

UPSC Mains 2013 — All GS Questions

87 Questions across GS Paper I-IV

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GS-I

2013 GS-I 10M • 200W Medium
Q1. Though not very useful from the point of view of a connected political history of South India, the Sangam literature portrays the social and economic conditions of its time with remarkable vividness. Comment. (200 words)

2013 GS-I 5M • 150W Easy
Q2. Discuss the 'Tandava' dance as recorded in early Indian inscriptions. (100 words)

2013 GS-I 10M • 200W Medium
Q3. Defying the barriers of age, gender and religion, the Indian women became the torch-bearer during the struggle for freedom in India. Discuss. (200 words)

2013 GS-I 10M • 200W Medium
Q4. Several foreigners made India their homeland and participated in various movements. Analyze their role in the Indian struggle for freedom. (200 words)

2013 GS-I 10M • 200W Medium
Q5. "In many ways, Lord Dalhousie was the founder of modern India." Elaborate. (200 words)

2013 GS-I 10M • 200W Medium
Q6. Critically discuss the objectives of Bhoodan and Gramdan Movements initiated by Acharya Vinoba Bhave and their success. (200 words)

2013 GS-I 10M • 200W Medium
Q7. Write a critical note on the evolution and significance of the slogan, 'Jai Jawan Jai Kisan'. (200 words)

2013 GS-I 10M • 200W Medium
Q8. Discuss the contributions of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad to pre- and post-independent India. (200 words)

2013 GS-I 10M • 200W

Medium

Q9. Analyze the circumstances that led to the Tashkent Agreement in 1966. Discuss the highlights of the Agreement. (200 words)

2013 GS-I 10M • 200W

Medium

Q10. Critically examine the compulsions which prompted India to play a decisive role in the emergence of Bangladesh. (200 words)

2013 GS-I 10M • 200W

Medium

Q11. "'Latecomer' Industrial Revolution in Japan involved certain factors that were markedly different from what West had experienced." Analyze. (200 words)

2013 GS-I 10M • 200W

Medium

Q12. "Africa was chopped into States artificially created by accidents of European competition." Analyze. (200 words)

2013 GS-I 10M • 200W

Medium

Q13. "American Revolution was an economic revolt against mercantilism." Substantiate. (200 words)

2013 GS-I 10M • 200W

Medium

Q14. What policy instruments were deployed to contain the Great Economic Depression? (200 words)

2013 GS-I 10M • 200W

Medium

Q15. Discuss the various social problems which originated out of the speedy process of urbanization in India. (200 words)

2013 GS-I 10M • 200W

Medium

Q16. "Male membership needs to be encouraged in order to make women's organization free from gender bias." Comment. (200 words)

2013 GS-I 5M • 200W

Medium

Q17(b). What do you understand by Run-of-river hydroelectricity project? How is it different from any other hydroelectricity project? [100 words]

2013 GS-I 10M • 200W

Medium

Q18. Growing feeling of regionalism is an important factor in generation of demand for a separate State. Discuss. (200 words)

2013 GS-I 10M • 150W

Easy

Q19. What are the consequences of Illegal mining? Discuss the Ministry of Environment and Forests' concept of GO AND NO GO zones for coal mining sector. [200 words]

2013 GS-I 5M • 150W

Easy

Q20(a). Bring out the causes for the formation of heat islands in the urban habitat of the world. (100 words)

2013 GS-I 10M • 200W

Medium

Q21. Major hot deserts in northern hemisphere are located between 20–30° N latitudes and on the western side of the continents. Why?

2013 GS-I 10M • 200W

Medium

Q24. With growing scarcity of fossil fuels, the atomic energy is gaining more and more significance in India. Discuss the availability of raw material required for the generation of atomic energy in India and in the world. (200 words)

2013 GS-I 10M • 200W

Medium

Q25. It is said that India has substantial reserves of shale oil and gas, which can feed the needs of the country for quarter century. However, tapping of the resource does not appear to be high on the agenda. Discuss critically the availability and issues involved. (200 words)

GS-II

2013 GS-II 10M • 200W

Medium

Q1. The role of individual MPs (Members of Parliament) has diminished over the years and as a result healthy constructive debates on policy issues are not usually witnessed. How far can this be attributed to the anti-defection law which was legislated but with a different intention? [200 words]

