

Cracking the UPSC prelims

The Civil Services exam is around the corner and aspirants will be racing against time, trying to cover the entire length and breadth of the syllabus. This happens every year and many students are not in a position to understand the requirements of the examination.

The real problem with the test-takers is that they focus on what they do not know. The key areas for the examination can be easily comprehended from the prescribed syllabus and a thorough understanding of question paper patterns over the last 10 years. Upon analysis till 2015, it is clear that general science and science and technology, environmental ecology and geography cover more than 50 per cent of the paper and aspirants should focus on them. In addition, economy, polity and governance and art and culture will cover another 30 - 35 per cent of the questions. In an examination where the cut-off is more than 55 per cent (for the preliminary exams), negative marking may land one in trouble. Hence, attempt questions carefully and leave those which you are not confident about.

Another important aspect of UPSC preliminary exam preparation is to subscribe to a good test series at the all-India level as it will ensure that you cover current affairs and will help you get conceptual clarity on all subjects/topics that require revision. Many reputed institutes, including SuperProfs, are providing free online test series. Timed tests are a good way to identify weak areas and assess accuracy.

Once you identify your problem areas, do not panic. Sit down, relax and do self-study either from existing resources or turn to the Internet. This will save your considerable time.

However, if you know experienced teachers, you can seek help from them as well. Fortunately, such teachers are available on online platforms along with live doubt-clearing sessions and webinars. Civil services, as an examination, is not only a test of knowledge but also of aptitude. Keeping this in mind practice as many mock tests as possible with an eye on the time as time management is an important aspect of the examination. A good understanding of examination requirements, practice of mock test papers and time management are a sure shot recipe of success in the examination.