



CSAT Prelims Strategy

 drishtiias.com/printpdf/csats-prelims-strategy

Since CSAT is of qualifying nature we are going to set its strategy separate from Paper I GS. This will benefit greatly in time-management and also in developing focus for the GS paper. This strategy will benefit those who are struggling with the CSAT paper as well as those who have very few doubts on the CSAT.

First, it must be noted that CSAT will consume considerably lesser amount of time as compared to the GS paper. Since you have to score only 33% to pass the paper there is absolutely no need for you to sacrifice much of your valuable time preparing for it. Keeping these aspects in mind we have devised the following strategy to help you clear the CSAT paper with relative ease. This strategy is very practical and as such it is important that you follow it diligently.

Step 1: Take CSAT seriously

There are candidates who have actually failed to pass this paper. As a result, despite scoring high in GS these candidates didn't qualify for the Mains examination. So, take it seriously - *you must clear this paper at all costs.*

Step 2: Evaluate yourself before you begin preparation

- Attempt last year's CSAT paper and check your score. This will give you an idea of where you stand vis-a-vis the CSAT paper.
- If you score high then keep CSAT on the back burner for now and focus on GS. You can start your CSAT preparation two months before the exam. If you score less - don't worry – *starting immediately, follow this strategy and all shall be well.*

Step 3: Get a comprehensive CSAT manual like the one published by Tata McGraw Hill

- A manual such as this will provide you with a one-stop solution for your preparation, the importance of which cannot be overemphasized.
- You do not need to learn everything in the book cover-to-cover. The book is divided into parts and you should pick and choose topics as per your requirement.

- Keep every Sunday for CSAT practice and solve some questions from the numerous mock question papers found in the book.
- Candidates who are struggling with the CSAT paper should practice at least 1 hour daily. This can be reduced to weekly 3-4 hours or 1 mock paper per week depending on your requirement.
- If you consider yourself extremely weak in CSAT you must take a Test Series with any reputed coaching institute. In any case, taking up a test series helps as it not only keeps you on your toes, it also keeps you familiar with the CSAT pattern and topics.
- Lastly, in qualifying papers like CSAT you should try to maximize your strengths rather than your weaknesses. The overall aim should be to get basic familiarity with any area you are not comfortable with so that you do not miss out on easy questions.
- There is no point in spending excessive time for a paper that is only qualifying in nature so keep in mind the amount of time you are going to devote to CSAT.

In these 3 steps you have seen that you should take the CSAT paper seriously - but not that seriously. CSAT preparation must not affect GS preparation at any cost. Remember that being familiar with the CSAT topics, regular evaluation (coaching test series or self-evaluation) and focusing on your strengths will get you there. Yet, do not let over-confidence or ignorance stop you from preparing for this paper. You must clear the CSAT at all costs!

To conclude this strategy let us remind ourselves of some very basic things. Things like revision, steadiness, relaxation and motivation. In CSE preparation revision is extremely important - *the more you revise the better you remember*. Therefore we advise you to revise at least weekly if not daily. Without revision the battle is half-fought. Remaining steady and well disciplined is also necessary as you cannot cover all topics at once. So, go bit by bit, step by step, remain focused and disciplined. Relax as much as you can. Do not over stretch yourself. If you cannot finish a topic in one day, do it the next day. Sometimes, it is more important that you revise your half-finished topics than to finish them without proper understanding. Finally, motivate yourself, tell yourself that you can do it. You must remain motivated throughout the CSE year - from Prelims, to Mains to Interview. Never let that motivation decrease because without it your daily studies will become monotonous and you will never be able to enjoy the process of preparing for the CSE. *Finally, it is said that 'fear of the unknown is most debilitating'*, which is true as you cannot know how the Prelims papers will be set. So, have faith, follow this strategy which many have followed before you with success. Fight that fear with faith and begin your preparation as soon as you finish reading this. Good luck!

Best Wishes, Team Drishti