2013 GS-II 10M • 200W

Medium

Q2. Discuss Section 66A of IT Act, with reference to its alleged violation of Article 19 of the Constitution. [200 words]

2013 GS-II 10M • 200W

Medium

Q3. Recent directives from Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas are perceived by the 'Nagas' as a threat to override the exceptional status enjoyed by the State. Discuss in light of Article 371A of the Indian Constitution. [200 words]

2013 GS-II 10M • 200W

Medium

Q4. 'The Supreme Court of India keeps a check on arbitrary power of the Parliament in amending the Constitution.' Discuss critically. [200 words]

2013 GS-II 10M • 200W

Medium

Q5. Many State Governments further bifurcate geographical administrative areas like Districts and Talukas for better governance. In light of the above, can it also be justified that more number of smaller States would bring in effective governance at State level? Discuss.

2013 GS-II 10M • 200W

Medium

Q6. Constitutional mechanisms to resolve the inter-state water disputes have failed to address and solve the problems. Is the failure due to structural or process inadequacy or both? Discuss. [200 words]

2013 GS-II 10M • 200W

Medium

Q7. Discuss the recommendations of the 13th Finance Commission which have been a departure from the previous commissions for strengthening the local government finances. [200 words]

2013 GS-II 10M • 200W

Medium

Q8. The product diversification of financial institutions and insurance companies, resulting in overlapping of products and services strengthens the case for the merger of the two regulatory agencies, namely SEBI and IRDA. Justify. [200 words]

2013 GS-II 10M • 200W

Medium

Q9. The concept of Mid Day Meal (MDM) scheme is almost a century old in India with early beginnings in Madras Presidency in pre-independent India. The scheme has again been given impetus in most states in the last two decades. Critically examine its twin objectives, latest mandates and success.

2013 GS-II 10M • 200W

Medium

Q10. Pressure group politics is sometimes seen as the informal face of politics. With regards to the above, assess the structure and functioning of pressure groups in India.

2013 GS-II 10M • 200W

Medium

Q11. The legitimacy and accountability of Self Help Groups (SHGs) and their patrons, the micro-finance outfits, need systematic assessment and scrutiny for the sustained success of the concept. Discuss.

2013 GS-II 10M • 200W

Medium

Q12. The Central Government frequently complains on the poor performance of the State Governments in eradicating suffering of the vulnerable sections of the society. Restructuring of Centrally sponsored schemes across the sectors for ameliorating the cause of vulnerable sections of population aims at providing flexibility to the States in better implementation. Critically evaluate.

2013 GS-II 10M • 200W

Medium

Q13. Electronic cash transfer system for the welfare schemes is an ambitious project to minimize corruption, eliminate wastage and facilitate reforms. Comment.

2013 GS-II 10M • 200W

Medium

Q14. The basis of providing urban amenities in rural areas (PURA) is rooted in establishing connectivity. Comment.

2013 GS-II 10M • 200W

Medium

Q15. Identify the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that are related to health. Discuss the success of the actions taken by the Government for achieving the same.

2013 GS-II 10M • 200W

Medium

Q16. Though Citizens' charters have been formulated by many public service delivery organizations, there is no corresponding improvement in the level of citizens' satisfaction and quality of services being provided. Analyse.

2013 GS-II 10M • 200W

Medium

Q17. 'A national Lokpal, however strong it may be, cannot resolve the problems of immorality in public affairs.' Discuss.

2013 GS-II 10M • 200W

Medium

Q18. The proposed withdrawal of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) from Afghanistan in 2014 is fraught with major security implications for the countries of the region. Examine in light of the fact that India is faced with a plethora of challenges and needs to safeguard its own strategic interests.

2013 GS-II 10M • 200W

Medium

Q19. What do you understand by 'The String of Pearls'? How does it impact India? Briefly outline the steps taken by India to counter this.

2013 GS-II 10M • 200W

Medium

Q20. Economic ties between India and Japan while growing in the recent years are still far below their potential. Elucidate the policy constraints which are inhibiting this growth.

2013 GS-II 10M • 200W

Medium

Q21. The protests in Shahbag Square in Dhaka in Bangladesh reveal a fundamental split in society between the nationalists and Islamic forces. What is its significance for India?

