

Anthropology

OPTIONAL TEST SERIES PROGRAM

2026



**We don't just test you
We train you to succeed**

As an aspirant, you are investing everything into mastering your optional subject. You are reading the books, building your notes and understanding the content. But knowing the content is only the first step for mastering Mains. The **ultimate challenge** lies in the exam hall: transforming that **knowledge into high-scoring answers** under intense pressure.

For over a decade, **VisionIAS** has been the **trusted partner** of India's top rankers, not for merely imparting knowledge, but also helping them perfect its application through answer writing.

"From concepts to ranks, a complete journey in Anthropology Optional"

ANTHROPOLOGY OPTIONAL COMPREHENSIVE TEST SERIES + PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS (PYQ) SESSIONS

Program Content: 16 Tests + 20 Previous Year Questions (PYQs) Discussion & Strategy Sessions

PROGRAM FEATURES

PYQ Sessions



20 Faculty-Led PYQ Analysis & Strategy Sessions

Previous Year Questions Discussion and Strategy Sessions

- Sessions to Understand Important Themes and Trends through PYQs
- Build Effective Answer Structures to Bridge the Gap between UPSC Demand and Aspirants Understanding of Questions.
- Enhance Quality of Answers with Faculty Inputs



Unit Tests (8)

- **2 Mini-tests** per section of the syllabus
- **Nature of Questions:** Easy to Medium focusing on coverage of the syllabus



Sectional Tests (4)

- **1 Part test** per section of the Syllabus
- **Nature of Questions:** Medium to Difficult testing analytical understanding of Aspirants to tackle uncertainty of UPSC Mains

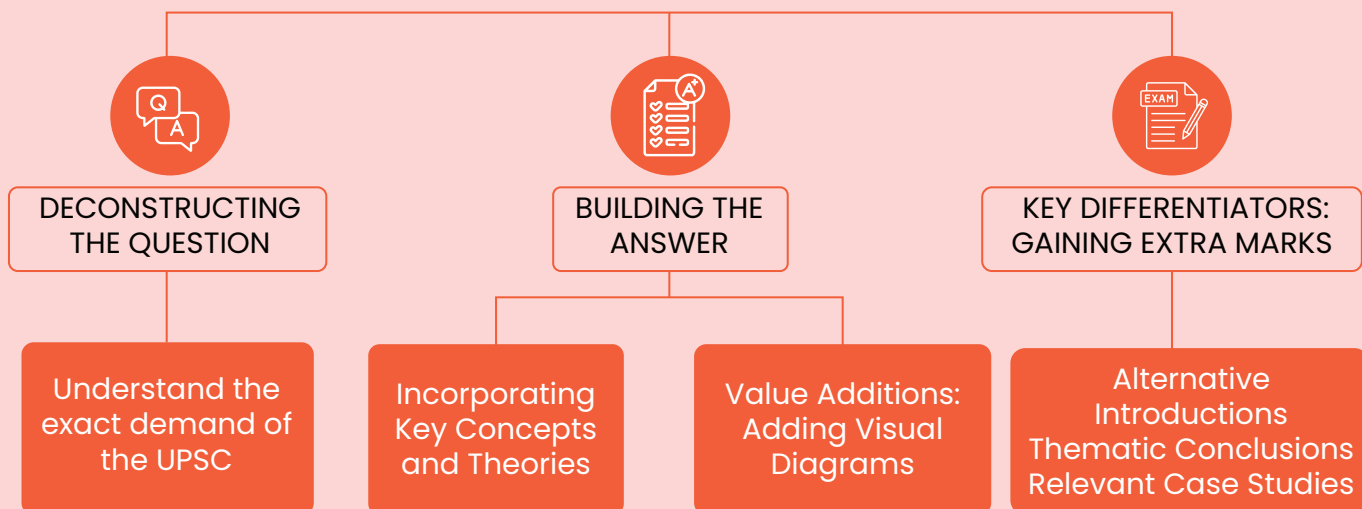


Full-Length Tests (4)

- **2 Full Length Test** per Paper of Anthropology Optional
- **Nature of Questions:** Simulation of the real UPSC exam for comprehensive performance assessment

