

UnlockIAS

www.unlockias.in

UPSC CSE MAINS

Previous Year Questions

Environment, Conservation & Pollution — GS-III

Previous Year Questions (verbatim, official syllabus)

34 Questions

Year range: 2013–2025

Verbatim from official UPSC papers

"Master Mains with PYQs — consistency is key"

— Neil Sir, Founder, UnlockIAS

UnlockIAS Test Series 2026

30+ Full-Length Prelims Tests • AI-Powered Analytics

Detailed Solutions • Performance Tracking

www.unlockias.in/test_series

Table of Contents

34 Questions across 3 Sections

1. Conservation (biodiversity, ecology)	10Q
2. Environmental pollution and degradation	20Q
3. Environmental impact assessment	4Q

Conservation (biodiversity, ecology)

2024 GS-III 15M · 250W

Q15. The world is facing an acute shortage of clean and safe freshwater. What are the alternative technologies which can solve this crisis? Briefly discuss any three such technologies citing their key merits and demerits.

2023 GS-III 15M · 250W

Q14. Comment on the National Wetland Conservation Programme initiated by the Government of India and name a few India's wetlands of international importance included in the Ramsar Sites.

2021 GS-III 15M · 250W

Q12. Describe the major outcomes of the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). What are the commitments made by India in this conference?

2021 GS-III 10M · 250W

Q14. Explain the purpose of the Green Grid Initiative launched at World Leaders Summit of the COP26 UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow in November, 2021. When was this idea first floated in the International Solar Alliance (ISA)?

2020 GS-III 10M · 250W

Q13. What are the salient features of the Jal Shakti Abhiyan launched by the Government of India for water conservation and water security?

2019 GS-III 15M · 250W

Q14. Define the concept of carrying capacity of an ecosystem as relevant to an environment. Explain how understanding this concept is vital while planning for sustainable development of a region.

2018 GS-III 10M · 250W

Q13. 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 · 250W

Q14. Sikkim is the first 'Organic State' in India. What are the ecological and economical benefits of Organic State?

2018 GS-III 15M · 250W

Q15. How does biodiversity vary in India? How is the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 helpful in conservation of flora and fauna?

2014 GS-III 12.5M · 200W

Q12. Should the pursuit of carbon credits and clean development mechanisms set up under UNFCCC be maintained even though there has been a massive slide in the value of a carbon credit? Discuss with respect to India's energy needs for economic growth.

Environmental pollution and degradation

2025 GS-III 10M · 250W

Q12. What is Carbon Capture, Utilization and Storage (CCUS)? What is the potential role of CCUS in tackling climate change?

2025 GS-III 10M · 250W

Q13. Seawater intrusion in the coastal aquifers is a major concern in India. What are the causes of seawater intrusion and the remedial measures to combat this hazard?

2025 GS-III 15M · 250W

Q14. Examine the factors responsible for depleting groundwater in India. What are the steps taken by the government to mitigate such depletion of groundwater?

2025 GS-III 15M · 250W

Q15. Write a review on India's climate commitments under the Paris Agreement (2015) and mention how these have been further strengthened in COP26 (2021). In this direction, how has the first Nationally Determined Contribution intended by India been updated in 2022?

2025 GS-III 15M · 250W

Q16. Mineral resources are fundamental to the country's economy and these are exploited by mining. Why is mining considered an environmental hazard? Explain the remedial measures required to reduce the environmental hazard due to mining.

2024 GS-III 10M · 250W

Q13. Industrial pollution of river water is a significant environmental issue in India. Discuss the various mitigation measures to deal with this problem and also the government's initiatives in this regard.

2023 GS-III 10M · 250W

Q12. What is oil pollution? What are its impacts on the marine ecosystem? In what way is oil pollution particularly harmful for a country like India?

www.unlockias.in/test_series

2023 GS-III 15M · 250W

Q13. The adoption of electric vehicles is rapidly growing worldwide. How do electric vehicles contribute to reducing carbon emissions and what are the key benefits they offer compared to traditional combustion engine vehicles?

2023 GS-III 15M · 250W

Q15. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has predicted a global sea level rise of about one metre by AD 2100. What would be its impact in India and the other countries in the Indian Ocean region?

2022 GS-III 15M · 250W

Q13. Discuss global warming and mention its effects on the global climate. Explain the control measures to bring down the level of greenhouse gases which cause global warming, in the light of the Kyoto Protocol, 1997.

2022 GS-III 10M · 250W

Q14. Discuss in detail photochemical smog emphasizing its formation, effects, and mitigation. Explain the 1999 Gothenburg Protocol.

2021 GS-III 10M · 250W

Q13. Describe the key points of the revised Global Air Quality Guidelines (AQGs) recently released by the World Health Organisation (WHO). How are these different from its last update in 2005? What changes in India's National Clean Air Programme are required to achieve these revised standards?

2020 GS-III 15M · 250W

Q14. What are the key features of the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) initiated by the Government of India?

2019 GS-III 10M · 250W

Q13. Coastal sand mining, whether legal or illegal, poses one of the biggest threats to our environment. Analyze the impact of sand mining along the Indian coasts, citing specific examples.

2018 GS-III 10M · 250W

Q12. What are the impediments in disposing the huge quantities of discarded solid wastes which are continuously being generated? How do we remove safely the toxic wastes that have been accumulating in our habitable environment?

2017 GS-III 10M · 250W

Q14. Not many years ago, river linking was a concept, but it is becoming a reality in the country. Discuss the advantages of river linking and its possible impact on the environment.

2017 GS-III 15M · 250W

Q15. 'Climate change' is a global problem. How India will be affected by climate change? How Himalayan and coastal states of India will be affected by climate change?

2015 GS-III 12.5M · 250W

Q14. Discuss the Namami Gange and National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) programmes and causes of mixed results from the previous schemes. What quantum leaps can help preserve the river Ganga better than incremental inputs?

2013 GS-III 10M · 200W

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.

2013 GS-III 10M · 200W

Q20. Enumerate the National Water Policy of India. Taking river Ganges as an example, discuss the strategies which may be adopted for river water pollution control and management. What are the legal provisions of management and handling of hazardous wastes in India?

Environmental impact assessment

2024 GS-III 10M · 250W

Q14. What role do environmental NGOs and activists play in influencing Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) outcomes for major projects in India? Cite four examples with all important details.

2020 GS-III 10M · 250W

Q12. How does the draft Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2020 differ from the existing EIA Notification, 2006?

2016 GS-III 12.5M · 250W

Q13. Rehabilitation of human settlements is one of the important environmental impacts which always attracts controversy while planning major projects. Discuss the measures suggested for mitigating this impact while proposing major developmental projects.

2014 GS-III 12.5M · 200W

Q13. Environmental Impact Assessment studies are increasingly undertaken before a project is cleared by the Government. Discuss the environmental impacts of coal-fired thermal plants located at coal pitheads.

www.unlockias.in/test_series