

Tips for Writing Better Answers in UPSC Main Examination

Style of Answering Questions

It is vitally important to understand the question first. If you are asked to “elucidate”, “discuss”, “critically appreciate”, explain or “give reasons for and against”, preferred mode of answering should be descriptive. It is through your style of answering questions, one can get a chance to examine your analytical abilities or originality of thought. Right strategy is to devote five or ten minutes of your time to run through the question paper which will help you decide which questions have to be answered first. You should also allocate time to frame the answer so that there is no confusion later on. It is advisable to use simple English and stave off using flowery and decorative language which takes attention away from the original facts and opinions about a given topic.

How to Write a Good Answer

It is not just enough to know all the facts and information but to pen down your answers in a clear and concise manner is pertinent. By writing answers having clear and a logical frame with no irrelevant or piling up of information, you can grab one’s attention. A candidate should adopt an answering style which is natural, original and to the point. Likewise, use of archaic and fancy words or language should be avoided at all costs. Grammatical errors in the answers attract dislike of the evaluator so there must be no room for grammatical errors in your answers. Last but not the least, it is essential to have a good and legible handwriting.

How to Answer the Effective Part of the Question:

Time and again, you would have heard aspirants talking about effective part of the question and which is too frequently confused with introduction, body and conclusion of any answer which is its structure. The effective part refers to angle or perspective; you wish the answers to be seen. The facts remain unchangeable but the presentation differs.

Getting attuned to the meaning and application of terms that appear repeatedly in questions in the IAS mains exam will certainly help you write better answers. A vast majority of students sometimes wrongly interpret the meaning of these terms consequently they err while answering.

Enumerate:

Enumeration involves listing the points about the topic without giving detailed explanation.

Define:

It refers to writing the simple definition. A bit of memory will definitely help you while reproducing verbatim and at least including all possible keywords and phrases which you know are essential parts of that particular definition.

Evaluate/ Assess / Examine:

Detailed explanations are required. Whatever you know should be explained in detail. The ideal approach is to write introduction in one or two lines followed by three to four lines in favor and three to four lines against the given topic. Implications or limitations associated with a concept should be penned down in two or three lines and finally conclusion should be made in another two or three line.

Opinion / Comment / Views:

Whenever a question asks for your opinion, you should give constructive opinions. Future-oriented and progressive ideas must reflect on your answers.

Purpose / Goal / Objective / Target:

Your answers must answer the fundamental questions like what goals, purposes, objectives or the targets will be achieved? Your answers must provide or suggest viable solutions to the addressed problems.

Analyse:

Analysis is same as evaluation, examination or assessment just that you need to buttress your analysis with your opinion here. How you opine will tell how you evaluate a situation.

Discuss:

You should write answers in a fashion as if you are talking to the examiner. This is how; it will be like child's play to convey your point of view in an evident manner to the examiner.

Describe:

If you have good theoretical knowledge, describing the

concepts will be the easiest thing to do. You have to write basically its parts, constituents, characteristics, what it is made up of and attributes.

Critically:

Whenever you are asked to critically comment, critically examine or critically analyse, you need to write both pros and cons and give a fair, unbiased or value loaded judgment. It should always give a feeling of closure.

Elucidate / Elaborate / Expand / Exemplify:

Most of the candidates fail to find difference between these similar looking words. Elaborate and expand mean detailed explanations. Elucidate means make it clear with examples.

Implications / Consequences / Outcomes / Results:

Here you have to shed light on the possible scenario or impact of the event in question.

Contrast/ Distinguish:

It means to write differences not similarities. But if you are asked to compare and contrast, you can write similarities as well as differences.

Significance / Importance:

What happens because it exists or what happen if it doesn't exist.

Justify / Advocate:

Here you have to argue in favor of a situation or an event and write favorable comments as far as reasonably possible.

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