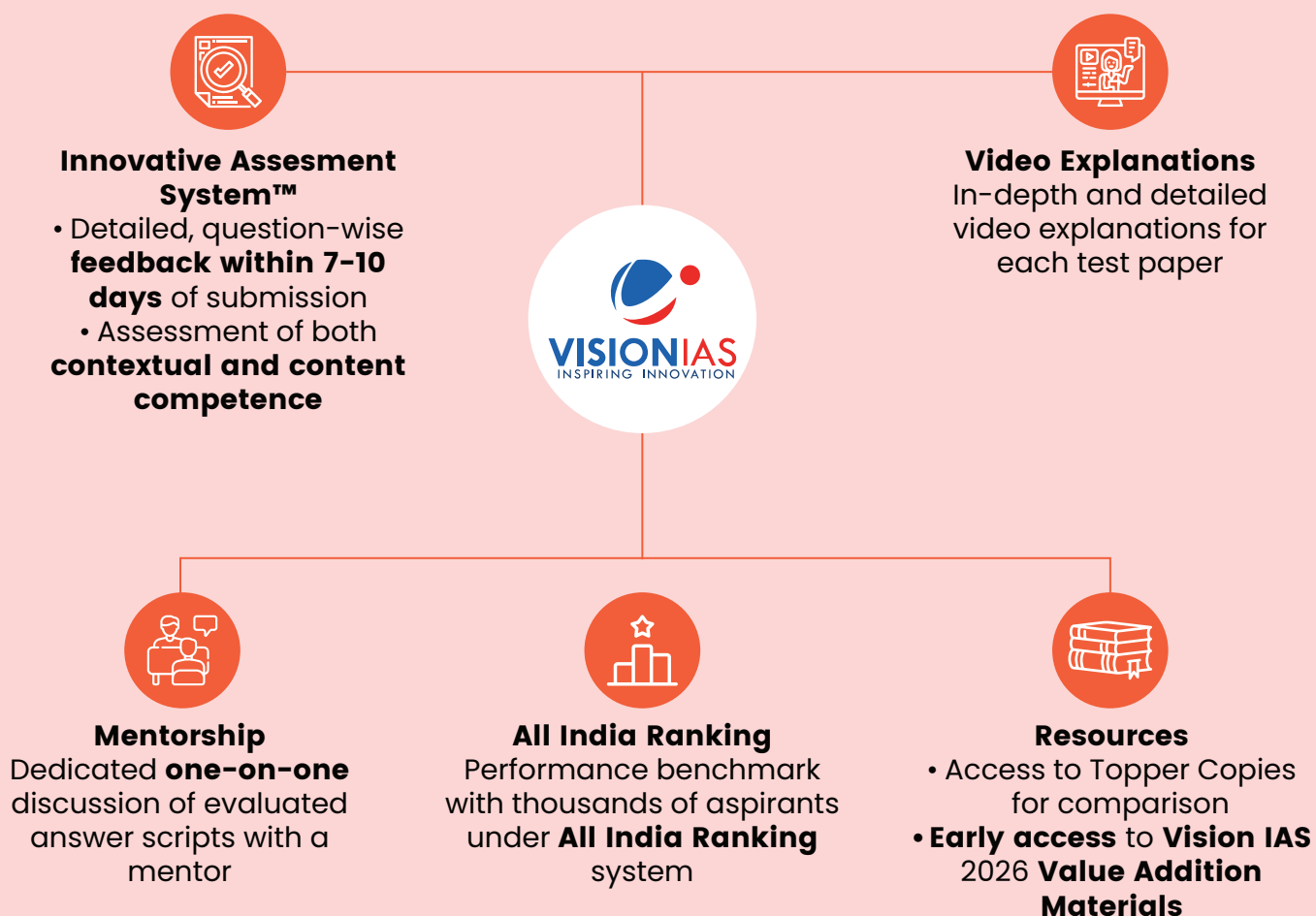
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Moving beyond Model Answers to Answer Writing Blueprints



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Post-test Mentorship and Feedback



ANTHROPOLOGY OPTIONAL TEST SERIES

Program One: 16 Tests

Program Features:

