GS-II: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Answer Writing Workbook

Previous Year Questions · 2013 to 2024

Name: _____

Roll No: _____ Batch: _____

Start Date: _____ Target Date: _____

How to Use This Workbook

Answer Space Allocation:

5 Marks — 1 A4 page of writing space (~50 words)
10 / 12.5 Marks — 2 A4 pages of writing space (~150–200 words)
15 Marks — 3 A4 pages of writing space (~250 words)

Each Question Header Shows:

Question Number · Sub-Theme · UPSC Year · Marks

Track Your Performance:

Use the Date / Score / Remarks line below each question card.
Get your answers evaluated and note the score for revision tracking.

Total Questions: 53 | Sections: 4 | Years: 2013–2024



1. India and its Neighborhood — Relations

PYQs 2013 – 2024

Q.1 · India's Neighbourhood Policy & Diplomatic Doctrines | UPSC 2013 | **10 Marks**

What is meant by Gujral doctrine? Does it have any relevance today? Discuss.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 10 Remarks: _____

Q.2 · India's Neighbourhood Policy & Diplomatic Doctrines | UPSC 2015 | **12.5 Marks**

Project 'Mausam' is considered a unique foreign policy initiative of the Indian Government to improve relationship with its neighbors. Does the project have a strategic dimension? Discuss.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 12.5 Remarks: _____

Q.3 · India–Sri Lanka & Maldives: Island Neighbour Dynamics | UPSC 2013 | **10 Marks**

Discuss the political developments in Maldives in the last two years. Should they be of any cause of concern to India?

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 10 Remarks: _____

Q.4 · India–Sri Lanka & Maldives: Island Neighbour Dynamics | UPSC 2013 | **10 Marks**

In respect of India-Sri Lanka relations, discuss how domestic factors influence foreign policy.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 10 Remarks: _____

Q.5 · India–Sri Lanka & Maldives: Island Neighbour Dynamics | UPSC 2022 | **10 Marks**

India is an age-old friend of Sri Lanka. Discuss India's role in the recent crisis in Sri Lanka in the light of the preceding statement.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 10 Remarks: _____

Q.6 · India–Pakistan, Bangladesh & Soft Power Diplomacy | UPSC 2015 | **12.5 Marks**

Terrorist activities and mutual distrust have clouded India-Pakistan relations. To what extent the use of soft power like sports and cultural exchanges could help generate goodwill between the two countries? Discuss with suitable examples.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 12.5 Remarks: _____

Q.7 · India–Pakistan, Bangladesh & Soft Power Diplomacy | UPSC 2013 | **10 Marks**

The protests in Shahbag Square in Dhaka in Bangladesh reveal a fundamental split in society between the nationalists and Islamic forces. What is its significance for India?

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 10 Remarks: _____

2. Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements Involving India

PYQs 2013 – 2024

Q.8 · India's Bilateral Relations: USA, Japan, Israel, China & Maldives | UPSC 2019 | **10 Marks**

'The time has come for India and Japan to build a strong contemporary relationship, one involving global and strategic partnership that will have a great significance for Asia and the world as a whole.' Comment.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 10 Remarks: _____

Q.9 · India's Bilateral Relations: USA, Japan, Israel, China & Maldives | UPSC 2019 | **15 Marks**

"What introduces friction into the ties between India and the United States is that Washington is still unable to find for India a position in its global strategy, which would satisfy India's National self-esteem and ambitions". Explain with suitable examples.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 15 Remarks: _____

Q.10 · India's Bilateral Relations: USA, Japan, Israel, China & Maldives | UPSC 2013 | **10 Marks**

Economic ties between India and Japan, while growing in recent years, are still far below their potential. Elucidate the policy constraints which are inhibiting this growth.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 10 Remarks: _____

Q.11 · India's Bilateral Relations: USA, Japan, Israel, China & Maldives | UPSC 2018 | **10 Marks**

India's relations with Israel have, of late, acquired a depth and diversity, which cannot be rolled back. Discuss.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 10 Remarks: _____

Q.12 · India's Bilateral Relations: USA, Japan, Israel, China & Maldives | UPSC 2020 | **15 Marks**

