

• THE IAS AKADEMIA • VIKASH SIR

CLASS III OF III • 20 AUGUST 2026 • 7:00 PM

Tonight, *You Write.*

Two timed essays • one case study • the grand revision of both papers

Nothing new enters your preparation after tonight. Everything from here is recall, structure and nerve.

2

TIMED ATTEMPTS

6

SCREENSHOT SHEETS

0

NEW SOURCES

We are because you are

How tonight works

I	Attempt one • philosophical essay	"The journey of a human is from human being to being human" — you plan it cold, then we build it together	28 min
II	Attempt two • quotation essay	"The function of prayer is not to influence God but to change the nature of the one who prays"	26 min
III	Mark your own script	The examiner's checklist, applied honestly to what you just wrote	10 min
IV	Grand revision • both papers	Six screenshot sheets, two fifteen-minute checklists, two exam-hall algorithms	26 min

One rule for the writing blocks: no notes, no phones, no questions. The hall will not answer questions either.

ATTEMPT ONE · ESSAY

*"The journey of a human is from human
being to being human."*

No hints. No dimensions. Next slide, and write.

YOUR TURN

10 minutes · silent, no notes

"...from human being to being human."

WHAT DISTINCTION IS THE STATEMENT MAKING?

THESIS — ONE SENTENCE

"HUMAN BEING" MEANS —

FOUR EXAMPLES YOU WILL ACTUALLY USE

"BEING HUMAN" MEANS —

COUNTER-VIEW, THEN YOUR LAST LINE

The noun you are given, the verb you must earn

HUMAN BEING · A NOUN

Biological membership. Given at birth, requiring nothing, forfeitable by no one. A fact about the species — chromosomes, upright gait, a capacity for language.

Nobody has ever had to become a human being.

BEING HUMAN · A VERB

A moral achievement, renewed daily and reversible. Conscious, compassionate, responsible existence — chosen in situations where cruelty or indifference was equally available.

And everyone who has managed it has done so unevenly, on particular days, in particular acts.

The word "journey" is not decoration. It tells you the essay must move — from a condition to an achievement, with stages in between.

The journey is not one-directional. Atrocities have been committed by people who had once been kind. Any honest essay includes the possibility of regression.

The trap: writing three pages on kindness. Compassion is one station on this journey; responsibility, dignity and restraint are the others.

Seven stations from existence to self-transcendence



Use it as structure, not as content. Draw the ladder on the rough sheet, assign one example to each station, and the essay writes itself in order — with a natural place for the counter-view at station three, where freedom also permits cruelty.

Where to take the journey

DIMENSION	THE CLAIM	ONE EXAMPLE, TWO LINES
Evolution	Biology gave us the capacity, not the achievement	Cooperation evolved as advantage; what we call morality began as strategy and became conviction
Childhood and education	The journey is taught before it is chosen	Kohlberg's stages: the child who obeys from fear and the adult who obeys from principle perform the same act
Violence and war	The journey reverses under permission	Arendt at Eichmann's trial: catastrophe required ordinary men who stopped thinking, not monsters
Technology and AI	Distance makes cruelty administratively easy	Milgram's obedience findings; the moral distance of a drone operator or an engagement-optimised feed
Inequality	Structures can outsource our indifference for us	Deaths in manual scavenging, decades after prohibition — a law obeyed on paper and abandoned in practice
Constitutionalism	A republic can institutionalise the journey	Ambedkar's fraternity: not sentiment but the constitutional demand that dignity be extended beyond one's own
Administration	Being human is a professional competence, not a private virtue	Kerala's community kitchens: empathy expressed as logistics, at scale, under pressure
Everyday life	The journey is completed in unwitnessed acts	The clerk who explains the form to a woman who cannot read it, with no one watching and nothing gained

Notice: four of these examples came from Tuesday's Ethics bank. That is what "one idea, many questions" means in practice.

Philosophy that carries an argument

Aristotle Virtue is trained habit, not a single act. "Being human" is therefore a practice — and practices can lapse.	Kant Persons are ends, never merely means. The journey is the growing refusal to treat anyone as an instrument.	Buddha Hatred ceases by love, not by hatred. Compassion as discipline rather than mood — the Dhammapada, safely citable.
Gandhi Purity of means. Moral self-transformation as the precondition of political change, not its reward.	Vivekananda They alone live who live for others. Service as the completed form of the journey.	Ambedkar Fraternity as constitutional obligation — the journey written into a republic's founding text, and still unfinished.