- **8 Unit Tests:** Mini Tests to cover **Anthropology Optional** syllabus in parts.
- **4 Sectional Tests:** Part Tests covering the full syllabus Sectionwise for **Anthropology Optional**
- **4 Full-Length Tests:** FLTs simulating UPSC Mains experience, to be conducted after Prelims 2026

Program Two: 8 Tests

Program Features:

- **4 Sectional Tests:** Part Tests covering the full syllabus Sectionwise for **Anthropology Optional**
- **4 Full-Length Tests:** FLTs simulating UPSC Mains experience, to be conducted after Prelims 2026

Program	Fee	Module Number	Starting Date
Anthropology Optional Comprehensive Test Series 2026 (16 Tests + 20 Previous Year Questions (PYQ) Sessions)	₹20,000	3722	30 November 2025
Anthropology Optional Test Series 2026 (16 Tests)	₹14,000	3723	30 November 2025
Anthropology Optional Test Series 2026 (8 Tests)	₹10,000	3724	21 December 2025

THE OPTIONAL PAPER DILEMMA: YOU KNOW THE SYLLABUS, SO WHY AREN'T YOU SCORING MORE?

OTHER ANTHROPOLOGY OPTIONAL TEST SERIES	VISION IAS ANTHROPOLOGY OPTIONAL TEST SERIES	
 GENERIC FEEDBACK	 CONCEPT CLARITY THROUGH PYQS	 PERSONALIZED EVALUATION
 VAGUE MODEL ANSWERS	 SYSTEMATIC ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE	
 OUTDATED QUESTION PAPER PATTERN	 SCORE IMPROVEMENT THROUGH MENTORSHIP	

Thus, whether you are:

- Just starting out and unsure of how to even begin writing a good answer,
- Already writing tests, but receiving vague feedback that doesn't show you how to improve, or
- An experienced aspirant whose scores are no longer improving despite knowing the content inside-out.

You need to utilize The **VisionIAS Advantage** and think like a topper. Success in UPSC comes with high scores in Mains examination and writing a high quality **toppers trusted** test series will surely lead to success in **UPSC Civil Service Exam**.

HOW OUR TEST SERIES FARED IN MAINS 2025

At VisionIAS, we don't just cover the syllabus but decode the very DNA of the UPSC examination. Our research-driven approach identifies emerging trends, recurring themes, and shifts in question patterns, ensuring that our test series doesn't just cover the syllabus—it anticipates the exam.

Here's how closely our test series reflected the UPSC Mains 2025:

UPSC CSE Mains 2025 Question		Our Test Series Question (2025)
Anthropology Optional Paper I	2b) Compare and contrast the symbolic approaches of Clifford Geertz and Victor Turner to understand culture. (15 marks)	Discuss the difference in approach of Victor Turner and Clifford Geertz to the study of performative aspects in rituals. (15 marks) (Test Code 4521, 2025)
	5d) Mitochondrial DNA and human evolution. (10 marks)	Mitochondrial inheritance (10 marks) (Test Code 4521, 2025)
	7c) Critically discuss the centrality of the African continent in the narrative of human evolution. (15 marks)	"The story of human origins is less about a single "event" and more about a continuous, complex interplay of migration, admixture and adaptation." Discuss in light of 'out of Africa' hypothesis. (Test Code 3316, 2025)
Anthropology Optional Paper II	1e) Characteristics and communication between Little and Great Traditions (10 marks)	The 'great' and the 'little' traditions are not polar opposites, but are 'constantly negotiating and interacting with each other.' Illustrate with suitable examples. (15 marks) (Test Code 4522, 2025)
	3b) Examine the environmental and biocultural factors influencing the health of tribals of India. (15 marks)	Discuss the issue of 'quadruple burden of disease' among tribes of India. (20 marks) (Test Code 4522, 2025) Tribal malnutrition is a direct outcome of replacing nutrient-dense forest diets which is exacerbated by ecological displacement. Discuss. (15 marks) (Test Code 3315, 2025)
	7b) Discuss the rising ethnic conflicts in India and propose their possible remedial measures. (15 marks)	How do concepts of 'cultural revival' and 'social boundaries' explain the persistence of India's identity based movements? In this context, discuss how can Anthropology help in providing solution to secessionist threats." (Test Code 4522, 2025) Discuss how anthropology contribute to deciphering the complexities of communalism and ethnic movements in India.

