



UPSC CIVIL SERVICES MAINS EXAMINATION-2018

GUIDELINES FOR ANSWER WRITING PRACTICES

How to write the best answer in UPSC Mains Exam:

1. Firstly, you need to have a clear understanding of what the question is asking you to do.
2. Identify the 'directive words, which instruct you how to answer the question. It is the most significant step in producing your answer.
3. Brain storming – Jot down the relevant points that will form part of your answer.
4. Arrange the points in the order of importance. Side heading may be given.
5. Introduction, main, conclusion

a) Introduction

- It should include a few general statements about the subject to provide a background to your answer and to attract the reader's attention. It should try to explain why you are writing the essay. It may include a definition of terms in the context of the essay etc.
- It should introduce the central idea or the main purpose of the writing.

b) Conclusion

- It should recall the issues raised in the introduction and draw together the points made in the main body, and explain the overall significance of the conclusion. What general points can be drawn from the essay answer as a whole?

Do's	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Simple English with clarity in the points.• Always have a positive approach in your answer.• Underline the key/important words	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There should not be any repetition of points.• Do not criticize government policy (or) programmes.• Do not show leftist tendency in your answer.• Short cut, strictly should not be used.(Eg) Government: GOVT, with: \bar{c}

UPSC CIVIL SERVICES MAINS EXAMINATION-2018

GUIDELINES FOR ANSWER WRITING PRACTICES

Additional Points:

1. Flow chart, Map, Diagram etc can be placed in your answer.
2. As far as possible include examples recent policy measures – Current Update
3. ‘Captions’ Taken from Government Advertisement (or) speeches of Ministries
(Eg) “*Minimum Government, Maximum Government*”.
4. Innovative Answers or suggestions wherever asked.
5. Strictly follow your word limits.

List Of Significant “Directive Words” And Its Meaning :

Understanding the Meaning of these Directive words is a Vital First Step in writing Your Answer:

Analyse	‘Break an issue into its constituent parts. Look in depth at each part using supporting arguments and evidence for and against as well as how these interrelate to one another.
Assess	Weigh up to what extent something is true. Persuade the reader of your argument by citing relevant research but also remember to point out any flaws and counter arguments as well. Conclude by stating clearly how far you in agreement with the original proposition.
Clarify	Literally make something clearer and where appropriate, simplify it. This could involve, for example explaining in simpler terms a complex process or theory or the relationship between two variables.
Comment upon	Pick out the main points on a subject and give your opinion, reinforcing your point of view using logic and reference to relevant evidence, including any wider reading you have done.
Compare	Identify the similarities and differences between two or more phenomena, ‘compare’ and ‘contrast’ will often feature together in an essay question.
Contrast	Similar to compare but concentrate on the dissimilarities between two or more phenomena or what sets them apart.
Critically Evaluate	Give your verdict as to what extent a statement or findings within a piece of research are true, or to what extent you agree with them. Provide evidence taken from a wide range of sources which both agree with and contradict an argument. Come to a final conclusion, basing your decision on what you judge to be the most important factors and justify how you have made our choice.

UPSC CIVIL SERVICES MAINS EXAMINATION-2018

GUIDELINES FOR ANSWER WRITING PRACTICES

Define	To give in precise terms the meaning of something. Bring to attention any problems posted with the definition and different interpretations that may exist.
Demonstrate	Show how, with examples to illustrate.
Describe	Provide a detailed explanation as to how and why something happens – fact.
Discuss (What, Why, How, Whose, When)	Essentially this is a written debate where you are using your skill at reasoning, backed up by carefully selected evidence to make a case for and against an argument, or point out the advantages and disadvantages of a given context. Remember to arrive at a conclusion.
Elaborate	To give in more detail, provide more information on.
Examine:	Look in close detail and establish the key facts and important issues surrounding a topic. This should be a critical evaluation and you should try and offer reasons as to why, the facts and issues you have identified are the most important, as well as explain the different ways they could be construed.
Explain (What, Why, How)	Classify a topic by giving a detailed account as to how and why it occurs, or what is meant by the use of this term in a particular context. Your writing should have clarity so that complex procedures or sequences of events can be understood, defining key terms where appropriate, and be substantiated with relevant research.
Explore	Adopt a questioning approach and consider a variety of different view points. Where possible reconcile opposing views by presenting a final line of argument.
Give an account of (What)	Means give a detailed description of something. Not to be confused with ‘account for’ which asks you not only what, but why something happened.
Give an account for (what, why)	Explain what and also write why something happened.
Identify	Determine what are the key points to be addressed and implications thereof
Illustrate	A similar instruction to explain whereby you are asked to show the



UPSC CIVIL SERVICES MAINS EXAMINATION-2018

GUIDELINES FOR ANSWER WRITING PRACTICES

	workings of something, making use of definite examples and statistics if appropriate to add weight to your explanation.
Interpret	Demonstrate your understanding of an issue or topic. This can be the use of particular terminology by an author, or what the findings from a piece of research suggest to you. In the latter instance, comment on any significant patterns and causal relationships.
Justify	Make a case by providing a body of evidence to support your ideas and points of view. In order to present a balanced argument, consider opinions which may run contrary to your own before stating your conclusion.
Outline	Convey the main points placing emphasis on global structures and interrelationships rather than minute detail.
Review	Look thoroughly into a subject. This should be critical assessment and not merely descriptive.
Showhow	Present, in a logical order, and with reference to relevant evidence the stages and combination of factors that give rise to something.
State	To specify in clear terms the key aspects pertaining to a topic without being overly descriptive. Refer to evidence and examples where appropriate.
Summarise	Give a condensed version drawing out the main facts and omit superfluous information. Brief or general examples will normally suffice for this kind of answer.
To what extent	Evokes a similar response to questions containing how far.... this type of question calls for a thorough assessment of the evidence in presenting your argument. Explore alternative explanations where they exist.

PREPARED BY

Mr. M. Shunmugam

Founder & Director

Vetri IAS Study Circle