Do not turn this essay into a quotation compilation. Six names in a thousand words reads as anxiety. Two, each doing work at a point of tension, reads as command.

And nothing from Tuesday's misattribution list. No "be the change", no "eye for an eye", no Aristotle-by-Durant. An invented citation costs more than a missing one.

Where the essay disagrees with itself

Counter-view 1 · the journey is not linear. The same civilisations that produced philosophy and music also produced industrial slaughter. Moral progress does not accumulate the way technical progress does.

Counter-view 2 · circumstance does much of the work. The Milgram findings suggest situation predicts behaviour better than character. Virtue may be partly a privilege of comfortable conditions.

Counter-view 3 · the framing flatters us. "Being human" implies the humane is our natural destination. The historical record is at best ambiguous about that.

The qualification that answers all three: if the journey were natural it would need no institutions. Constitutions, codes and courts exist precisely because the humane is achievable but not automatic — which is an argument for building them, not for despair.

THE ENDING · TRANSFORMATION TYPE

"Biology settles that we are human beings; it settles nothing else. Whether we become human is decided in ordinary hours — in what we refuse to do when refusal costs something, and in whether the institutions we build make that refusal easier for the next person than it was for us."

Two moves worth copying: the abstract claim is closed, then handed forward to institutions — which is what keeps a philosophical essay from ending in sentiment.

ATTEMPT TWO · ESSAY

*"The function of prayer is not to influence God
but to change the nature of the one who prays."*

A quotation topic. Do not define the quotation and start writing.

YOUR TURN

10 minutes • plan only

"...not to influence God but to change the one who prays."

THE CORE QUESTION BENEATH THE QUOTATION

SIX DIMENSIONS, AND THE LINK SENTENCE FOR EACH

THESIS — ONE SENTENCE

WHERE THE PRACTICE IS MISUSED — YOUR COUNTER-DIMENSION

OPENING — WHICH OF THE TEN TYPES, AND ITS FIRST LINE

LAST LINE

This is not an essay about religion

RUNG	WHAT YOU WRITE
The problem	Is the point of a moral practice its external result, or its effect on the one who practises it?
The human condition	We face outcomes we cannot control and demands we cannot escape — and must still act.
Individual	Arjuna's despair is not resolved by any change in the war; it is resolved by clarity about his duty. The Gita's counsel is to act and release the fruit.
Social	Shared practice trains a community — collective discipline rather than collective petition; equality performed by standing shoulder to shoulder.
Institutional	Gandhi's evening prayers were a discipline that trained a movement in restraint — a practice with a political function and no supernatural claim.
Psychological	Frankl's observation in the camps: meaning did not free anyone, and it made survival possible. Reflective practice builds resilience where circumstances cannot be altered.
Counterpoint	Reduced to bargaining, the same practice becomes escapism — responsibility outsourced upward instead of accepted. Ritual can substitute for conduct.
Synthesis	The practice is worth what it changes in the practitioner — which is exactly the test to apply to oaths of office, codes of conduct and every ceremony a republic keeps.

The move that lifts this essay: generalise beyond prayer. Any practice whose value lies in transforming the practitioner — an oath, a fast, a discipline, a service — belongs in the argument. That is how a quotation topic becomes a thesis rather than a devotional.

THE TWO ENDS OF THE ESSAY

How to open it, and how to land it

OPENING A · ANECDOTAL

"Gandhi's evening prayers did not stop a single lathi charge. He never expected them to. What they produced was a movement that could absorb the blow without returning it — and that was the point."

Concrete, historical, and it states the thesis without announcing it.

OPENING B · LITERARY

"Tagore asked in *Gitanjali* not to be sheltered from danger but to be fearless in facing it. The request is addressed upward and aimed inward — which is the whole argument of this essay."

A verified source, and a sentence that turns the quotation into a thesis.

THE ENDING · PHILOSOPHICAL SYNTHESIS

"Prayer, then, is not a negotiation with heaven but a discipline of the earthbound. Misunderstood as transaction, it breeds fatalism; practised as transformation, it produces people capable of acting well when acting well is expensive."

