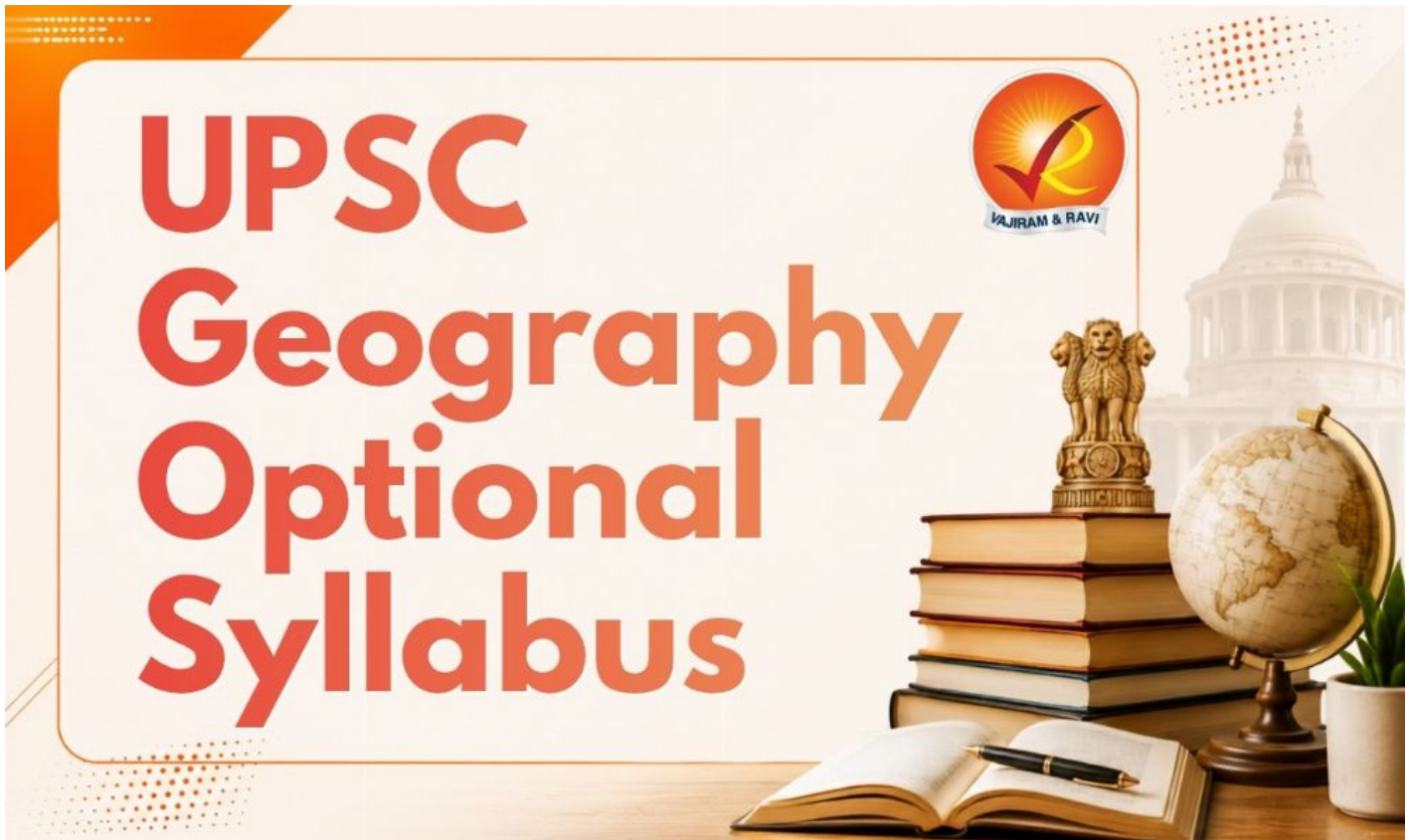


UPSC Geography Syllabus 2026, Prelims and Optional Syllabus PDF

August 1, 2026 • vajiramandravi.com



UPSC Geography Syllabus: Geography is one of the optional subjects in the UPSC CSE Mains exam. It is also covered in the General Studies paper in the Prelims and GS Paper 1 in the UPSC CSE Mains. UPSC Geography Optional consists of two papers, Paper 1 and Paper 2, each with 250 marks.

The Geography syllabus for UPSC Paper 1 consists of Principles of Geography, and Paper 2 consists of Geography of India. This article covers the UPSC Geography optional syllabus for both Paper 1 and Paper 2, a few tips on how to prepare for this subject, and essential topics of the subject.