TEST SCHEDULE & REFERENCES

Test No. 1	Date	Topics covered	References
Unit Test 1 [5137]	30 Nov 2025	Paper I: General & Socio-Cultural Anthropology (Part 1) 1.1 Meaning, Scope and development of Anthropology. 1.2 Relationships with other disciplines: Social Sciences, behavioural Sciences, Life Sciences, Medical Sciences, Earth Sciences and Humanities. 1.3 Main branches of Anthropology, their scope and relevance: (a) Social-cultural Anthropology. (b) Biological Anthropology. (c) Archaeological Anthropology. (d) Linguistic Anthropology. 6. Anthropological theories: (a) Classical evolutionism (Tylor, Morgan and Frazer) (b) Historical particularism (Boas) Diffusionism (British, German and American) (c) Functionalism (Malinowski); Structural-Functionalism (Radcliffe-Brown) (d) Structuralism (L'evi-Strauss and E. Leach) (e) Culture and personality (Benedict, Mead, Linton, Kardiner and Cora-du Bois) (f) Neo-evolutionism (Childe, White, Steward, Sahlins and Service) (g) Cultural materialism (Harris) (h) Symbolic and interpretive theories (Turner, Schneider and Geertz) (i) Cognitive theories (Tyler, Conklin) (j) Post-modernism in anthropology. 7. Culture, Language and Communication: Nature, origin and characteristics of language; verbal and non-verbal communication; social context of language use.	• IGNOU Material • e-PG Pathshala Material • AnthroEdge Paper I by VisionIAS • General Anthropology by Nadeem Hasnain • An introduction to anthropological thought by Makhan Jha • History of Anthropological Thought by V.S. Upadhyay and Gaya Panday • An Introduction To Social Anthropology by T.N. Madan and D.N. Majumdar • Anthropology by Ember and Ember
Unit Test 2 [5138]	14 Dec 2025	Paper I: General & Socio-Cultural Anthropology (Part 2) 2.1 The Nature of Culture: The concept and Characteristics of culture and civilization; Ethnocentrism vis-a-vis cultural Relativism. 2.2 The Nature of Society: Concept of Society; Society and Culture; Social Institution; Social groups; and Social stratification. 2.3 Marriage: Definition and universality; Laws of marriage (endogamy, exogamy, hypergamy, hypogamy, incest taboo); Type of marriage	• IGNOU Material • e-PG Pathshala Material • AnthroEdge Paper I by VisionIAS • General Anthropology by Nadeem Hasnain • An introduction to anthropological thought Makhan Jha

(monogamy, polygamy, polyandry, group marriage). Functions of marriage; Marriage regulations (preferential, prescriptive and proscriptive); Marriage payments (bride wealth and dowry).

2.4 Family: Definition and universality; Family, household and domestic groups; functions of family; Types of family (from the perspectives of structure, blood relation, marriage, residence and succession); Impact of urbanization, industrialization and feminist movements on family.

2.5 Kinship: Consanguinity and Affinity; Principles and types of descent (Unilineal, Double, Bilateral Ambilineal); Forms of descent groups (lineage, clan, phratry, moiety and kindred); Kinship terminology (descriptive and classificatory); Descent, Filiation and Complimentary Filiation; Decent and Alliance.

3. Economic Organization Meaning, scope and relevance of economic anthropology; Formalist and Substantivist debate; Principles governing production, distribution and exchange (reciprocity, redistribution and market), in communities, subsisting on hunting and gathering, fishing, swiddening, pastoralism, horticulture, and agriculture; globalization and indigenous economic systems.

4. Political Organization and Social Control: Band, tribe, chiefdom, kingdom and state; concepts of power, authority and legitimacy; social control, law and justice in simple Societies.

