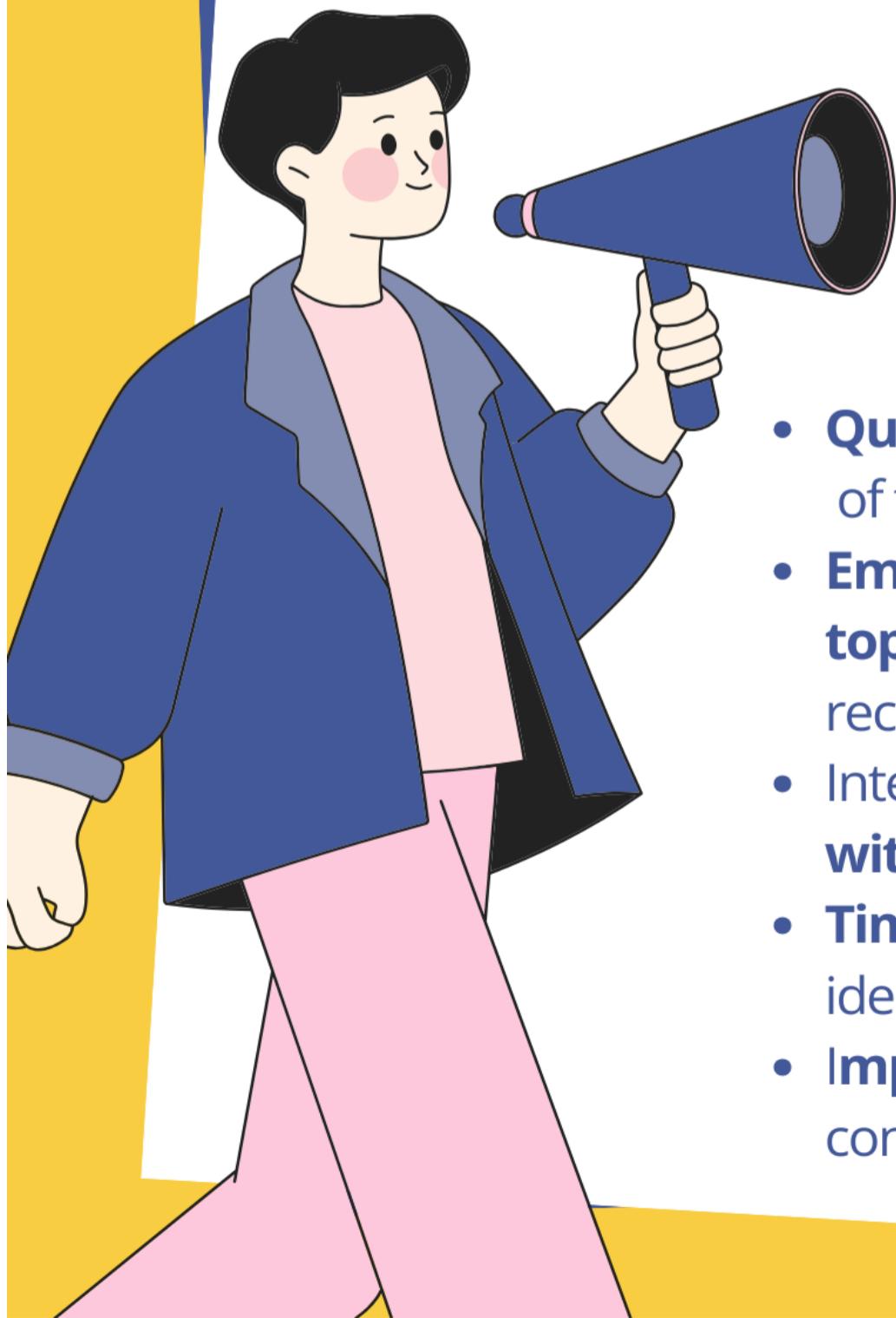


CRASH COURSE – UPSC CSE (PRELIMS)

HISTORY & ART AND CULTURE

**“To understand the present, one must read
the past through its art and culture.”**



Benefit:

- **Quick and focused revision** of the entire UPSC syllabus
- **Emphasis on high-yield topics** based on PYQs and recent trends
- Integration of **static concepts with current affairs**
- **Time-efficient preparation**, ideal for last-phase revision
- **Improves exam orientation**, confidence, and accuracy

CRASH COURSE – UPSC CSE (PRELIMS) IQRA IAS (History & Art and Culture Module)

The History segment remains a cornerstone of General Studies Paper I. On average, it contributes **13-18 questions annually**. While Modern History has traditionally held the highest weight, recent trends (2020-2025) show a significant shift toward **Ancient, Medieval, and South Indian History**, often linked with **Art, Architecture, and Terms**.

"History is not a burden on the memory, but an illumination of the soul. UPSC rewards those who can connect the dots between the past and the present."

Trend Analysis (2017-2025)

Year	Questions	Focus Areas	Nature of Questions	Remarks
2017	14	Freedom struggle (6), Ancient & Culture (8)	Mostly Factual	Emphasis on Bhakti/Sufi and Coins.
2018	20	Modern (14), Ancient (2), Art (5)	Factual & Conceptual	High focus on tribal/peasant revolts.
2019	17	Buddhism/Jainism, Modern movements	Mixed	Analytical shift in terms and agriculture.
2020	19	Ancient (8), Medieval (1), Modern (10)	Analytical	Dominance of Temple Architecture and Rock-cut art.
2021	20	Modern (8), Ancient/Medieval/Art (12)	Conceptual/Terms	Focus on Sangam literature and South Indian dynasties.
2022	9	Medieval (5), Modern (4)	Tough/Conceptual	Significant drop in total history questions.
2023	14	Ancient (6), Modern (4), Art (1)	Moderate-Difficult	Focus on Vijayanagara, Jaina texts, and South Indian ports.
2024	12	Ancient (4), Modern (5), Art (2)	Factual & Applied	Resurgence of Sangam and Vedic societal changes.
2025	15-18	Art & Culture (Crashed), Ancient/Modern (High)	Applied Static	Questions on Ashokan inscriptions and Chinese travelers.

