

# UPSC Mains 2018 — All GS Questions

72 Questions across GS Paper I-IV

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## GS-I

2018 GS-I 10M • 150W

**Q1. Safeguarding the Indian art heritage is the need of the moment. Discuss. (Answer in 150 words)**

Easy

2018 GS-I 10M • 150W

**Q2. Assess the importance of the accounts of the Chinese and Arab travellers in the reconstruction of the history of India. (Answer in 150 words)**

Easy

2018 GS-I 10M • 150W

**Q3. Throw light on the significance of the thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi in the present times. (Answer in 150 words)**

Easy

2018 GS-I 10M • 150W

**Q4. Why is Indian Regional Navigational Satellite System (IRNSS) needed? How does it help in navigation?**

Easy

2018 GS-I 10M • 150W

**Q5. Why is India taking keen interest in resources of Arctic Region? (Answer in 150 words)**

Easy

2018 GS-I 10M • 150W

**Q6. Define mantle plume and explain its role in plate tectonics. (Answer in 150 words)**

Easy

2018 GS-I 10M • 150W

**Q7. What are the consequences of spreading of 'Dead Zones' on marine ecosystem? (Answer in 150 words)**

Easy

2018 GS-I 10M • 150W

**Q8. "Caste system is assuming new identities and associational forms. Hence, caste system cannot be eradicated in India." Comment. (Answer in 150 words)**

Easy

2018 GS-I 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q9. 'Despite implementation of various programmes for eradication of poverty by the government in India, poverty is still existing.' Explain by giving reasons.**

2018 GS-I 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q10. How the Indian concept of secularism is different from the western model of secularism? Discuss. (Answer in 150 words)**

2018 GS-I 15M • 250W

Medium

**Q11. The Bhakti movement received a remarkable re-orientation with the advent of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Discuss. (Answer in 250 words)**

2018 GS-I 15M • 250W

Medium

**Q13. Why indentured labour was taken by the British from India to other colonies? Have they been able to preserve their cultural identity over there? (Answer in 250 words)**

2018 GS-I 15M • 250W

Medium

**Q14. "The ideal solution of depleting ground water resources in India is water harvesting system." How can it be made effective in urban areas? (Answer in 250 words)**

2018 GS-I 15M • 250W

Medium

**Q15. Defining blue revolution, explain the problems and strategies for pisciculture development in India. (Answer in 250 words)**

2018 GS-I 15M • 250W

Medium

**Q16. What is the significance of Industrial Corridors in India? Identifying industrial corridors, explain their main characteristics. (Answer in 250 words)**

2018 GS-I 15M • 250W

Medium

**Q17. How does biodiversity vary in India? How is the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 helpful in conservation of flora and fauna? (Answer in 250 words)**

2018 GS-I 15M • 250W

Medium

**Q18. 'Women's movement in India has not addressed the issues of women of lower social strata.' Substantiate your view. (Answer in 250 words)**

2018 GS-I 15M • 250W

Medium

**Q19.** 'Globalization is generally said to promote cultural homogenization but due to this cultural specificities appear to be strengthened in the Indian Society.' Elucidate. (Answer in 250 words)

2018 GS-I 15M • 250W

Medium

**Q20.** 'Communalism arises either due to power struggle or relative deprivation.' Argue by giving suitable illustrations. (Answer in 250 words)

## GS-II

2018 GS-II 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q1.** In the light of recent controversy regarding the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVM), what are the challenges before the Election Commission of India to ensure the trustworthiness of elections in India? (Answer in 150 words)

2018 GS-II 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q2.** Whether National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) can enforce the implementation of constitutional reservation for the Scheduled Castes in the religious minority institutions? Examine.

2018 GS-II 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q3.** Under what circumstances can the Financial Emergency be proclaimed by the President of India? What consequences follow when such a declaration remains in force? (Answer in 150 words)

2018 GS-II 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q4.** Why do you think the committees are considered to be useful for parliamentary work? Discuss, in this context, the role of the Estimates Committee. (Answer in 150 words)

2018 GS-II 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q5.** "The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has a very vital role to play." Explain how this is reflected in the method and terms of his appointment as well as the range of powers he can exercise. (Answer in 150 words)

2018 GS-II 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q6.** "Policy contradictions among various competing sectors and stakeholders have resulted in inadequate 'protection and prevention of degradation' to environment." Comment with relevant illustrations.

