



ENHANCE YOUR WRITING SKILL

THE PREFACE

Generally, the aspirants' main focus is to write answers so that the paper is completed on time. In that intense pressure, it hardly matters that what exactly is being asked by the question, especially the key terms used in the questions and the pre-fix or the suffix mentioned in the question, for example, analyse/describe/explain, etc., therefore, there is a mismatch between the demand of the question and what actually has been written.

Most students know their subject, the concepts, theories and topics but they do not know how to present them. Remember,

EXAMINATION IS AN ART AND NOT NECESSARILY A TEST OF KNOWLEDGE.

You often see a student who has studied less hours but do well in examinations. Those who burn their midnight oil for nights and nights together and do not even pick up the calls of near and dear ones` do not do well in their examinations. Why so? They often blame their bad luck, some bad omen, curses of the hated ones. Quit this blame game, don't curse your labour and sincerity. Probably the cause lies in your lack of **writing skill**.

Give some thought to this, for every question of GS and Optional you follow a pattern of writing answers in which you normally first introduce the topic or the problem, then you write all aspects in different paragraphs and then you write a good conclusion. You have not written anything wrong but you don't get good marks. The question is why? We think you did three things or at least one of them:

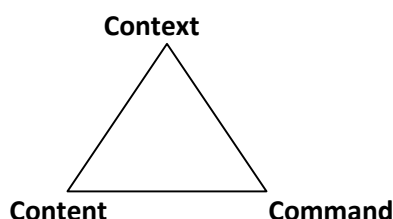
THE THREE PRINCIPLES THAT YOU IGNORE IN UNDERSTANDING QUESTIONS

1. You did not read the questions very sincerely
2. You did not care for the directions or commands or demands or whatever you may call it like Discuss, critically examine, Explain, Illustrate etc.
3. You did not give attention to the context of the question, parts of the question and the interrelation of the questions.

PLEASE, PLEASE AND PLEASE read the questions as sincerely as possible followed by

- Take your time in selection of the questions
- Write first that question answer you are most prepared
- Focus on the substance of the answer rather than length
- There should be a balance between quantity and quality
- Relate with context, content and command of the question

The philosophy of 3Cs for good answer



THE LENGTH OF THE ANSWER HAS LESS RELEVANCE THAN THE SUBSTANCE

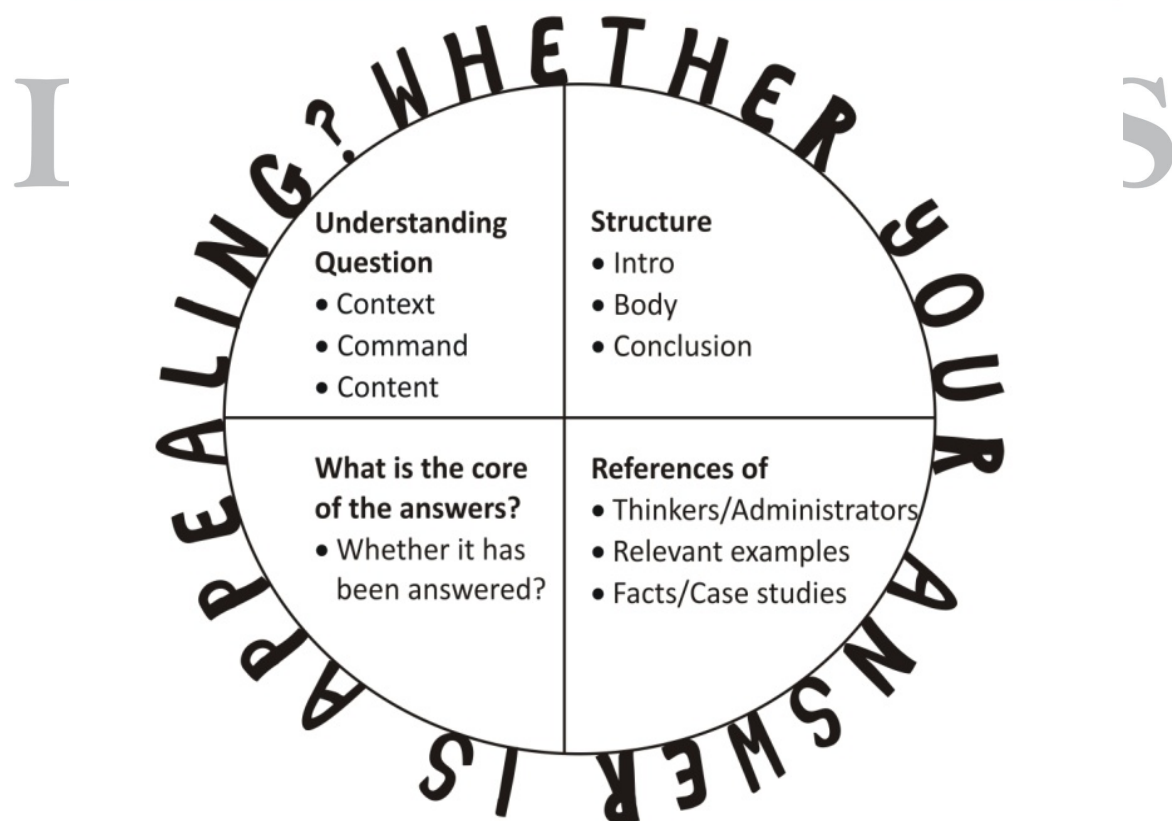
You may say, Sir, where is the time to brood so much, I will miss the answers. We must tell you don't write the maximum number of words you are allowed. There is a limit on the maximum words but not one on the minimum but then the words must be adequate. In writing your answers you write the first paragraph in essay form and the rest in points but the last paragraph of conclusion should be in essay form. There can be changes in this scheme if there is expediency.