What is the significance of Indo-US defence deals over Indo-Russian defence deals? Discuss with reference to stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 15 Remarks: _____

Q.13 · India's Bilateral Relations: USA, Japan, Israel, China & Maldives | UPSC 2014 | **12.5 Marks**

With respect to the South China Sea, maritime territorial disputes and rising tension affirm the need for safeguarding maritime security to ensure freedom of navigation and over flight throughout the region. In this context, discuss the bilateral issues between India and China.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 12.5 Remarks: _____

Q.14 · India's Bilateral Relations: USA, Japan, Israel, China & Maldives | UPSC 2024 | **10 Marks**

Discuss the geopolitical and geostrategic importance of Maldives for India with a focus on global trade and energy flows. Further also discuss how this relationship affects India's maritime security and regional stability amidst international competition?

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 10 Remarks: _____

Q.15 · SAARC, SCO, BIMSTEC & Central Asian Engagement | UPSC 2016 | **12.5 Marks**

Increasing cross-border terrorist attacks in India and growing interference in the internal affairs of several member-states by Pakistan are not conducive for the future of SAARC. Explain with suitable examples.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 12.5 Remarks: _____

Q.16 · SAARC, SCO, BIMSTEC & Central Asian Engagement | UPSC 2016 | **12.5 Marks**

Evaluate the economic and strategic dimensions of India's Look East Policy in the context of the post-Cold War international scenario.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 12.5 Remarks: _____

Q.17 · SAARC, SCO, BIMSTEC & Central Asian Engagement | UPSC 2021 | **15 Marks**

Critically examine the aims and objectives of SCO. What importance does it hold for India?

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 15 Remarks: _____

Q.18 · SAARC, SCO, BIMSTEC & Central Asian Engagement | UPSC 2022 | **10 Marks**

Do you think that BIMSTEC is a parallel organisation like the SAARC? What are the similarities and dissimilarities between the two? How are Indian foreign policy objectives realized by forming this new organisation?

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 10 Remarks: _____

Q.19 · SAARC, SCO, BIMSTEC & Central Asian Engagement | UPSC 2023 | **10 Marks**

'Virus of Conflict is affecting the functioning of the SCO'. In the light of the above statement point out the role of India in mitigating problems.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 10 Remarks: _____

Q.20 · SAARC, SCO, BIMSTEC & Central Asian Engagement | UPSC 2024 | **10 Marks**

Critically analyse India's evolving diplomatic, economic and strategic relations with the Central Asian Republics (CARs) highlighting their increasing significance in regional and global geopolitics.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 10 Remarks: _____

Q.21 · Quad, AUKUS, I2U2, Africa & Transregional Partnerships | UPSC 2015 | **12.5 Marks**

Increasing interest of India in Africa has its pros and cons. Critically examine.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 12.5 Remarks: _____

Q.22 · Quad, AUKUS, I2U2, Africa & Transregional Partnerships | UPSC 2021 | **10 Marks**

"If the last few decades were of Asia's growth story, the next few are expected to be of Africa's." In the light of this statement, examine India's influence in Africa in recent years.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 10 Remarks: _____

Q.23 · Quad, AUKUS, I2U2, Africa & Transregional Partnerships | UPSC 2017 | **15 Marks**

The question of India's Energy Security constitutes the most important part of India's economic progress. Analyze India's energy policy cooperation with West Asian Countries.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 15 Remarks: _____

Q.24 · Quad, AUKUS, I2U2, Africa & Transregional Partnerships | UPSC 2020 | **15 Marks**

'Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad)' is transforming itself into a trade bloc from a military alliance, in present times. Discuss.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 15 Remarks: _____

Q.25 · Quad, AUKUS, I2U2, Africa & Transregional Partnerships | UPSC 2021 | **15 Marks**

The newly tri-nation partnership AUKUS is aimed at countering China's ambitions in the Indo-Pacific region. Is it going to supersede the existing partnerships in the region? Discuss the strength and impact of AUKUS in the present scenario.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 15 Remarks: _____

Q.26 · Quad, AUKUS, I2U2, Africa & Transregional Partnerships | UPSC 2022 | **15 Marks**

How will I2U2 (India, Israel, UAE and USA) grouping transform India's position in global politics?