2018 GS-II 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q7. Appropriate local community-level healthcare intervention is a prerequisite to achieve 'Health for All' in India. Explain.**

2018 GS-II 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q8. E-governance is not only about utilization of the power of new technology, but also much about critical importance of the 'use value' of information. Explain.**

2018 GS-II 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q9. 'Despite implementation of various programmes for eradication of poverty by the government in India, poverty is still existing.' Explain by giving reasons.**

2018 GS-II 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q10. A number of outside powers have entrenched themselves in Central Asia, which is a zone of interest to India. Discuss the implications, in this context, of India's joining the Ashgabat Agreement, 2018.**

2018 GS-II 15M • 250W

Medium

**Q11. Whether the Supreme Court Judgement (July 2018) can settle the political tussle between the Lt. Governor and elected government of Delhi? Examine. (Answer in 250 words)**

2018 GS-II 15M • 250W

Medium

**Q12. How far do you agree with the view that tribunals curtail the jurisdiction of ordinary courts? In view of the above, discuss the constitutional validity and competency of the tribunals in India. (Answer in 250 words)**

2018 GS-II 15M • 250W

Medium

**Q13. India and USA are two large democracies. Examine the basic tenets on which the two political systems are based. (Answer in 250 words)**

2018 GS-II 15M • 250W

Medium

**Q14. How is the Finance Commission of India constituted? What do you know about the terms of reference of the recently constituted Finance Commission? Discuss. (Answer in 250 words)**

2018 GS-II 15M • 250W

Medium

**Q15. Assess the importance of the Panchayat system in India as a part of local government. Apart from government grants, what sources the Panchayats can look out for financing developmental projects? (Answer in 250 words)**

2018 GS-II 15M • 250W

Medium

**Q16. Multiplicity of various commissions for the vulnerable sections of the society leads to problems of overlapping jurisdiction and duplication of functions. Is it better to merge all commissions into an umbrella Human Rights Commission? Argue your case.**

2018 GS-II 15M • 250W

Medium

**Q17. Mention core strategies for the transformation of aspirational districts in India and explain the nature of convergence, collaboration and competition for its success.**

2018 GS-II 15M • 250W

Medium

**Q18. The Citizens' Charter is an ideal instrument of organizational transparency and accountability, but it has its own limitations. Identify the limitations and suggest measures for greater effectiveness of the Citizens' Charter.**

2018 GS-II 15M • 250W

Medium

**Q19. What are the key areas of reform if the WTO has to survive in the present context of 'Trade War', especially keeping in mind the interest of India?**

2018 GS-II 15M • 250W

Medium

**Q20. In what ways would the ongoing US-Iran Nuclear Pact Controversy affect the national interest of India? How should India respond to this situation?**

### GS-III

2018 GS-III 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q1. "Access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy is the sine qua non to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)." Comment on the progress made in India in this regard.**

2018 GS-III 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q2. Comment on the important changes introduced in respect of the Long-term Capital Gains Tax (LCGT) and Dividend Distribution Tax (DDT) in the Union Budget for 2018-2019.**

2018 GS-III 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q3. What do you mean by Minimum Support Price (MSP)? How will MSP rescue the farmers from the low income trap?**

2018 GS-III 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q4. Examine the role of supermarkets in supply chain management of fruits, vegetables and food items. How do they eliminate number of intermediaries?**

2018 GS-III 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q5. Discuss the work of 'Bose-Einstein Statistics' done by Prof. Satyendra Nath Bose and show how it revolutionized the field of Physics.**

2018 GS-III 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q7. What is wetland? Explain the Ramsar concept of 'wise use' in the context of wetland conservation. Cite two examples of Ramsar sites from India.**

2018 GS-III 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q8. Sikkim is the first 'Organic State' in India. What are the ecological and economical benefits of Organic State?**

2018 GS-III 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q9. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is viewed as a cardinal subset of China's larger 'One Belt One Road' initiative. Give a brief description of CPEC and enumerate the reasons why India has distanced itself from the same.**

2018 GS-III 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q10. Left Wing Extremism (LWE) is showing a downward trend, but still affects many parts of the country. Briefly explain the Government of India's approach to counter the challenges posed by LWE.**

2018 GS-III 15M • 250W

Medium

**Q11. How are the principles followed by the NITI Aayog different from those followed by the erstwhile Planning Commission in India?**

2018 GS-III 15M • 250W

Medium

**Q12. How would the recent phenomena of protectionism and currency manipulations in world trade affect macroeconomic stability of India?**

2018 GS-III 15M • 250W

Medium

**Q13. Assess the role of National Horticulture Mission (NHM) in boosting the production, productivity and income of horticulture farms. How far has it succeeded in increasing the income of farmers?**

2018 GS-III 15M • 250W

Medium

**Q14. How has the emphasis on certain crops brought about changes in cropping patterns in recent past? Elaborate the emphasis on millets production and consumption.**