Geography Syllabus for UPSC Prelims

Geography syllabus for UPSC Prelims covers Indian and World Geography – Physical, Social, and Economic Geography of India and the World. Oceanography, Climatology, Geomorphology, and Physical features of India, such as rivers, mountain ranges and passes, are some of the most important topics in the Geography syllabus for UPSC Prelims. Mapping is one the most important areas for preparing geography for **UPSC Prelims**, where aspirants can score more. This requires regular practice of mapping and awareness regarding the places in the news, as UPSC has

been asking about the places in the news in mapping questions.

UPSC Geography Optional Course

What is the UPSC Geography Optional Syllabus?

UPSC Geography is one of the most popular optional subjects among applicants. Geography, as an **optional subject for UPSC**, has consistently produced excellent results in the Civil Services Exam. For a variety of reasons, the subject is an excellent choice for optional. It is a subject that is both scientific and humanistic, diverse, complex, and nuanced. As a result, it is an excellent choice for engineers, doctors, and aspirants with a background in the arts. Out of a total of 1750 marks for all main papers, the optional paper's weightage is 500 marks, that is, 250 marks for each paper. It can be useful for candidates because it overlaps with GS Paper 1 and is sometimes useful for essay paper.

UPSC Geography Syllabus 2026 for Paper 1

PRINCIPLES OF GEOGRAPHY

Physical Geography:

- **Geomorphology:** Factors controlling landform development; endogenetic and exogenetic forces; Origin and evolution of the earth's crusts; Fundamentals of geomagnetism; Physical conditions of the earth's interior; Geosynclines; Continental drift; Isostasy; Plate tectonics; Recent views on mountain building; Volcanicity; Earthquakes and Tsunamis; Concepts of geomorphic cycles and Landscape development; Denudation chronology; Channel morphology; Erosion surfaces; Slope development; Applied Geomorphology; Geomorphology, economic geology and environment.
- **Climatology:** Temperature and pressure belts of the world; Heat budget of the earth; Atmospheric circulation; Atmospheric stability and instability. Planetary and local winds; Monsoons and jet streams; Air masses and fronts; Temperate and tropical cyclones; Types and distribution of precipitation; Weather and Climate; Koppen's Thornthwaite's and Trewartha's classification of world climate; Hydrological cycle; Global climatic change, and role and response of man in climatic changes Applied climatology and Urban climate.
- **Oceanography:** Bottom topography of the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans; Temperature and salinity of the oceans; Heat and salt budgets, Ocean deposits; Waves, currents and tides; Marine resources; biotic, mineral and energy resources; Coral reefs coral bleaching; Sea-level changes; Law of the sea and marine pollution.
- **Biogeography:** Genesis of soils; Classification and distribution of soils; Soil profile; Soil erosion, Degradation and conservation; Factors influencing world distribution of plants and animals; Problems of deforestation and conservation measures; Social forestry, agro-forestry; Wild life; Major gene pool centres.
- **Environmental Geography:** Principle ecology; Human ecological adaptations; Influence of man on ecology and environment; Global and regional ecological changes and imbalances; Ecosystem their management and conservation; Environmental degradation, management and conservation; Biodiversity and sustainable development; Environmental policy; Environmental hazards and remedial measures; Environmental education and legislation.

Human Geography:

- **Perspectives in Human Geography:** Areal differentiation; Regional synthesis; Dichotomy and dualism; Environmentalism; Quantitative revolution and locational analysis; Radical, behavioural, human and welfare approaches; Languages, religions and secularisation; Cultural regions of the world; Human development index.
- **Economic Geography:** World economic development: measurement and problems; World resources and their distribution; Energy crisis; the limits to growth; World agriculture: typology of agricultural regions; Agricultural inputs and productivity; Food and nutrition problems; Food security; famine: causes, effects and remedies; World industries: location patterns and problems; Patterns of world trade.
- **Population and Settlement Geography:** Growth and distribution of world population; Demographic attributes; Causes and consequences of migration; Concepts of over-under-and optimum population; Population theories, world population problems and policies, Social well-being and quality of life; Population as social capital. Types and patterns of rural settlements; Environmental issues in rural settlements; Hierarchy of urban settlements; Urban morphology; Concept of primate city and rank-size rule; Functional classification of towns; Sphere of urban influence; Rural-urban fringe; Satellite towns; Problems and remedies of urbanisation; Sustainable development of cities.
- **Regional Planning:** Concept of a region; Types of regions and methods of regionalisation; Growth centres and growth poles; Regional imbalances; Regional development strategies; Environmental issues in regional planning; Planning for sustainable development.
- **Models, Theories and Laws in Human Geography:** System analysis in Human geography; Malthusian, Marxian and demographic transition models; Central Place theories of Christaller and Losch; Perroux and Boudeville; Von Thunen's model of agricultural location; Weber's model of industrial location; Ostov's model of stages of growth. Heartland and Rimland theories; Laws of international boundaries and frontiers.