So, to come to the main point; Read the question carefully and decide on three things:

1. What is the exact meaning of the question?
2. How many parts the question has?
3. What are the directions, demands or commands of the question?

Explanations

1. How better one understands the meaning depends upon the level of knowledge and understanding on the subject-matter /topic on which question has been framed.
2. The context of the question means largely why/when/what of the question.
3. A question can have different parts which may require answering to all parts.
4. One should have better understanding of Pre-fixes and suffixes which determine the command and direction of the question.

FOLLOW THE FIVE FUNDAMENTALS OF A GOOD ANSWER

UNDERSTANDING TERMINOLOGIES USED IN QUESTIONS

It is the pre-fix or suffix of the question which determines direction and command of the answer. It is for your convenience, we are trying to make explicit what is meant by these words and what you will write.

Terminology	Meaning and Demand
Discuss	In discuss you have to write two or all the aspects of an issue. Don't criticize, simply present all the sides in an analytical manner. As the conclusion you write a brief summary of all the sides.
Critically Discuss	<p>Critically discuss again has to aspects. In discuss one writes two aspects or all aspects of an issue or the problem. Discuss is an elaboration in which all the aspects of a problem, issue and a phenomenon are to be presented. Critically discuss is a popular command. Critically discuss indicate, one has to present all the aspects by examining its pros and cons. One does not only present all aspects but evaluate the different aspects.</p> <p>Critically discuss refers to examine either two aspects or aspects by examining aspects. One has to give the plus points and minus points of a phenomenon. For example, one has to critically discuss the Gandhian view of nonviolence. In this one has to see the plus points of nonviolence and one must give the example of India's national struggle. Then one has to severely criticize the concept of non-violence and cite all the negative aspects of nonviolence.</p>
Explain	<p>It is also a common directive. You write the meaning of the problem, all aspects involved in it. You simply try to write all the why which may emerge in the problem. We can give an example; Why smart city programme, this has to be written in 'explain smart city. Explain is the answer to all 'why'. It touches and explores all aspects.</p> <p>Explanations require you to write the context of the question. You explain or convince by providing this context. In simple terms you write all aspects without any criticism and your opinion.</p>
critically examine, examine and evaluate	<p>These all indicate the same meaning. You first write after two lines of introduction, a brief statement of what the idea or presentation is. Only then you evaluate, criticize or examine. Examine does not mean only a rejection of the idea. it also means support and praise. In such questions you do not criticise on your own. You are not eligible to criticise as scholars. Criticise on the basis of scholar's views.</p> <p>In nutshell, you should demolish the proposition.</p>
Comment	<p>Generally, this is presented at the end of the question and so it is called suffix. In comment, you write the different aspects of a problem or issue or the topic in an analytical manner and you also give your opinion.</p> <p>In comment the whole problem or issue is presented and different aspects and different views are presented related to the issue or the problem. No criticisms are to be attempted. Criticism is the view of a scholar and comment is your view.</p>
Critically Comment	Critically comment is a double evaluation in simple terms. In comment one has to give one's view on any particular issue. In comment one has the liberty to make any comments showing the for or against views. The comment is not baseless. It requires you to do a general perusal and then you comment. This general perusal is also a type of evaluation.