2018 GS-III 15M • 250W

Medium

**Q15. Why is there so much activity in the field of biotechnology in our country? How has this activity benefitted the field of biopharma?**

2018 GS-III 15M • 250W

Medium

**Q16. With growing energy needs should India keep on expanding its nuclear energy programme? Discuss the facts and fears associated with nuclear energy.**

2018 GS-III 15M • 250W

Medium

**Q18. Describe various measures taken in India for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) before and after signing 'Sendai Framework for DRR (2015-2030)'. How is this framework different from 'Hyogo Framework for Action, 2005'?**

2018 GS-III 15M • 250W

Medium

**Q19. Data security has assumed significant importance in the digitized world due to rising cyber crimes. The Justice B. N. Srikrishna Committee Report addresses issues related to data security. What, in your view, are the strengths and weaknesses of the Report relating to protection of personal data in cyber space?**

2018 GS-III 15M • 250W

Medium

**Q20. India's proximity to two of the world's biggest illicit opium-growing states has enhanced her internal security concerns. Explain the linkages between drug trafficking and other illicit activities such as gunrunning, money laundering and human trafficking. What counter-measures should be taken to prevent the same?**

## GS-IV

2018 GS-IV 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q1(a). State the three basic values, universal in nature, in the context of civil services and bring out their importance. (150 words)**

2018 GS-IV 10M • 150W

Medium

**Q1(b). Distinguish between "Code of ethics" and "Code of conduct" with suitable examples. (150 words)**

2018 GS-IV 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q2(a). What is meant by public interest? What are the principles and procedures to be followed by the civil servants in public interest?**

2018 GS-IV 10M • 150W

Medium

**Q2(b). "The Right to Information Act is not all about citizens' empowerment alone, it essentially redefines the concept of accountability." Discuss. (150 words)**

2018 GS-IV 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q3(a). What is meant by conflict of interest? Illustrate with examples, the difference between the actual and potential conflicts of interest. (150 words)**

2018 GS-IV 10M • 150W

Medium

**Q4(b). With regard to morality of actions, one view is that means are of paramount importance and the other view is that the ends justify the means. Which view do you think is more appropriate? Justify your answer. (150 words)**

2018 GS-IV 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q5(a). Suppose the Government of India is thinking of constructing a dam in a mountain valley bound by forests and inhabited by ethnic communities. What rational policy should it resort to in dealing with unforeseen contingencies? (150 words)**

2018 GS-IV 10M • 150W

Easy

**Q5(b). Explain the process of resolving ethical dilemmas in Public Administration. (150 words)**

2018 GS-IV 10M • 150W

Hard

**Q6(b). What do each of the following quotations mean to you in the present context? "Anger and intolerance are the enemies of correct understanding." — Mahatma Gandhi (150 words)**

- (a) "The true rule, in determining to embrace, or reject any thing, is not whether it has any evil in it; but whether it has more evil than good. There are few things wholly evil or wholly good; especially of governmental policy, it is an inseparable compound of the two; so that our best judgment of the preponderance between them is continually demanded." — Abraham Lincoln
- (b) "Anger and intolerance are the enemies of correct understanding." — Mahatma Gandhi
- (c) "Falsehood takes the place of truth when it results in unblemished common good." — Tirukkural

**Q7. Rakesh is a responsible district level officer, who enjoys the trust of his higher officials. Knowing his honesty, the government entrusted him with the responsibility of identifying the beneficiaries under a healthcare scheme meant for senior citizens.**

The criteria to be a beneficiary are the following :

- (a) 60 years of age or above.
- (b) Belonging to a reserved community.
- (c) Family income of less than ₹ 1 lakh per annum.
- (d) Post-treatment prognosis is likely to be high to make a positive difference to the quality of life of the beneficiary.

One day, an old couple visited Rakesh's office with their application. They have been the residents of a village in his district since their birth. The old man is diagnosed with a rare condition that causes obstruction in the large intestine. As a consequence, he has severe abdominal pain frequently that prevents him from doing any physical labour. The couple have no children to support them. The expert surgeon whom they contacted is willing to do the surgery without charging any fee. However, the couple will have to bear the cost of incidental charges, such as medicines, hospitalization, etc., to the tune of ₹ 1 lakh. The couple fulfils all the criteria except criterion 'b'. However, any financial aid would certainly make a significant difference in their quality of life.

How should Rakesh respond to the situation?