2013 GS-II 10M • 200W

Medium

Q22. Discuss the political developments in Maldives in the last two years. Should they be of any cause of concern to India?

2013 GS-II 10M • 200W

Medium

Q23. In respect of India – Sri Lanka relations, discuss how domestic factors influence foreign policy.

2013 GS-II 10M • 200W

Medium

Q24. What is meant by Gujral doctrine? Does it have any relevance today? Discuss.

2013 GS-II 10M • 200W

Medium

Q25. The World Bank and the IMF, collectively known as the Bretton Woods Institutions, are the two inter-governmental pillars supporting the structure of the world's economic and financial order. Superficially, the World Bank and the IMF exhibit many common characteristics, yet their role, functions and mandate are distinctly different. Elucidate.

GS-III

2013 GS-III 10M • 200W

Medium

Q1. With a consideration towards the strategy of inclusive growth, the new Companies Bill, 2013 has indirectly made CSR a mandatory obligation. Discuss the challenges expected in its implementation in right earnest. Also discuss other provisions in the Bill and their implications.

2013 GS-III 10M • 200W

Medium

Q2. What were the reasons for the introduction of Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, 2003? Discuss critically its salient features and their effectiveness.

2013 GS-III 10M • 200W

Medium

Q3. What is the meaning of the term 'tax expenditure'? Taking housing sector as an example, discuss how it influences the budgetary policies of the government.

2013 GS-III 10M • 200W

Medium

Q4. Food Security Bill is expected to eliminate hunger and malnutrition in India. Critically discuss various apprehensions in its effective implementation along with the concerns it has generated in WTO.

2013 GS-III 10M • 200W

Medium

Q5. What are the different types of agriculture subsidies given to farmers at the national and at state levels? Critically analyse the agricultural subsidy regime with reference to the distortions created by it.

2013 GS-III 10M • 200W

Medium

Q6. India needs to strengthen measures to promote the pink revolution in food industry for ensuring better nutrition and health. Critically elucidate the statement.

2013 GS-III 10M • 200W

Medium

Q7. Examine the impact of liberalization on companies owned by Indians. Are they competing with the MNCs satisfactorily? Discuss.

2013 GS-III 10M • 200W

Medium

Q8. Establish relationship between land reforms, agriculture productivity and elimination of poverty in the Indian economy. Discuss the difficulties in designing and implementation of agriculture-friendly land reforms in India.

2013 GS-III 5M • 150W

Medium

Q9(a). Discuss the impact of FDI entry into Multi-trade retail sector on supply chain management in commodity trade pattern of the economy.

2013 GS-III 5M • 150W

Medium

Q9(b). Though India allowed Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in what is called multi-brand retail through the joint venture route in September 2012, the FDI, even after a year, has not picked up. Discuss the reasons.

2013 GS-III 10M • 200W

Medium

Q10. Discuss the rationale for introducing Goods and Services Tax (GST) in India. Bring out critically the reasons for the delay in roll out for its regime.

2013 GS-III 10M • 200W

Medium

Q11. Write a note on India's green energy corridor to alleviate the problem of conventional energy.

2013 GS-III 10M • 200W

Medium

Q12. Adoption of PPP model for infrastructure development of the country has not been free of criticism. Critically discuss pros and cons of the model.

2013 GS-III 10M • 200W

Medium

Q13. Bringing out the circumstances in 2005 which forced amendment to the section 3(d) in Indian Patent Law, 1970, discuss how it has been utilized by the Supreme Court in its judgement in rejecting Novartis' patent application for 'Glivec'. Discuss briefly the pros and cons of the decision.

2013 GS-III 10M • 200W

Medium

Q14. What do you understand by Fixed Dose Drug Combinations (FDCs)? Discuss their merits and demerits.

2013 GS-III 10M • 200W

Medium

Q15. What do you understand by Umpire Decision Review System in Cricket? Discuss its various components. Explain how silicone tape on the edge of a bat may fool the system?

2013 GS-III 5M • 150W

Easy

Q16(b). How does the 3D printing technology work? List out the advantages and disadvantages of the technology.

2013 GS-III 5M • 150W

Easy

Q17(a). What is an FRP composite material? How are they manufactured? Discuss their applications in aviation and automobile industries.

