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Essay

UPSC PREVIOUS YEARS PAPPERS

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Essay Test Series

Previous Years UPSC-CSE Questions

2013

Write an essay on any of the following topics in not more than 2500 Words (250 marks)

- “Be the change you want to see in others” – Gandhiji
- Is the colonial mentality hindering India’s success?
- GDP (gross domestic product) along with GDH (gross domestic happiness) would be the right indices for judging the well-being of a country.
- Science and technology is the panacea for the growth and security of the nation.

2014

Write two essays, choosing ONE from each of the Sections A & B, in about 1000-1200 words each. 125 x 2 = 250

Section A

- With greater power comes greater responsibility.
- Is the growing level of competition good for the youth?
- Are the standardized tests good measure of academic ability or progress?
- Words are Sharper than the two-edged sword.

Section B

- Was it the policy paralysis or the paralysis of implementation which slowed the growth of our country?
- Is sting operation an invasion on privacy?
- Fifty Golds in Olympics: Can this be a reality for India?
- Tourism: Can this be the next big thing for India?

2015

Write two essays, choosing ONE from each of the Sections A & B, in about 1000-1200 words each. 125 x 2 = 250

Section A

- Lending hands to someone is better than giving a dole.
- Quick but steady wins the race.

- Character of an institution is reflected in its leader.
- Education without values, as useful as it is, seems rather to make a man more clever devil.

Section B

- Technology cannot replace manpower.
- Crisis faced in India – moral or economic.
- Dreams which should not let India sleep.
- Can capitalism bring inclusive growth?

2016

Essay Write two essays, choosing ONE from each of the Sections A & B, in about 1000-1200 words each.
125 x 2 = 250

Section A

- If development is not engendered, it is endangered
- Need brings greed, if greed increases it spoils breed
- Water disputes between states in federal India
- Innovation is the key determinant of economic growth and social welfare

Section B

- Cooperative federalism: Myth or reality
- Cyberspace and internet: Blessing or curse to the human civilization in the long run
- Near jobless growth in India: An anomaly or an outcome of economic reforms
- Digital economy: A leveller or a source of economic inequality.

2017

Write two essays, choosing ONE from each of the Sections A & B, in about 1000-1200 words each. 125 x 2 = 250

Section A

- Farming has lost the ability to be a source of subsistence for majority of farmers in India.
- Impact of the new economic measures on fiscal ties between the union and states in India.
- Destiny of a nation is shaped in its classrooms.
- Has the Non-Alignment Movement(NAM) lost its relevance in a multipolar world.

Section B

- Joy is the simplest form of gratitude.
- Fulfilment of 'new woman' in India is a myth.
- We may brave human laws but cannot resist natural laws.

- Social media is inherently a selfish medium.

2018

Write two essays, choosing ONE from each of the Sections A & B, in about 1000-1200 words each. 125 x 2 = 250

Section A

- Alternative technologies for a climate change resilient India
- A good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge
- Poverty anywhere is a threat to prosperity everywhere
- Management of Indian border disputes – a complex task

Section B

- Customary morality cannot be a guide to modern life
- “The past’ is a permanent dimension of human consciousness and values
- A people that values its privileges above its principles loses both
- Reality does not conform to the ideal, but confirms it

2019

Write two essays, choosing ONE from each of the Sections A & B, in about 1000-1200 words each. 125 x 2 = 250

Section A

- Wisdom finds truth
- Values are not what humanity is, but what humanity ought to be
- Best for an individual is not necessarily best for the society
- Courage to accept and dedication to improve are two keys to success

Section B

- South Asian societies are woven not around the state, but around their plural cultures and plural identities
- Neglect of primary health care and education in India are reasons for its backwardness
- Biased media is a real threat to Indian democracy
- Rise of Artificial Intelligence: the threat of jobless future or better job opportunities through reskilling and upskilling

2020

Write two essays, choosing ONE from each of the Sections A & B, in about 1000-1200 words each. 125 x 2 = 250

Section A

- Life is long journey between human being and being humane
- Mindful manifesto is the catalyst to a tranquil self
- Ships do not sink because of water around them, ships sink because of water that gets into them
- Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication

Section B

- Culture is what we are, civilization is what we have
- There can be no social justice without economic prosperity but economic prosperity without social justice is meaningless
- Patriarchy is the least noticed yet the most significant structure of social inequality
- Technology as the silent factor in international relations

2021

Section A

- The process of self-discovery has now been technologically outsourced.
- Your perception of me is a reflection of you; my reaction to you is an awareness of me.
- Philosophy of wantlessness is Utopian, while materialism is a chimera.
- The real is rational and the rational is real.

Section B

- Hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.
- What is research, but a blind date with knowledge!
- History repeats itself, first as a tragedy, second as a farce.
- There are better practices to “best practices”.

2022

Section A

- Forests are the best-case studies for economic excellence
- Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.
- History is a series of victories won by the scientific man over the romantic man.
- A ship in harbour is safe, but that is not what ship is for.

Section B

- The time to repair the roof is when the sun is shining?
- You cannot step twice in the same river.
- A smile is the chosen vehicle for all ambiguities.
- Just because you have a choice, it does not mean that any of them has to be right.

2023

Section A

- Thinking is like a game, it does not begin unless there is an opposite team.
- Visionary decision-making happens at the intersection of intuition and logic.
- Not all who wander are lost.
- Inspiration for creativity springs from the effort to look for the magical in the mundane.

Section B

- Girls are weighed down by restrictions, boys with demands- two equally harmful disciplines.
- Mathematics is the music of reasons.
- A society that has more justice is a society that needs less charity.
- Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school.

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