5. Religion: Anthropological approaches to the study of religion (evolutionary, psychological and functional); monotheism and polytheism; sacred and profane; myths and rituals; forms of religion in tribal and peasant Societies (animism, animatism, fetishism, naturism and totemism); religion, magic and science distinguished; magico-religious functionaries (priest, shaman, medicine man, sorcerer and witch).

8. Research methods in Anthropology

(a) Fieldwork tradition in anthropology
 (b) Distinction between technique, method and methodology
 (c) Tools of data collection: observation, interview, schedules, questionnaire, case study, genealogy, life- history, oral history,

- History of Anthropological Thought by V.S. Upadhyay and Gaya Panday
- An Introduction To Social Anthropology by T.N. Madan and D.N. Majumdar
- Anthropology by Ember and Ember

		secondary sources of information, participatory methods. (d) Analysis, interpretation and presentation of data.	
Sectional Test - 1 [5139]	21 Dec 2025	Syllabus of Unit Test 1 and 2.	
Unit Test 3 [5140]	4 Jan 2026	Paper I: Physical Anthropology 1.7 The biological basis of Life: The Cell, DNA structure and replication, Protein Synthesis, Gene, Mutation, Chromosomes, and Cell Division. 9.1 Human Genetics: Methods and Application: Methods for study of genetic principles in man-family study (pedigree analysis, twin study, foster child, co-twin method, cytogenetic method, chromosomal and karyo-type analysis), biochemical methods, immunological methods, D.N.A. technology and recombinant technologies. 9.2 Mendelian genetics in man-family study, single factor, multifactor, lethal, sub-lethal and polygenic inheritance in man. 9.3 Concept of genetic polymorphism and selection, Mendelian population, Hardy-Weinberg law; causes and changes which bring down frequency-mutation, isolation, migration, selection, inbreeding and genetic drift. Consanguineous and non-consanguineous mating, genetic load, genetic effect of consanguineous and cousin marriages. 9.4 Chromosomes and chromosomal aberrations in man, methodology. Numerical and structural aberrations (disorders). Sex chromosomal aberration-Klinefelter (XXY), Turner (XO), Super female (XXX), intersex and other syndromic disorders. Autosomal aberrations- Down syndrome, Patau, Edward and Cri-du-chat syndromes. Genetic imprints in human disease, genetic screening, genetic counseling, human DNA profiling, gene mapping and genome study. 9.5 Race and racism, biological basis of morphological variation of non-metric and characters. Racial criteria, racial traits in relation to heredity and environment; biological basis of racial classification, racial	• IGNOU Material • e-PG Pathshala Material • AnthroEdge Paper I by Vision IAS • Outlines of Physical Anthropology by B.M. Das • Physical Anthropology by P. Nath • Biological Anthropology: The Natural History of Humankind by Craig Stanford

differentiation and race crossing in man.

9.6 Age, sex and population variation as

genetic marker: ABO, Rh blood groups, HLA

Hp, transferring, Gm, blood enzymes.

Physiological characteristics-Hb level, body fat, pulse rate, respiratory functions and sensory perceptions in different cultural and socio-economic groups.

9.7 Concepts and methods of Ecological

Anthropology: Bio-cultural

Adaptations-Genetic and Non- genetic factors. Man's physiological responses to environmental stresses: hot desert, cold, high altitude climate.

9.8 Epidemiological Anthropology: Health and disease. Infectious and non-infectious diseases, Nutritional deficiency related diseases.

10. Concept of human growth and

Development: Stages of growth-pre-natal, natal, infant, childhood, adolescence, maturity, senescence. Factors affecting growth and development genetic, environmental, biochemical, nutritional, cultural and socio-economic. Ageing and senescence. Theories and observations Biological and chronological longevity. Human physique and somatotypes. Methodologies for growth studies.

11.1 Relevance of menarche, menopause and other bioevents to fertility. Fertility patterns and differentials.

11.2 Demographic theories-biological, social and cultural.

11.3 Biological and socio-ecological factors influencing fecundity, fertility, natality and mortality.

12. Applications of Anthropology:

Anthropology of sports, Nutritional anthropology, Anthropology in designing of defence and other equipments, Forensic Anthropology, Methods and principles of personal identification and reconstruction, Applied human genetics-Paternity diagnosis, genetic counselling and eugenics, DNA technology in diseases and medicine, serogenetics and cytogenetics in reproductive biology.