2013 GS-III 10M • 200W

Medium

Q18. How important are vulnerability and risk assessment for pre-disaster management? As an administrator, what are key areas that you would focus on in a Disaster Management System.

2013 GS-III 5M • 200W

Medium

Q19(b). The recent cyclone on east coast of India was called 'Phailin'. How are the tropical cyclones named across the world? Elaborate.

2013 GS-III 10M • 200W

Medium

Q21. Money laundering poses a serious security threat to a country's economic sovereignty. What is its significance for India and what steps are required to be taken to control this menace?

2013 GS-III 10M • 200W

Medium

Q22. What are social networking sites and what security implications do these sites present?

2013 GS-III 10M • 200W

Medium

Q23. Cyber warfare is considered by some defense analysts to be a larger threat than even Al Qaeda or terrorism. What do you understand by Cyber warfare? Outline the cyber threats which India is vulnerable to and bring out the state of the country's preparedness to deal with the same.

2013 GS-III 10M • 200W

Medium

Q24. Article 244 of the Indian Constitution relates to administration of scheduled areas and tribal areas. Analyse the impact of non-implementation of the provisions of the Fifth schedule on the growth of Left Wing extremism.

2013 GS-III 10M • 200W

Medium

Q25. How far are India's internal security challenges linked with border management particularly in view of the long porous borders with most countries of South Asia and Myanmar?

GS-IV

2013 GS-IV 10M • 150W

Easy

Q1. What do you understand by 'values' and 'ethics'? In what way is it important to be ethical along with being professionally competent? (150 words)

2013 GS-IV 25M • 250W

Hard

Q2. (a) What do you understand by the following terms in the context of public service? (i) Integrity (ii) Perseverance (iii) Spirit of service (iv) Commitment (v) Courage of conviction (b) Indicate two more attributes which you consider important for public service. Justify your answer.

(a) What do you understand by the following terms in the context of public service? (i) Integrity (ii) Perseverance (iii) Spirit of service (iv) Commitment (v) Courage of conviction (250 words)

(b) Indicate two more attributes which you consider important for public service. Justify your answer. (100 words)

2013 GS-IV 10M • 150W

Easy

Q3. Some people feel that values keep changing with time and situation, while others strongly believe that there are certain universal and eternal human values. Give your perception in this regard with due justification. (150 words)

2013 GS-IV 10M • 150W

Easy

Q4. What is 'emotional intelligence' and how can it be developed in people? How does it help an individual in taking ethical decisions? (150 words)

2013 GS-IV 10M • 150W

Hard

Q5(a). What do you understand by the term 'voice of conscience'? How do you prepare yourself to heed to the voice of conscience? (150 words)

(a) What do you understand by the term 'voice of conscience'? How do you prepare yourself to heed to the voice of conscience? (150 words)

(b) What is meant by 'crisis of conscience'? Narrate one incident in your life when you were faced with such a crisis and how you resolved the same. (150 words)

2013 GS-IV 30M • 150W

Hard

Q6. Given below are three quotations of great moral thinkers/philosophers. For each quotation, bring out what it means to you in the present context: (a) "There is enough on this earth for every one's need but for no one's greed." – Mahatma Gandhi (b) "Nearly all men can withstand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power." – Abraham Lincoln (c) "I count him braver who overcomes his desires than him who overcomes his enemies." – Aristotle

(a) "There is enough on this earth for every one's need but for no one's greed." – Mahatma Gandhi. Explain what it means to you in the present context. (150 words)

(b) "Nearly all men can withstand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power." – Abraham Lincoln. Explain what it means to you in the present context. (150 words)

(c) "I count him braver who overcomes his desires than him who overcomes his enemies." – Aristotle. Explain what it means to you in the present context. (150 words)

2013 GS-IV 10M • 150W

Easy

Q7. "The good of an individual is contained in the good of all." What do you understand by this statement? How can this principle be implemented in public life? (150 words)

2013 GS-IV 10M • 150W

Easy

Q8. It is often said that 'politics' and 'ethics' do not go together. What is your opinion in this regard? Justify your answer with illustrations. (150 words)