TWO CAUTIONS FOR THIS TOPIC

Never characterise any faith or its adherents critically — write about practices, never about believers. And keep the essay reflective: three paragraphs of scriptural quotation will read as a compilation, not an argument.

Mark your own script the way an examiner would

☐ My thesis appears in the first paragraph as a sentence, not a promise.	☐ Someone intelligent could disagree with that sentence.
☐ Every paragraph has one claim, and I can say what it is.	☐ Reading only my link sentences produces a coherent argument.
☐ Each example is two lines and names a concept, not a story.	☐ My examples come from at least four different domains.
☐ The counter-argument is stated in its strongest form, not a straw version.	☐ I answered it with a qualification, not with "a balanced approach is needed".
☐ No quotation on the misattribution list appears anywhere.	☐ No group, faith or region is caricatured in any sentence.
☐ The conclusion introduces no new argument and does not summarise.	☐ The last line is the best sentence in the essay.

Scoring honestly: nine or more ticks is a script in the 120s. Six to eight is a good essay that leaked marks in coherence. Five or fewer means the plan was skipped — and the plan takes twelve minutes.

THE LAST MOVEMENT

The Grand Revision

Six screenshot sheets. Both papers. Nothing on them is new — every line was taught in one of the last three evenings, and that is precisely why it will be available to you on the day.

500

Ethics · definitions and distinctions

FOUNDATIONS

Ethics reasoned standard of right, independent of law · **Morality** norms a community actually practises · **Value** belief that decides action when duties compete · **Virtue** trained disposition, Aristotle's hexis · **Conscience** recognition prior to instruction · **Duty** obligation independent of mood · **Dharma** duty calibrated to role · **Justice** distributive, procedural, corrective

ATTITUDE AND EI

Attitude cognition, affect, behaviour · **Aptitude** capacity to perform the role · **EI** recognise, manage, use emotion · **Self-awareness** naming the state in real time · **Self-regulation** the pause before the response · **Empathy** from inside the other's position · **Amygdala hijack** the half-second without judgment · **PSM** intrinsic motivation of public work

CORRUPTION · NAME THE FORM

Embezzlement · patronage · regulatory capture · quid pro quo · conflict of interest · moral hazard · free rider · moral disengagement (Bandura) · banality of evil (Arendt)

GOVERNANCE

Integrity being undivided · **Probity** integrity built into process · **Objectivity** fidelity to evidence · **Impartiality** equal treatment of persons · **Accountability** vertical, horizontal, social · **Transparency** visible criteria and records · **Constitutional morality** fidelity to the spirit, cultivated not natural · **Discretion** latitude that permits both compassion and extraction

THE SIX DISTINCTIONS · WRITE EACH WITH "VERSUS"

Ethics vs morality · integrity (person) vs probity (system) · empathy (understands, acts) vs sympathy (feels) · objectivity (evidence) vs impartiality (persons) · bribery (willing) vs extortion (coerced) · nepotism (blood) vs cronyism (friendship)

THE DEFINITION FORMULA

Genus + differentiator + administrative consequence, in under twenty-five seconds. If it takes longer, it is a paragraph pretending to be a definition.

A · Master flowchart. Stakeholders → name the conflict → apply frameworks → constitutional check → decide and justify → build safeguards.

C · Klitgaard. $C = M + D - A$. Reduce monopoly (GeM, e-auction), reduce discretion (published criteria, DBT), raise accountability (RTI, CVC, Lokpal, social audit).

E · EI pyramid. Self-awareness → self-regulation → motivation → empathy → relationship management. Personal competence beneath social.

G · Corruption iceberg. Above: bribery, embezzlement. Below: nepotism, patronage, capture, policy written for one bidder, undeclared interest.

I · ABC attitude cycle. Cognition → affect → behaviour. Persuasion enters at cognition, training at behaviour.

K · Decision funnel. Individual values + constitutional values + public interest + consequences → defensible decision.

B · Theory wheel. Deontology (duty) · consequentialism (outcome) · virtue (character) · care (this person) — each with its named weakness.

D · COI tree. Actual → prosecution · potential → declare and recuse · apparent → disclose and document. Remedies escalate: declare, recuse, divest, transfer, refuse.

F · Kohlberg. Pre-conventional (punishment, exchange) → conventional (approval, law) → post-conventional (social contract, universal principles).