*Estimated based on preliminary analysis.

Detailed Syllabus & Priority Matrix (Prelims 2026)

S.No	Module	Sub-Topics & Focus Areas	High-Yield Themes
1	Ancient India	Harappan Sites, Vedic Society, Mahajanapadas, Mauryas, Guptas, Sangam Age	Terms/Officers (e.g., Pradeshika, Rajuka), Buddhism/Jainism texts
2	Medieval India	Delhi Sultanate, Mughals, Vijayanagara, Marathas, Bahmanids	Vijayanagara (Administration/Dams), Bhakti/Sufi saints, Land Revenue systems
3	Art and Culture	Temple Architecture (Nagara, Dravida, Vesara), Sculpture, Paintings, Literature, Classical Dances	Temple features, UNESCO sites, Indo-Islamic architecture, GI Tags related to crafts
4	Modern India	European Entry, 1857 Revolt, Tribal/Peasant Revolts, Congress Phases, Gandhian Era	Acts & Policies (1773-1947), Personalities (Phule, Ambedkar, Bose), Land Settlements
5	Thematic History	Economic History, Women's role, Educational reforms, Press & Literature	Drain of Wealth, Social-Religious Reformers, Post-Independence reorganization

Recommended Reference Books

- Ancient & Medieval:** NCERTs (Class 6-12), Tamil Nadu State Board (Class 11)
- Art and Culture:** Nitin Singhania / Fine Arts NCERT
- Modern India:** Spectrum (Rajiv Ahir) / Bipan Chandra

Strategic Advice for 2026

- Minimize Medieval:** Don't get lost in minor kings; focus on **Vijayanagara** and **Mughal Art/Admin.**
- Focus on South India:** **Sangam literature, Cholas, and Pallavas** are consistently tested.
- Link with Current:** Archaeological discoveries (ASI) or anniversaries of freedom fighters often trigger static questions.

Trend Overview (2017-2025)

Aspect	Details
Average Questions	15-20 questions
Nature of Shift	Rote facts → Concept + linkage
High Weightage Areas	Art & Culture; Administrative systems; Socio-religious movements; Personalities + current linkage

PART 1: ANCIENT INDIA (HIGH-YIELD MODULE)

Topic	Sub-topics / Focus Areas
Prehistoric India	Paleolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic; tools & subsistence patterns; Bhimbetka rock shelters; Neolithic Revolution
Indus Valley Civilization	Town planning & drainage; economy (agriculture, trade, seals); religion (Mother Goddess, Pashupati); decline theories (climate, river shift); UPSC focus: urban planning, dockyard, weights
Vedic Age	Early vs Later Vedic differences; Sabha, Samiti, Vidatha; Varna system evolution; economy shift: pastoral → agrarian
Religious Movements	Buddhism & Jainism; Four Noble Truths; Eightfold Path; Triratna; Sangha; Ahimsa; Councils (1st-4th); UPSC focus: doctrine + councils
Mauryan Empire	Chandragupta, Bindusara, Ashoka; Arthashastra (administration & economy); Ashokan inscriptions & Dhamma; provincial administration; keywords: Kosh, Danda, Amatya
Gupta Age	Administration & land grants; coins, art, science; Nalanda University; UPSC focus: Maurya vs Gupta comparison
Ancient Art & Culture	Stupa, Vihara, Chaitya; Gandhara vs Mathura art; Ajanta, Ellora; temple architecture basics (early Nagara)

PART 2: MEDIEVAL INDIA (PRELIMS-FOCUSED)

Topic	Sub-topics / Focus Areas
Delhi Sultanate	Slave to Lodhi dynasties; Iqta system; market control (Alauddin Khilji); architecture: arches, domes
Mughal Empire	Babur to Aurangzeb; Mansabdari system; revenue system (Todar Mal); administrative structure; UPSC focus: Akbar's policies
Bhakti & Sufi Movement	Saguna vs Nirguna; Kabir, Mirabai, Chaitanya; Sufi silsilas (Chishti, Suhrawardi); societal impact
Medieval Art & Architecture	Mughal painting; Indo-Islamic architecture; gardens, forts, tombs

PART 3: MODERN INDIA (MOST IMPORTANT)

Topic	Sub-topics / Focus Areas
Advent of Europeans	Portuguese, Dutch, French, British; Carnatic Wars; reasons for British dominance
British Expansion	Subsidiary Alliance; Doctrine of Lapse; revenue systems: Permanent Settlement, Ryotwari, Mahalwari
Revolts & Resistance	1857 Revolt (causes, nature, failure); tribal revolts; peasant movements
Indian National Movement	INC formation (1885); Moderates vs Extremists; Home Rule Movement; Gandhian movements (Non-Cooperation, Civil Disobedience, Quit India)
Revolutionary Nationalism	Bhagat Singh; HSRA; Chittagong uprising
Constitutional Developments	Regulating Act 1773; Pitt's India Act; Government of India Acts; Cabinet Mission
Important Personalities	Gandhi; Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose; Ambedkar; Sardar Patel