	<p>Critically comment requires you to show all the aspects with an evaluation which is systematic and on concrete grounds. One has to meticulously see one by one all issues. The evaluation is on certain criteria. This evaluation must indicate the merits and demerits of the given topic or problem.</p> <p>Critically comment therefore, indicate to comment after evaluation in a systematic way. Comment is the view of some body in a deliberate manner but when it is critically comment then the view has to be given after systematic evaluation. For example, if one has to comment on the question of nationalism, one can simply say nationalism is sacrosanct and nobody should be allowed say anything against it. The other non-critical comment can be nationalism has many bases and there can be different views on it.</p> <p>Critically comment has to go by an evaluation of the principle of nationalism and then one takes a position. One has to evaluate both the consequences of nationalism and also the positive effects of nationalism.</p>
Analyse	It is also a very frequent directive. You simply remember one analogy. As the medical students dissect insects or human organs in their laboratories so you analyse a problem. You go deeper, you want to see the inner meanings.
Critically Analyse	<p>We have already presented the meaning of analyse. One has to dissect any phenomenon trying to go deeper and present the causes of any phenomenon. This requires one to go inside any phenomenon and do the deep searching. Critically analyze means one is an intense deep inspector. One does not only show the underlying causes of a phenomenon but show all other dimensions.</p> <p>Critically analyze requires any one to show the underlying causes but also the plus and minus of any cause. This refers to seeing and imagining all the interrelated aspects of the causes. This is in-depth and analyzes underlying and interrelated causes. For example, one has to critically analyze the problem of black money in India. One has to write the sources of black money, the causes of black money, why it is difficult to identify black money, how other countries like USA have done this. Critically analyze does not mean you have to more rather deeper causes in very brief.</p>
Describe	It is the simplest directive. Describe is the description of a phenomenon or a simple statement of facts. In describe neither you criticise nor you analyse. You directly write about the apparent features. You write in straight way the features.
Illustrate, Elucidate, Enumerate and Elaborate	They are almost identical terms. Normally in central services examinations 'describe' is not given but other queries are there. In all these cases you state the facts or arguments in a straight forward manner. No criticisms should be attempted. Detailed description is required.
Distinguish	It indicates a directive when you have to write the differences between two or more phenomena. You distinguish all aspects.
Compare	It is a directive in which you first, in very brief present the meanings of the phenomena you are to compare. Then you write the differences as well as similarities of the two. In the conclusion when you are summarizing write what are more, the similarities or the differences.
Substantiate	It means you have to prove a particular proposition. You give only positive aspects. You present your arguments as a lawyer. You convince the examiner.

GENERAL STUDIES: SUGGESTED READINGS

GENERAL STUDIES- I

INDIAN HERITAGE AND CULTURE, HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY OF THE WORLD AND SOCIETY

INDIAN HERITAGE AND CULTURE: This Part will require appreciation of Indian art, sculpture, dance, architecture, music festivals, folklore, drama, literatures etc. One has to capture the evolution of Indian art and culture since ancient times. Out of 250 marks in this paper, it is expected that approximately 50-70 marks will be allotted to this section.

Suggested readings:

- Gazetteer of India-volume II
- A. L Basham: The wonder that was India
- S.A.A Rizvi: The wonder that was India (volume II)
- Books on India Dance, painting, temples etc of Publications Divisions and National Book Trust (NBT)

MODERN HISTORY: It covers the period between the Revolt of 1857 and modern times. It will have the following components:

- Political History: British conquest of India
 - Freedom Struggle: The moderates, the militants, the revolutionaries and the Gandhian Era.
 - Important leaders of freedom movement, their ideologies and contributions.
 - Social-Religious movements.
 - British Economic policies and their consequences.
 - Revolts: Tribal, peasant and popular revolts.
 - Educational and Press policies.
 - Important Governor Generals and the significant measures initiated by them.
- It is expected that this section will account for 70-80 marks

POST-INDEPENDENT INDIA: This will have questions relating to the following areas:

- Integration of Indian States.
- Linguistic Reorganisation of States.
- Task of nation building.
- Secularism, communalism, backward classes and affirmative action.

Suggested Readings:

- Tara Chand: History of Freedom Movement in India, Vol- I to IV, (Publications Division).
- Surendranath Sen: 1857 (Publications Division)
- Ancient India-Collection of Article (Publications Division)
- NCERT-Modern India.
- NBT- Freedom Struggle.
- Bipan Chandra-India's Struggle for Independence.
- Bipan Chandra-Post Independent India.
- Gazetteer of India- Volume II.

WORLD HISTORY: One can conceptualize and systematize the syllabus of the World History as follows:

Suggested Readings:

- NCERT: The Story of Civilization (2 Volumes)
- NCERT: Contemporary World History.
- L.Mukherji: A History of the World.

TOPICS RELATED TO INDIAN SOCIETY:Suggested Readings

- SC Dubey- Indian Society
- Arjun Appadurai – Globalisation
- NCERT Books on Sociology

GEOGRAPHY OF THE WORLD:Applied aspects have been emphasized in both Indian and World Geography syllabus. NCERT books on Indian and world Geography continue to remain extremely relevant to the new syllabus. The following books can help in covering the new geography syllabus:

- Physical Geography: Savindra Singh
- Geomorphology:Savindra Singh
- Oceanography: Sharma and Vatal (NCERT)
- Economics and Social Geography: Rupa Publications
- Environmental Geography: Savindra Singh
- Survey of Indian Agriculture: The Hindu Publications.
- Survey of Indian Economy: The Hindu Publications
- India-2017: Publications Division
- Certificate Physical and Human Geography: G. C. Leon

GENERAL STUDIES- II

GOVERNANCE, CONSTITUTION, POLITY, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.