H · Integrity–probity matrix. High integrity + weak process = heroic but fragile. Low + strong = constrained. High + strong = the goal.

J · Legitimacy chain. Transparency → accountability → trust → legitimacy → compliance without coercion.

Drawing rules. Five to seven boxes · label with the concept · one arrow direction · one sentence underneath · thirty seconds, no ruler.

The example bank, by concept

INSTITUTIONAL INDEPENDENCE Seshan's ECI · Sreedharan's Metro · CAG reports · judicial recusal norms	LEGALITY VS ETHICS The Emergency · punitive demolitions before adjudication · lawful anonymity of electoral bonds struck down	REDUCING DISCRETION DBT · GeM · Right to Service Acts · published criteria in allocation
TRANSPARENCY RTI 2005 · Sweden 1766 · social audit of MGNREGA muster rolls · BRSR disclosure	COMPASSION IN DELIVERY Kerala's community kitchens · PM-POSHAN gaps as the counter-example · Mission Karmayogi	COURAGE AND DISSENT Ambedkar's 1951 resignation · whistleblowers in procurement · Socrates' trial · Russell's imprisonment
CONSENT AND RESEARCH ETHICS Tuskegee · Henrietta Lacks · Nuremberg Code · thalidomide · He Jiankui	OBEDIENCE AND DISENGAGEMENT Milgram · Abu Ghraib · My Lai · superior orders rejected at Nuremberg · Rwanda	ENVIRONMENT AND THE FUTURE Montreal Protocol · Bhopal · Green Revolution's ecological cost · Bishnoi and Chipko
FAIR PLAY Maradona's handball · Sandpapergate · Mankading · Vinesh Phogat's disqualification · Jesse Owens 1936	RIGHT AGAINST RIGHT Antigone · Arjuna · Les Misérables' Javert · 12 Angry Men · Newton	ONE IDEA, MANY QUESTIONS Pick five examples. For each, list the eight questions it can answer. Five examples used eight ways beats fifty revised once.

Thinkers, safe quotations, and what to avoid

TWELVE THINKERS · ONE SENTENCE EACH

Aristotle virtue as the mean, character as trained habit

Socrates / Plato the examined life; each part performing its function

Kant universalisability; persons as ends

Bentham / Mill greatest happiness; quality over quantity

Rawls fairness behind the veil of ignorance

Arendt evil done by those who never decided to be evil

Sen development as freedom; *niti* and *nyaya*

Ambedkar constitutional morality must be cultivated

Gandhi purity of means; trusteeship; the seven social sins

Buddha hatred ceases by love (Dhammapada 1.5)

Vivekananda they alone live who live for others

Kautilya the king's welfare lies in his subjects' welfare

INDIAN CONCEPTS · TRANSLATE IN THE SAME SENTENCE

Nishkama karma (desireless action) · *svadharma* (duty of this role) · *niti* and *nyaya* (rules and realised justice) · trusteeship · *anekantavada* (many-sidedness) · *sthitaprajna* (steadiness). **Maximum two per answer.**

DO NOT ATTRIBUTE THESE

"Be the change you want to see" — not in Gandhi's Collected Works

"An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind" — a biographer's paraphrase

"We are what we repeatedly do" — Will Durant, not Aristotle

"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil..." — unverified in Burke

"Insanity is doing the same thing..." — not Einstein

"Give a man a fish..." — not Confucius

"The unexamined life..." — genuine, but from the *Apology*, not *The Republic*

Safer habit: name the idea and the tradition — "as the Dhammapada teaches" — rather than a citation you cannot defend. And delete any thinker whose removal would leave the paragraph unchanged.

Case studies · method, options, language

S.T.A.K.E. · THE RECALL WORD

Stakeholders, four tiers · Tensions, named as a pair · Alternatives, four or five · Knowledge: Constitution, rule, framework · Execution and evaluation, ending in a safeguard

STAKEHOLDER TIERS

Primary (directly affected) · secondary (colleagues, community, family) · institutional (the office, the service, the precedent) · future and invisible (next generation, ecosystem, the citizen who never complains)

OPTION GENERATION · NEVER TWO

Immediate (stop the harm) → institutional (use the channel, on record) → consultative (bring in those with standing) → corrective (undo the damage) → preventive (change the incentive)

DILEMMA MATRIX · FIVE COLUMNS

Legality · ethics · public interest · feasibility · long-term impact. Rule it in thirty seconds, then justify the chosen row in one sentence.