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 15 Remarks: _____

3. Effect of Policies of Developed & Developing Countries on India; Indian Diaspora

PYQs 2013 – 2024

Q.27 · Major Power Geopolitics, China's Rise & India's Strategic Interests | UPSC 2021 | **10 Marks**

"The USA is facing an existential threat in the form of a China, that is much more challenging than the erstwhile Soviet Union." Explain.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 10 Remarks: _____

Q.28 · Major Power Geopolitics, China's Rise & India's Strategic Interests | UPSC 2013 | **10 Marks**

The proposed withdrawal of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) from Afghanistan in 2014 is fraught with major security implications for the countries of the region. Examine in light of the fact that India is faced with a plethora of challenges and needs to safeguard its own strategic interests.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 10 Remarks: _____

Q.29 · Major Power Geopolitics, China's Rise & India's Strategic Interests | UPSC 2013 | **10 Marks**

What do you understand by 'The String of Pearls'? How does it impact India? Briefly outline the steps taken by India to counter this.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 10 Remarks: _____

Q.30 · Major Power Geopolitics, China's Rise & India's Strategic Interests | UPSC 2017 | **10 Marks**

'China is using its economic relations and positive trade surplus as tools to develop potential military power status in Asia'. In the light of this statement, discuss its impact on India as her neighbor.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 10 Remarks: _____

Q.31 · Major Power Geopolitics, China's Rise & India's Strategic Interests | UPSC 2018 | **10 Marks**

A number of outside powers have entrenched themselves in Central Asia, which is a zone of interest to India. Discuss the implications, in this context, of India's joining the Ashgabat Agreement, 2018.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 10 Remarks: _____

Q.32 · Major Power Geopolitics, China's Rise & India's Strategic Interests | UPSC 2018 | **15 Marks**

In what ways would the ongoing US-Iran Nuclear Pact Controversy affect the national interest of India? How should India respond to this situation?

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 15 Remarks: _____

Q.33 · Major Power Geopolitics, China's Rise & India's Strategic Interests | UPSC 2019 | **15 Marks**

"The long-sustained image of India as a leader of the oppressed and marginalised Nations has disappeared on account of its new found role in the emerging global order". Elaborate.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 15 Remarks: _____

Q.34 · Major Power Geopolitics, China's Rise & India's Strategic Interests | UPSC 2023 | **15 Marks**

'The expansion and strengthening of NATO and a stronger US-Europe strategic partnership works well in India.' What is your opinion about this statement? Give reasons and examples to support your answer.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 15 Remarks: _____

Q.35 · Major Power Geopolitics, China's Rise & India's Strategic Interests | UPSC 2024 | **10 Marks**

The West is fostering India as an alternative to reduce dependence on China's supply chain and as a strategic ally to counter China's political and economic dominance. Explain this statement with examples.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 10 Remarks: _____

Q.36 · Indian Diaspora: Economic & Political Significance | UPSC 2020 | **10 Marks**

'Indian diaspora has a decisive role to play in the politics and economy of America and European Countries'. Comment with examples.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 10 Remarks: _____

Q.37 · Indian Diaspora: Economic & Political Significance | UPSC 2017 | **15 Marks**

Indian Diaspora has an important role to play in South-East Asian countries' economy and society. Appraise the role of Indian Diaspora in South-East Asia in this context.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 15 Remarks: _____

Q.38 · Indian Diaspora: Economic & Political Significance | UPSC 2023 | **10 Marks**

Indian diaspora has scaled new heights in the West. Describe its economic and political benefits for India.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 10 Remarks: _____

4. Important International Institutions, Agencies and Fora — Structure & Mandate

PYQs 2013 – 2024

Q.39 · IMF, World Bank, NDB & AIIB: Development Finance | UPSC 2014 | **12.5 Marks**

Some of the International funding agencies have special terms for economic participation stipulating a substantial component of the aid to be used for sourcing equipment from the leading countries. Discuss on merits of such terms and if, there exists a strong case not to accept such conditions in the Indian context.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 12.5 Remarks: _____

Q.40 · IMF, World Bank, NDB & AIIB: Development Finance | UPSC 2013 | **10 Marks**

