. Role of the media in good governance.
 2. Nation identity and patriotism.
 3. Special Economic Zones: Boon or Bane.
 4. Discipline means success anarchy means ruins.
 5. Urbanization and its hazards.
 6. Is an egalitarian society possible by educating the masses?
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Essay Paper – UPSC Mains Question Paper (2007)

Time Allowed: 3 hours

Maximum Marks: 200

Write an essay on any one of the following topics

1. Independent thinking should be encouraged right from the childhood.
2. Evaluation of the Panchayati Raj System in India from the point of view of eradication of power to people.
3. Attitude makes, habit makes character and character makes a man.
4. Is Autonomy the best answer to combat balkanization?
5. How has satellite television brought about cultural change in Indian mindsets?
6. BPO boom in India.