RECURRING TYPES

Political pressure · corruption by a colleague · conflict of interest · whistleblowing · communal tension · disaster · protest · privacy vs security · procurement · harassment · relationship vs duty · environment vs livelihood

LANGUAGE · TWO OR THREE PER ANSWER

Proportional response · least restrictive alternative · due process · procedural fairness · reasoned decision · disclosure · institutional accountability · public trust · empathy without compromising legality · immediate relief with systemic correction · intergenerational equity

The essay paper on one screen

Topic	Decode	Thesis	Introduction	Dimensions	Counter-argument	Conclusion
DECODE · EIGHT QUESTIONS Keyword · proposition · hidden tension · is it absolute · philosophical question beneath · my thesis · counter-thesis · synthesis I will defend		TEN OPENINGS Anecdotal · historical · contemporary · philosophical question · paradox · dialogue · literary · constitutional · metaphor · circular		INTRO INTO BODY Image → interpretation → central question → thesis → first dimension. Never "now let us discuss the dimensions".		
PARAGRAPH UNIT Claim → explain → example → link. 60–80 words. One example per claim. The link makes the next paragraph inevitable.		TEN TRANSITIONS Deepen · change scale · change domain · qualify a virtue · move in time · concede · reverse causation · widen · narrow · close. Never "moreover".		EIGHT ENDINGS Return to opening · philosophical synthesis · future · constitutional · humanistic · metaphorical · call to wisdom · transformation		
PHILOSOPHICAL LADDER Quote → problem → human condition → individual → social → institutional → counterpoint → contemporary → synthesis returning to the quote		LITERARY TOPICS Literal image → symbolic meaning → human question → thesis. One image, returning twice. Journey · river · light · roots · walls · seeds · bridges		THE CLOCK, PER ESSAY Selection 5 · decode and plan 12 · write 60 · read back 8. Never begin writing before the twelfth minute.		

The last fifteen minutes — both papers

BEFORE GS PAPER IV

Six definitions, said in your head — not read

Three diagrams you are certain of

Five examples, with dates

Five thinkers, one sentence each — not six

Constitutional values: dignity, equality, fraternity, justice, liberty

Four stakeholder tiers, in order

Five columns of the dilemma matrix

Five option tiers, ending in preventive

"Compassion inside the rule, never instead of it"

One adaptable conclusion sentence, rehearsed

BEFORE THE ESSAY PAPER

Do not rush topic selection

Identify the exact proposition, not the theme

Write the thesis on the rough sheet first

Decide the opening and the ending together

Every paragraph connects to the one before

Include the counter-argument at full strength

Maintain balance — caricature nobody

Keep returning to the central theme

Do not let the essay become a GS answer

End higher than you began

Three sequences, one page

ETHICS · THEORY

READ
DECODE
DEFINE
STRUCTURE
EXAMPLE
DIAGRAM
BALANCE
CONCLUDE

ETHICS · CASE STUDY

STAKEHOLDERS
ISSUES
OPTIONS
EVALUATION
DECISION
IMPLEMENTATION
PREVENTION

ESSAY

TOPIC SELECTION
DECODING
BRAINSTORM
THESIS
INTRO + CONCLUSION
BODY FLOW
COUNTERPOINT
FINISH STRONGLY

If the clock beats you in a case study, write PREVENTION as one line and stop. If it beats you in an essay, write the conclusion you already chose. Never abandon the ending.

THREE DAYS FROM HERE

You have already studied enough.

You do not need to know everything. You need to express clearly what you already know — and you have spent three evenings making exactly that easier.

Do not try to impress the examiner.

*Make it easy for the examiner
to give you marks.*

A visible structure. A defined term. A dated example. A labelled diagram. A stated objection. A decision with a reason.

Nothing here is a flourish. Each one is a place where an examiner reading three hundred scripts can put a tick without hunting for the reason.

500 marks. Ethics + Essay. Three evenings.

No new burden

No new books

No panic

Recall

say it without the notes

Structure

headings before sentences

Application

one idea, many questions

Expression

make the mark easy to give

END OF THE MARATHON

Now convert preparation *into marks.*

Three evenings, two papers, one habit: everything you know, made reachable.

The IAS Akademia

We are because you are

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All the best for Mains 2026