**Q8. As a senior officer in the Ministry, you have access to important policy decisions and upcoming big announcements such as road construction projects before they reach the public domain. The Ministry is going to announce a major road construction project for which land acquisition has already been identified and compensation rates for the land owners have been fixed according to government norms. The compensation is expected to be on the lower side. It is anticipated that once the project is announced, land prices in and around that area will rise sharply.**

In the meantime, the concerned Minister has asked you to realign the road in such a way that it passes near his 20-acre farm-house. He has also suggested that he will help to purchase land in your wife's name around the proposed highway at the current nominal rates. The Minister assures you that there is no harm in doing so as the land is being purchased at the prevailing market price. He also wants you to keep him informed about the date when the project will be announced.

If you report the alleged malpractices in the land procurement for the project to your higher authorities, it will cause a long delay in your department's work, resulting in hardship to the farmers as well. Besides, the project is very essential; it will also lead to cutting down of a large number of trees, thereby destroying the green landscape of the area.

How would you deal with this situation? Evaluate the options available to you, indicating their merits and demerits, and explain what your responsibilities are as a public servant.

2018 GS-IV 20M • 250W

Hard

**Q9. It is a State where prohibition is in force. You are recently appointed as the Superintendent of Police of a district notorious for illicit distillation of liquor. The illicit liquor leads to many deaths, reported and unreported, and causes a major problem for the district authorities.**

The approach till now had been to view it as a law and order problem and tackle it accordingly. Raids, arrests, police cases, criminal trials – all these had only limited impact. The problem remains as serious as ever.

Your inspections show that the parts of the district where the distillation flourishes are economically, industrially and educationally backward. Agriculture is badly affected by poor irrigation facilities. Frequent clashes among communities gave boost to illicit distillation. No major initiatives had taken place in the past either from the government's side or from social organizations to improve the lot of the people.

Which new approach will you adopt to bring the problem under control? (250 words)

2018 GS-IV 20M • 250W

Hard

**Q10. A big corporate house is engaged in manufacturing industrial chemicals on a large scale. It proposes to set up an additional unit. Many States rejected its proposal due to detrimental effect on the environment. But one State government acceded to the request and permitted the unit close to a city, brushing aside all opposition.**

The unit was set up 10 years ago and was in full swing till recently. The pollution caused by the industrial effluents was affecting the land, water and crops in the area. It was also causing serious health problems to human beings and animals. This gave rise to a series of agitations demanding the closure of the plant. In a recent agitation thousands of people took part, creating a law and order problem necessitating stern police action. Following the public outcry, the State government ordered the closure of the factory.

The closure of the factory resulted in the unemployment of not only those workers who were engaged in the factory but also those who were working in the ancillary units. It also very badly affected those industries which depended on the chemicals manufactured by it.

As a senior officer entrusted with the responsibility of handling this issue, how are you going to address it? (250 words)

2018 GS-IV 20M • 250W

Hard

**Q11. Dr. X is a leading medical practitioner in a city. He has set up a charitable trust through which he plans to establish a super-speciality hospital in the city to cater to the medical needs of all sections of the society. Incidentally, that part of the State had been neglected over the years. The proposed hospital would be a boon for the region.**

**You are heading the tax investigation agency of that region. During an inspection of the doctor's clinic, your officers have found out some major irregularities. A few of them are substantial which had resulted in considerable withholding of tax that should be paid by him. Now the doctor is cooperative. He undertakes to pay the tax immediately.**

**However, there are certain other deficiencies in his tax compliance which are purely technical in nature. If these technical defaults are pursued by the agency, considerable time and energy of the doctor will be diverted to issues which are not so serious, urgent or even helpful to the tax collection process. Further, in all probability, it will hamper the prospects of the hospital coming up.**

**There are two options before you:**

- (i) Taking a broader view, ensure substantial tax compliance and ignore defaults that are merely technical in nature.**
- (ii) Pursue the matter strictly and proceed on all fronts, whether substantial or merely technical.**

**As the head of the tax agency, which course of action will you opt for and why? (250 words)**

2018 GS-IV 20M • 250W

Hard

**Q12. Edward Snowden, a computer expert and former CIA systems administrator, released confidential Government documents to the press about the existence of Government surveillance programmes. According to many legal experts and the US Government, his actions violated the Espionage Act of 1917, which identified the leak of State secrets as an act of treason. Yet, despite the fact that he broke the law, Snowden argued that he had a moral obligation to act. He gave a justification for his "whistle blowing" by stating that he had a duty "to inform the public as to that which is done in their name and that which is done against them."**

**According to Snowden, the Government's violation of privacy had to be exposed regardless of legality since more substantive issues of social action and public morality were involved here. Many agreed with Snowden. Few argued that he broke the law and compromised national security, for which he should be held accountable.**

**Do you agree that Snowden's actions were ethically justified even if legally prohibited? Why or why not? Make an argument by weighing the competing values in this case. (250 words)**