UPSC Geography Syllabus - Paper 2

GEOGRAPHY OF INDIA

- **Physical Setting:** Space relationship of India with neighbouring countries; Structure and relief; Drainage system and watersheds; Physiographic regions; Mechanism of Indian monsoons and rainfall patterns; Tropical cyclones and western disturbances; Floods and droughts; Climatic regions; Natural vegetation, Soil types and their distributions.
- **Resources:** Land, surface and groundwater, energy, minerals, biotic and marine resources, Forest and wildlife resources and their conservation; Energy crisis.
- **Agriculture:** Infrastructure: irrigation, seeds, fertilisers, power; Institutional factors; land holdings, land tenure and land reforms; Cropping pattern, agricultural productivity, agricultural intensity, crop combination, land capability; Agro and social-forestry; Green revolution and its socio-economic and ecological implications; Significance of dry farming; Livestock resources and white revolution; Aqua-culture; Sericulture, Agriculture and poultry; Agricultural regionalisation; Agro-climatic zones; Agro-ecological regions.
- **Industry:** Evolution of industries; Locational factors of cotton, jute, textile, iron and steel, aluminium, fertiliser, paper, chemical and pharmaceutical, automobile, cottage and agro-based industries; Industrial houses and complexes including public sector undertakings; Industrial regionalisation; New industrial policy;

Multinationals and liberalisation; Special Economic Zones; Tourism including ecotourism.

- **Transport, Communication and Trade:** Road, railway, waterway, airway and pipeline networks and their complementary roles in regional development; Growing importance of ports on national and foreign trade; Trade balance; Trade Policy; Export processing zones; Developments in communication and information technology and their impacts on economy and society; Indian space programme.
- **Cultural Setting:** Historical Perspective of Indian Society; Racial linguistic and ethnic diversities; religious minorities; Major tribes, tribal areas and their problems; Cultural regions; Growth, distribution and density of population; Demographic attributes: sex-ratio, age structure, literacy rate, work-force, dependency ratio, longevity; migration (inter-regional, intraregional and international) and associated problems; Population problems and policies; Health indicators.
- **Settlements:** Types, patterns and morphology of rural settlements; Urban developments; Morphology of Indian cities; Functional classification of Indian cities; Conurbations and metropolitan regions; Urban sprawl; Slums and associated problems; Town planning; Problems of urbanisation and remedies.
- **Regional Development and Planning:** Experience of regional planning in India; Five Year Plans; Integrated rural development programmes; Panchayati Raj and decentralised planning; Command area development; Watershed management; Planning for backward area, desert, drought-prone, hill tribal area development; Multi-level planning; Regional planning and development of island territories.
- **Political Aspects:** Geographical basis of Indian federalism; State reorganisation; Emergence of new states; Regional consciousness and inter-state issues; International boundary of India and related issues; Cross-border terrorism; India's role in world affairs; Geopolitics of South Asia and Indian Ocean realm.
- **Contemporary Issues:** Ecological issues: Environmental hazards: landslides, earthquakes, Tsunamis, floods and droughts, epidemics; Issues related to environmental pollution; Changes in patterns of land use; Principles of environmental impact assessment and environmental management; Population explosion and food security; Environmental degradation; Deforestation, desertification and soil erosion; Problems of agrarian and industrial unrest; Regional disparities in economic development; Concept of sustainable growth and development; Environmental awareness; Linkage of rivers; Globalisation and Indian economy.

How to Prepare Geography Syllabus for UPSC?

Geography is a fundamental and crucial subject in UPSC CSE preparation. It is asked in all three phases of CSE - Prelims, Mains and Interview. Studying the Geography syllabus for UPSC holistically is critical due to the overlapping of many topics in Prelims and Mains. Before preparing for the subject, one should have a clear understanding of the syllabus. After analysing the UPSC geography syllabus, analyse the previous year's questions, like how UPSC asks questions.

- **Reading:** Start by reading geography NCERTs as it is easy and simple to understand and clarify the concepts. It will make a strong foundation. Next, one can go for standard books such as Savindra Singh and Majid Hussain. It is essential to focus on the fundamentals of geography, such as physical and human geography.
- **Previous year's papers:** One should go through the previous year's questions. Solving previous year's questions assists in identifying and analysing the important topics that need to be thoroughly revised.