This paper is likely to find utmost favour with the aspirants because it contains interesting areas like Polity, Constitution and International Relations. The new polity syllabus is very well outlined this time and it emphasizes on the following:

- Structure of our polity i.e. the Constitutional framework of our political system.
- Operational aspects of our polity.
- Issues relating to governance.
- Public Administration.

The following source-material can be consulted on polity:

- D.D.Basu: Indian Constitution.
- P.M.Bakshi: Indian Constitution
- S.C. Kashyap: Encyclopaedia of Governance
- S.C.Kashyap: Our Parliament (NBT)
- S.C.Kashyap: Our Political System (NBT)
- M Laxmikant: Indian Polity
- Arora and Goyal: Indian Administration
- LUKMAAN IAS printed notes

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS:It covers three areas: Indian Foreign Policy, International affairs, and International Organizations. Since very contemporary issues will be asked in this section, one has to keep a close watch on day to day happenings on international affairs specially those which have a bearing on India. The following sources can be consulted:

- Rajiv Sikri: Challenge and Strategy- Understanding India's foreign policy

- C.Rajamohan: Crossing the Rubicon
- World Focus (Magazine) & The Economist (Magazine)

The best way to cover these areas is to read relevant articles in leading newspapers. Doordarshan News, Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha TV presents excellent panel discussions on international issues. This gives a proper perspective and balanced approach and understanding of a particular issue.

GENERAL STUDIES- III

TECHNOLOGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, BIO-DIVERSITY, ENVIRONMENT, SECURITY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

TECHNOLOGY: Technology, questions will be framed on latest developments on the front of technology such as Nano-technology, robotics, IT, space etc. Emphasis would be on India's advances and future programmes on Science and Technology. There is no single book available to include the vast theme under this section. An effort has to be made to collect material from a variety of sources.

Suggested Readings:

- India Yearbook-2017
- Annual Reports of the department of Space, Atomic Energy, Ministry of Environment etc.
- Down to Earth (Magazine)

INDIAN ECONOMY: The current syllabus under this section can be covered by referring to the following source materials.

- Mishra and Puri: Indian Economy
- NCERT: India's Economic Development
- Relevant Economic Survey
- 12th Five Year Plan Document
- Any one Economic Newspaper
- Yojana & Kurukshetra.

ENVIRONMENT AND BIO-DIVERSITY

- NCERT: India's Physical Environment
- Together, Towards a Safer India: CBSE Publication

INTERNAL SECURITY

Since internal security is the greatest threat to our country, a good number of questions can be expected from this section of the syllabus. The Home Ministry is responsible for internal security. Its website contains vital information on the internal security architecture including agencies, plans, mechanism. Therefore, one must visit this site and extract highly useful material relating to internal security.

Suggested Readings:

- Annual Reports of Ministry of Home Affairs, Defence and External Affairs.
- ARC II report on public order
- M PUNCHHI Commission report

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

- ARC II report on crisis management

GENERAL STUDIES- IV

ETHICS, INTEGRITY AND APTITUDE: This GS paper is a complete dark zone for the Civil Services aspirants because it has been introduced for the first time by UPSC. This paper aims to evaluate the candidate's attitude and approach to issues relating to integrity, probity in public life. Further, it also seeks to test his solving approach to various issues and conflicts while dealing with society as a civil servant.

ETHICS AND INTEGRITY: These two concepts have been borrowed from public administration. They deal with administrative ethics and integrity in public life. A regular study of Newspapers with focus on issues before society and issues raised by Civic Society groups will help. These two areas can be covered from the following sources.

Suggested Readings:

1. ARC-II report on ethics in governance.
2. G. Subba Rao & Chaudhary

ATTITUDE, APTITUDE AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: These topics belong to the realm of psychology. Its theoretical aspects can be comprehended by referring to any good text book of psychology.

Suggested Readings:

1. NCERT (Psychology 10+2)

PUBLIC/CIVIL SERVICE VALUES & PROBITY IN GOVERNANCE:**Suggested Readings:**

1. ARC-II report on ethics in governance.
2. ARC-II report on Citizen Centric Administration
3. Nolan Committee Report
4. R. K. Arora – Ethics, Integrity and Values in Public Service
5. IGNOU Notes on Ethics

FOR CASE STUDIES

Read LUKMAAN IAS 100 CASE STUDIES NOTES

...Lead with Edge...