Unit Test
4
[5141]

18 Jan
2026

Paper I: Physical & Archeological Anthropology

- IGNOU Material
- e-PG Pathshala Material

1.4 Evolution and emergence of Man:

(a) Biological and Cultural factors in human evolution.

(b) Theories of Organic Evolution (Pre-Darwinian, Darwinian and Post-Darwinian).

(c) Synthetic theory of evolution; Brief outline of terms and concepts of evolutionary biology (Doll's rule, Cope's rule, Gause's rule, parallelism, convergence, adaptive radiation, and mosaic evolution).

1.5 Characteristics of Primates; Evolutionary Trend and Primate Taxonomy;

Primate Adaptations; (Arboreal and Terrestrial) Primate Taxonomy; Primate Behaviour; Tertiary and Quaternary fossil primates; Living Major Primates; Comparative Anatomy of Man and Apes; Skeletal changes due to erect posture and its implications.

1.6 Phylogenetic status, characteristics and geographical distribution of the following:

(a) Plio-preleistocene hominids in South and East Africa-Australopithecines.

(b) Homo erectus: Africa (Paranthropus), Europe (Homo erectus (heidelbergensis), Asia (Homo erectus javanicus, Homo erectus pekinensis).

(c) Neanderthal man-La-chapelle-aux-saints (Classical type), Mt. Carmel (Progressive type).

(d) Rhodesian man.

(e) Homo sapiens-Cromagnon, Grimaldi and Chancelade.

1.8 a. Principles of Prehistoric Archaeology.

Chronology: Relative and Absolute Dating methods.

1.8 b. Cultural Evolution-Broad Outlines of Prehistoric cultures:

(i) Paleolithic

(ii) Mesolithic

(iii) Neolithic

(iv) Chalcolithic

(v) Copper-Bronze Age

(vi) Iron Age

- AnthroEdge Paper I by Vision IAS
- Outlines of Physical Anthropology by B.M. Das
- Physical Anthropology by P. Nath
- Biological Anthropology: The Natural History of Humankind by Craig Stanford

Unit Test 5 [5143]	8 Feb 2026	Paper II: Indian Anthropology (Part 1) 1.1. Evolution of the Indian Culture and Civilization- Prehistoric (Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic and Neolithic-Chalcolithic), Protohistoric (Indus Civilization). Pre-Harappan, Harappan and post- Harappan cultures. Contributions of the tribal cultures to Indian civilization. 1.2 Palaeo-Anthropological evidences from India with special reference to Siwaliks and Narmada basin (Ramapithecus, Sivapithecus and Narmada Man). 1.3 Ethno-archaeology in India: The concept of ethno-archaeology; Survivals and Parallels among the hunting, foraging, fishing, pastoral and peasant communities including arts and crafts producing communities. 2. Demographic profile of India-Ethnic and linguistic elements in the Indian population and their distribution. Indian population-factors influencing its structure and growth. 3.1. The structure and nature of traditional Indian social system-Varnashram, Purushartha, Karma, Rina and Rebirth. 3.3. Sacred Complex and Nature-Man-Spirit Complex. 4. Emergence, growth and development in India- Contributions of the 18th, 19th and early 20th Century scholar-administrators. Contributions of Indian anthropologists to tribal and caste studies.	• IGNOU Material • e-PG Pathshala Material • AnthroEdge Paper II by VisionIAS • An Outline Of Indian Prehistory by D.K.Bhattacharya • Indian Anthropology by Nadeem Hasnain • Indian Social system by Ram Ahuja • Indian Anthropology by R. N. Sharma
Unit Test 6 [5144]	22 Feb 2026	Paper II: Indian Anthropology (Part 2) 3.2 Caste system in India- Structure and characteristics Varna and caste, Theories of origin of caste system, Dominant caste, Caste mobility, Future of caste system, Jajmani system. Tribe-case continuum. 5.1 Indian Village: Significance of village study in India; Indian village as a social system; Traditional and changing patterns of settlement and inter-caste relations; Agrarian relations in Indian villages; Impact of globalization on Indian villages. 5.2 Linguistic and religious minorities and their social, political and economic status. 5.3 Indigenous and exogenous processes of socio-cultural change in Indian society: Sanskritization, Westernization, Modernization; Inter-play of little and great	• IGNOU Material • e-PG Pathshala Material • IGNOU material • AnthroEdge Paper II by VisionIAS • An Outline Of Indian Prehistory by D.K.Bhattacharya • Indian Anthropology by Nadeem Hasnain • Indian Social system by Ram Ahuja • Indian Anthropology by R. N. Sharma

