



MINIMALIST IAS

The UPSC Syllabus *X-Ray*

All 928 sub-topics of the UPSC syllabus – ranked by what UPSC has actually asked, with where to read each one, and boxes to tick it, revise it and own it.

928

sub-topics, Prelims to GS IV

2,659

UPSC questions mapped,
2016–2026

138

Core sub-topics that hold half
the GS questions

253

GS sub-topics not asked once
in 11 years

2027 edition · data to UPSC 2026



WHY THIS EXISTS

The syllabus tells you what is in the exam.

It never tells you what *matters*.

UPSC's syllabus is a list of lines. Every line looks equally important, so most aspirants give every line equal time — and run out of months. We broke the syllabus into 928 sub-topics and placed every question UPSC set from 2016 to 2026 under the sub-topic it came from. The picture that comes out is not flat at all.

60 of 429

the full X-Ray has 249 pages - minimalistias.com

Prelims GS sub-topics are behind **51%** of all 1,064 Prelims GS questions.

78 of 462

Mains GS sub-topics are behind **66%** of all 794 Mains GS questions.

253

GS sub-topics were **never asked** in 11 years — read once, don't live there.



THE CORE • PRELIMS GS

The 60 that carry half of Prelims

These 60 sub-topics — 14% of the Prelims GS syllabus — are behind **51% of all 1,064 questions** UPSC set from 2016 to 2026. Tick each one when you have studied it, then again on the big checklist — on screen, tap a name to jump to its row.

#	SUB-TOPIC	QS
☐	1 Animals in the news: species & habitats Environment & ecology	25
☐	2 Parliament: houses, sessions & conduct of business Polity & governance	24
☐	3 Greenhouse gases, emissions & carbon markets Environment & ecology	17
☐	4 Countries, regions & conflicts in the news Geography	16
☐	5 United Nations & its agencies International relations & current affairs	15
☐	6 Capital markets: shares, bonds & SEBI Economy & social development	14
☐	7 Digital, urban & infrastructure missions International relations & current affairs	13



THE CHECKLIST

Prelims · General Studies

429 sub-topics · 1,064 questions from 2016 to 2026.
Static subjects first, current affairs last.

Polity & governance

INDEX ↑

75 sub-topics · 146 questions · 13.7% of Prelims GS · **6 Core** · 13 High · 28 Steady · 28 Rare

Making of the Constitution, Preamble & features

★★★★★ 2.1% · 13 sub-topics · **2 Core**

☐ **STEADY** Constituent Assembly & making of the Constitution **P+M**

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NCERT 11 Indian Constitution at Work, ch 1 / M. Laxmikanth, Indian Polity, ch 'Making of the Constitution'

★★★★★ 2 Q · 0.2%  ○○○○

☐ **CORE** Preamble & its ideals **P+M** **Core #59 ↑**

NCERT 11 Indian Constitution at Work, ch 6 / M. Laxmikanth, Indian Polity, ch 'Preamble of the Constitution' / NCERT Class 11 Political Theory, chs 'Freedom' & 'Rights' / D.D. Basu, Introduction to the Constitution

★★★★★ 6 Q · 0.5%  ○○○○



YOUR SITUATION

Seven kinds of aspirant. Where each one starts.

The tiers are the same for everyone; the entry point isn't. Find yourself below.

Just starting, not sure yet

Reading NCERTs, nothing decided.

Start with the Prelims Core — the first 60 sub-topics — and read each one's NCERT chapter alongside. Use the 12-month plan; High only after the Core is ticked.

The free 30-minute call, then First Ascent →

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Working full-time

15–20 uneven hours a week.

Aim at Core + High only: 322 sub-topics across Prelims and Mains, behind four-fifths of the questions. Follow the 12-month plan's order at about 8 sub-topics a week, and leave Steady and Rare to a single pass at the end.

Ascent — a fixed weekly slot →