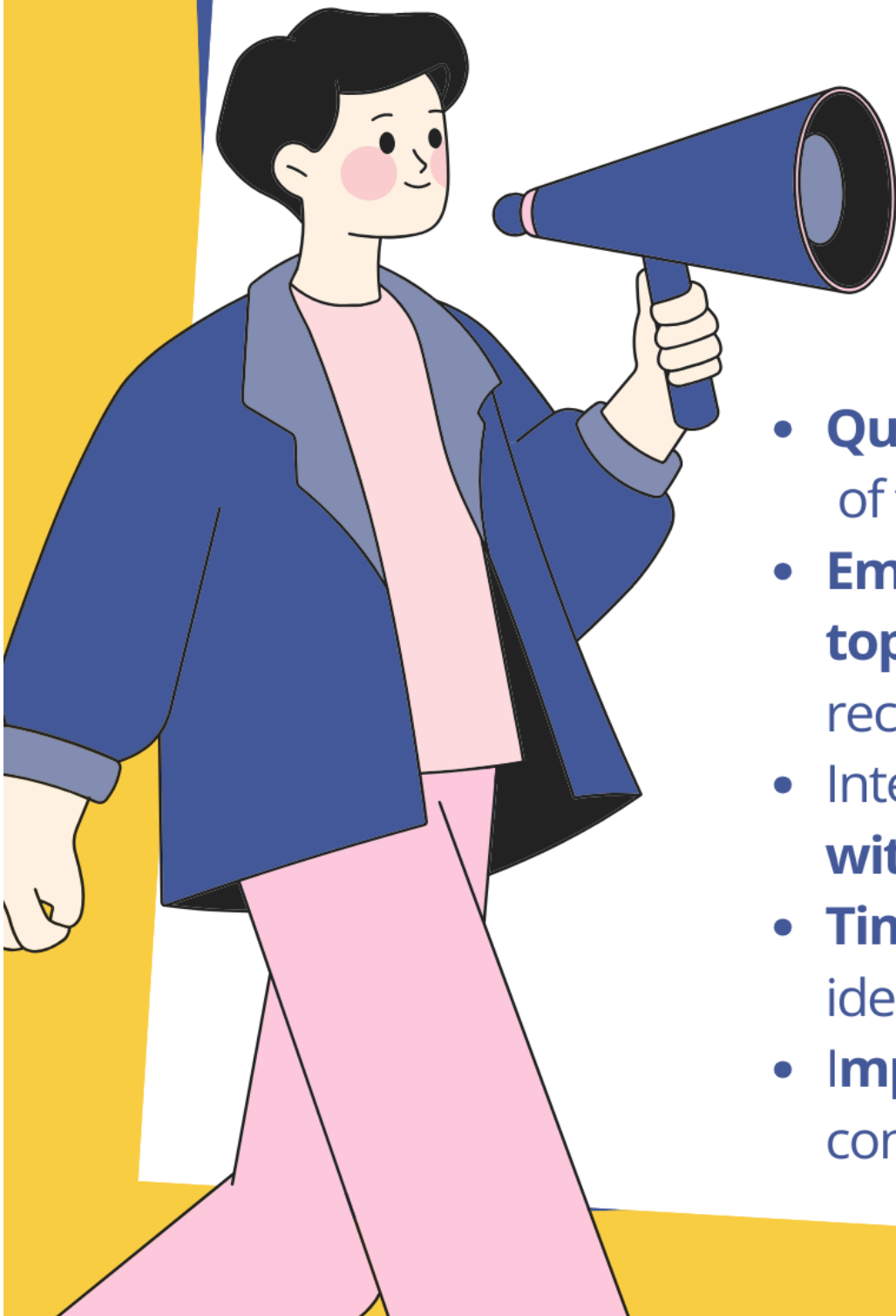


CRASH COURSE – UPSC CSE (PRELIMS)

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

- 1. Minimize Medieval:** Don't get lost in minor kings; focus on **Vijayanagara** and **Mughal Art/Admin**.
- 2. Focus on South India:** **Sangam literature, Cholas, and Pallavas** are consistently tested.
- 3. 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 | Gandhiji; Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose; Ambedkar; Sardar Patel |