The World Bank and the IMF, collectively known as the Bretton Woods Institutions, are the two intergovernmental pillars supporting the structure of the world's economic and financial order. Superficially, the World Bank and the IMF exhibit many common characteristics, yet their role, functions and mandate are distinctly different. Elucidate.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 10 Remarks: _____

Q.41 · IMF, World Bank, NDB & AIIB: Development Finance | UPSC 2014 | **12.5 Marks**

India has recently signed to become founding a New Development Bank (NDB) and also the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). How will the role of the two Banks be different? Discuss the significance of these two Banks for India.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 12.5 Remarks: _____

Q.42 · United Nations: UNSC, UNESCO, WHO, IMO & Climate Diplomacy | UPSC 2019 | **10 Marks**

'Too little cash, too much politics, leaves UNESCO fighting for life.' Discuss the statement in the light of US' withdrawal and its accusation of the cultural body as being 'anti-Israel bias'.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 10 Remarks: _____

Q.43 · United Nations: UNSC, UNESCO, WHO, IMO & Climate Diplomacy | UPSC 2016 | **12.5 Marks**

What are the aims and objectives of the McBride Commission of the UNESCO? What is India's position on these?

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 12.5 Remarks: _____

Q.44 · United Nations: UNSC, UNESCO, WHO, IMO & Climate Diplomacy | UPSC 2017 | **10 Marks**

What are the main functions of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)? Explain different functional commissions attached to it.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 10 Remarks: _____

Q.45 · United Nations: UNSC, UNESCO, WHO, IMO & Climate Diplomacy | UPSC 2020 | **10 Marks**

Critically examine the role of WHO in providing global health security during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 10 Remarks: _____

Q.46 · United Nations: UNSC, UNESCO, WHO, IMO & Climate Diplomacy | UPSC 2015 | **12.5 Marks**

Discuss the impediments India is facing in its pursuit of a permanent seat in UN Security Council.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 12.5 Remarks: _____

Q.47 · United Nations: UNSC, UNESCO, WHO, IMO & Climate Diplomacy | UPSC 2024 | **15 Marks**

Terrorism has become a significant threat to global peace and security. Evaluate the effectiveness of the United Nations Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) and its associated bodies in addressing and mitigating this threat at the international level.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 15 Remarks: _____

Q.48 · United Nations: UNSC, UNESCO, WHO, IMO & Climate Diplomacy | UPSC 2023 | **15 Marks**

'Sea is an important Component of the Cosmos'. Discuss in the light of the above statement the role of the IMO (International Maritime Organisation) in protecting environment and enhancing maritime safety and security.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 15 Remarks: _____

Q.49 · United Nations: UNSC, UNESCO, WHO, IMO & Climate Diplomacy | UPSC 2022 | **15 Marks**

Clean energy is the order of the day. Describe briefly India's changing policy towards climate change in various international fora in the context of geopolitics.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 15 Remarks: _____

Q.50 · WTO: Trade Negotiations, Doha Round & India's Position | UPSC 2014 | **12.5 Marks**

The aim of Information Technology Agreements (ITAs) is to lower all taxes and tariffs on information technology products by signatories to zero. What impact should such agreements have on India's interests?

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 12.5 Remarks: _____

Q.51 · WTO: Trade Negotiations, Doha Round & India's Position | UPSC 2016 | **12.5 Marks**

The broader aims and objectives of WTO are to manage and promote international trade in the era of globalization. But the Doha round of negotiations seem doomed due to differences between the developed and the developing countries. Discuss in the Indian perspective.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 12.5 Remarks: _____

Q.52 · WTO: Trade Negotiations, Doha Round & India's Position | UPSC 2018 | **15 Marks**

What are the key areas of reform if the WTO has to survive in the present context of 'Trade War', especially keeping in mind the interest of India?

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 15 Remarks: _____

Q.53 · WTO: Trade Negotiations, Doha Round & India's Position | UPSC 2014 | **12.5 Marks**

WTO is an important international institution where decisions taken affect countries in profound manner. What is the mandate of WTO and how binding are their decisions? Critically analyse India's stand on the latest round of talks on Food security.

Date: _____ Score: _____ / 12.5 Remarks: _____