- **Answer writing:** Start [answer writing](#) after finishing one or two units. Clarify the core concepts. Analyse PYQs with related topics. One can refer to Topper's answers for structure and presentation. Try to incorporate more dimensions in the answer, such as physical and human dimensions. Make sure that written answers are along the lines of the syllabus. Interlinking of paper 1 and paper 2 is essential for answer enrichment. Regular answer writing is the key to grabbing more marks. One can also use case studies and data wherever possible.
- **Mapping and diagrams:** The preparation of the geography syllabus for UPSC is incomplete without mapping. Mapping and relevant diagrams help in getting more marks than an average answer. One should try to add one map or diagram in the answers. This requires practice; without practice, it is not easy to add maps and diagrams. Prepare region-wise and theme-wise maps.
- **Current affairs:** [Current affairs](#) related to Geography is a crucial aspect while preparing for the static part. Nowadays, it has become a trend to interlink static portions with current affairs. For example, a question related to the Kalapani dispute was asked in UPSC Mains 2022, which had been in the news. It is advisable to read geography-related news from newspapers such as The Hindu, Indian Express, Down to Earth and monthly magazines such as [Yojana](#) and [Kurukshetra](#).

Other Related Posts of UPSC 2027	
UPSC Syllabus	UPSC Exam Pattern
UPSC Age Limit	IAS Salary
UPSC Exam Date 2026	UPSC Calendar
UPSC Prelims 2027	UPSC Mains 2026
UPSC Mains Syllabus	UPSC Interview
UPSC Prelims Result	UPSC Mains Result
UPSC Final Result	UPSC Cut Off
UPSC CSAT Syllabus	UPSC Books
UPSC Admit Card	UPSC Previous Year Papers
UPSC Answer Key	IAS vs IPS
UPSC GS Course	UPSC Mains Test Series 2027
UPSC Mentorship Program 2027	UPSC 2 Year Course

Books to Study UPSC Geography Syllabus

The table below provides a booklist for both papers on Geography. One can start with [NCERT books](#) and then move to the standard books.

- NCERT Class 11th and 12th

- Certificate Physical and Human Geography by GC Leong
- Physical Geography By Savindra Singh
- Indian Geography by D R Khullar
- Human Geography by Majid Hussain
- Models and Theories by Majid Hussain
- Geographical Thought by RD Dikshit
- Geography of India by Majid Hussain
- Settlement Geography by K Siddhartha

Important Topics in UPSC Geography Syllabus

The UPSC Geography Optional Syllabus covers a wide range of topics that are relevant to the field of Geography. Here are the important topics you need to be familiar with for the UPSC Geography Optional paper:

- **Paper 1:** Fundamental Concepts in Geomorphology, Climatology, Oceanography, Perspectives in Human Geography, Models and Theories, etc.
- **Paper 2:** Resources, Settlements, Physiographic Regions, Contemporary Issues, Agriculture etc.

Other Related UPSC Optional Syllabus		
UPSC Commerce Optional Syllabus	UPSC Geography Optional Syllabus	UPSC Geology Optional Syllabus
UPSC History Optional Syllabus	UPSC Law Optional Syllabus	UPSC Maths Optional Syllabus
UPSC Medical Science Optional Syllabus	UPSC Philosophy Optional Syllabus	UPSC Physics Optional Syllabus
UPSC PSIR Optional Syllabus	UPSC Psychology Optional Syllabus	UPSC Sociology Optional Syllabus
UPSC Zoology Optional Syllabus	UPSC Economics Optional Syllabus	UPSC Agriculture Optional Syllabus
UPSC Anthropology Optional Syllabus	UPSC Botany Optional Syllabus	UPSC Chemistry Optional Syllabus
UPSC Civil Engineering Optional Syllabus	UPSC Management Optional Syllabus	UPSC Mechanical Engineering Optional Syllabus

Other Related UPSC Optional Syllabus		
UPSC Public Administration Optional Syllabus	UPSC Statistics Optional Syllabus	UPSC Electrical Engineering Optional Syllabus
UPSC Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Science Optional Syllabus		

Other Related Posts of UPSC 2026	
UPSC Syllabus	UPSC Exam Pattern
UPSC Age Limit	IAS Salary
UPSC Exam Date 2026	UPSC Calendar
UPSC Prelims 2027	UPSC Mains 2026
UPSC Mains Syllabus	UPSC Interview
UPSC Prelims Result	UPSC Mains Result
UPSC Final Result	UPSC Cut Off
UPSC CSAT Syllabus	UPSC Books
UPSC Admit Card	UPSC Previous Year Papers
UPSC Answer Key	IAS vs IPS

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/upsc-exam/geography-syllabus-for-upsc/>

© Vajiram & Ravi. For personal use only.