2013 GS-IV 20M • 250W

Hard

Q9. A Public Information Officer (PIO) has received an application under the RTI Act. Having gathered the information, the PIO discovers that the information pertains to some of the decisions taken by him, which were not altogether right. Disclosure is likely to lead to disciplinary action against him as well as some colleagues. Non-disclosure or partial disclosure may result in lesser or no punishment. The PIO, otherwise honest and conscientious, seeks your advice. Evaluate the merits and demerits of the following options and indicate what you would advise, giving proper reasons: (i) Refer the matter to the superior officer and act strictly as advised. (ii) Proceed on leave/seek transfer of the application. (iii) Weigh consequences of truthful disclosure and reply with some compromise. (iv) Consult other colleagues who were party to the decision and act on their advice. Also, without restricting yourself to the above options, state your advice with reasons. (250 words)

2013 GS-IV 20M • 250W

Hard

Q10. You are working as an Executive Engineer in the construction cell of a Municipal Corporation and are in-charge of constructing a flyover. During surprise inspections you notice serious deviations from design specifications which, if ignored, may affect public safety. The Chief Engineer advises you that it is not a serious lapse and to expedite completion. Evaluate the merits and demerits of the following options and suggest the course of action you would take, giving reasons: (i) Follow the advice of the Chief Engineer and go ahead. (ii) Prepare a detailed report of facts, analysis and your views and seek written orders from the Chief Engineer. (iii) Call for explanation from the Junior Engineers and order the contractor to make corrections within a targeted time. (iv) Highlight the issue so that it reaches officers above the Chief Engineer. (v) Considering the rigid attitude of the Chief Engineer, seek transfer from the project or report sick. (250 words)

2013 GS-IV 0M • 150W

Easy

Q11. Sivakasi in Tamil Nadu is known for its manufacturing clusters on firecrackers and matches. The local economy largely depends on this industry, leading to economic development and improved living standards. International Labour Organization (ILO) norms fix the minimum age for hazardous industry work at 18 years, whereas in India it is 14 years. Industrial units may be registered or non-registered; many claim to be household-based units to evade child-labour laws, employing children from outside to reduce costs and increase profits. (Further questions continue on next page.)

2013 GS-IV 20M • 250W

Hard

Q12. You are heading a leading technical institute of the country. The institute is planning to convene an interview panel shortly under your chairmanship for selection of the post of professors. A few days before the interview, you get a call from the Personal Secretary (PS) of a senior government functionary seeking your intervention in favour of the selection of a close relative of the functionary for this post. The PS also informs you that he is aware of the long pending and urgent proposals of your institute for grant of funds for modernization, which are awaiting the functionary's approval. He assures you that he would get these proposals cleared.
(a) What are the options available to you?
(b) Evaluate each of these options and choose the option which you would adopt, giving reasons. (250 words)

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(b) Evaluate each of these options and choose the option which you would adopt, giving reasons. (250 words)

2013 GS-IV 20M • 250W

Hard

Q13. As a senior officer in the Finance Ministry, you have access to some confidential and crucial information about policy decisions that the Government is about to announce. These decisions are likely to have far-reaching impact on the housing and construction industry. If the builders have access to this information beforehand, they can make huge profits. One of the builders has done a lot of quality work for the Government and is known to be close to your immediate superior, who asks you to disclose this information to the said builder.
(a) What are the options available to you?
(b) Evaluate each of these options and choose the option which you would adopt, giving reasons. (250 words)

(a) What are the options available to you?

(b) Evaluate each of these options and choose the option which you would adopt, giving reasons. (250 words)

Q14. You are the Executive Director of an upcoming Infotech Company which is making a name for itself in the market.

Mr. A, who is a star performer, is heading the marketing team. In a short period of one year, he has helped in doubling the revenues as well as creating a high brand equity for the Company so much so that you are thinking of promoting him. However, you have been receiving information from many corners about his attitude towards the female colleagues; particularly his habit of making loose comments on women. In addition, he regularly sends indecent SMS's to all the team members including his female colleagues.

One day, late in the evening, Mrs. X, who is one of Mr. A's team members, comes to you visibly disturbed. She complains against the continued misconduct of Mr. A, who has been making undesirable advances towards her and has even tried to touch her inappropriately in his cabin. She tenders her resignation and leaves your office.

(a) What are the options available to you?

(b) Evaluate each of these options and choose the option you would adopt, giving reasons. (250 words)

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