		traditions; Panchayati Raj and social change; Media and Social change.	
Sectional Test - 3 [5145]	1 Mar 2026	Syllabus of Unit Test 5 and 6.	
Unit Test 7 [5146]	15 Mar 2026	Paper II: Indian Tribal Anthropology (Part 1) 6.1 Tribal situation in India-Bio-genetic variability, linguistic and socio-economic characteristics of the tribal populations and their distribution. 6.2 Problems of the tribal Communities-Land alienation, poverty, indebtedness, low literacy, poor educational facilities, unemployment, under-employment, health and nutrition. 6.3 Developmental projects and their impact on tribal displacement and problems of rehabilitation. Development of forest policy and tribals. Impact of urbanisation and industrialization on tribal populations. 7.1 Problems of exploitation and deprivation of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes. Constitutional safeguards for Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes. 7.2 Social change and contemporary tribal societies: Impact of modern democratic institutions, development programmes and welfare measures on tribals and weaker sections	• Tribal India by Nadeem Hasnain • The Tribal Culture of India by L.P. Vidyarthi • e-PG Pathshala Material • IGNOU material • AnthroEdge Paper II by VisionIAS • Xaxa committee report • Ministry of Tribal Annual report • Yojana (January 14 and July 22) and Kurukshetra (September 22) • State, Society and Tribes by Virginius Xaxa
Unit Test 8 [5147]	22 Mar 2026	Paper II: Indian Tribal Anthropology (Part 2) 7.3 The concept of ethnicity; Ethnic conflicts and political developments; Unrest among tribal communities; Regionalism and demand for autonomy; Pseudo-tribalism. Social change among the tribes during colonial and post-Independent India. 3.4. Impact of Buddhism, Jainism, Islam and Christianity of Indian society. 8.1 Impact of Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and other religions on tribal societies. 8.2 Tribe and nation state-a comparative study of tribal communities in India and other countries. 9.1 History of administration of tribal areas, tribal policies, plans, programmes	• Tribal India by Nadeem Hasnain • The Tribal Culture of India by L.P. Vidyarthi • e-PG Pathshala Material • IGNOU material • AnthroEdge Paper II by VisionIAS • Xaxa committee report • Ministry of Tribal Annual report • Yojana (January 14 and July 22) and Kurukshetra (September 22)

		of tribal development and their implementation. The concept of PTGs (Primitive Tribal Groups), their distribution, special programmes for their development. Role of N.G.O.s in tribal development. 9.2 Role of anthropology in tribal and rural development. 9.3 Contributions of anthropology to the understanding of regionalism, communalism and ethnic and political movements.	
Sectional Test 4 [5148]	29 Mar 2026	Syllabus of Test 7 & 8.	

FLT-1 [5149]	14 Jun 2026	Complete Syllabus of Paper-I (Full Length Test)
FLT-1 [5150]	28 June 2026	Complete Syllabus of Paper-II (Full Length Test)
FLT-1 [5151]	12 July 2026	Complete Syllabus of Paper-I (Full Length Test)
FLT-1 [5152]	26 Jul 2026	Complete Syllabus of Paper-II (Full Length Test)

NOTE

- In all of the three programs, Tests can be **rescheduled (postponed, but not preponed)** based on your convenience.
- **Offline test centers** are available in multiple cities including Delhi, Jaipur, Hyderabad, Pune, Bengaluru, Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Chandigarh, and Guwahati. Centers remain closed on Thursdays.
- **Study materials and test booklets** are provided in **soft copy** only and will not be physically dispatched.

HEARTIEST
Congratulations
TO ALL SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES

10

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