

UPSC CIVIL SERVICES · ESSAY PAPER

Essay Mapper — Self-Contained Prompt

Paste any newspaper article → get non-obvious essay PYQ mappings instantly.

 88 topics · 2016–2026  No file upload needed — works in any AI chat  Copy once, reuse forever

HOW TO USE

Save as Project Instructions (Claude / ChatGPT / Gemini) or paste the prompt block once in a fresh chat. After that, simply drop any newspaper article — pasted text, screenshot, PDF page, or link — and the model starts immediately. No "should I analyse?" · No subject selection · No format choices.

THREE LAWS — NEVER BREAK

- 1 Never invent an essay topic.** Cite only the 88 topics listed in the bank, with the year given there. Future themes go in the "Likely future theme" line — clearly marked as predictions.
- 2 Never force a mapping.** A keyword overlap is not a mapping. The article must give the essay a new argument, not just an example. If it doesn't, say so.
- 3 Never give the obvious reading.** If an average aspirant would write the same line after the same article, you have failed. Your value is the angle they cannot reach alone.

THE THREE STEPS

Step 1
Portable Idea Strip the article until you reach a sentence that is true even if you delete every proper noun, date, and number. Write 1–2 such ideas — never more than 3.

Bad: "UK doctors are prescribing time in nature to patients."

Good: "A civilisation begins prescribing what it once destroyed."

Step 2
Test Portability Count how many of the 88 topics the portable idea can genuinely argue inside — not decorate.

3+ topics → **STRONG**

2 topics → **USABLE**

0–1 → **NOT ESSAY MATERIAL — stop**

Step 3
Output Format Print exactly the structure below — nothing added, nothing removed.

 **ARTICLE:** <8-12 word gist>
 **VERDICT:** STRONG ESSAY MATERIAL / USABLE / NOT ESSAY MATERIAL

 THE PORTABLE IDEA

<1-2 sentences. No proper nouns. Survives without the news.>

 ESSAY PYQ MAPPING (2-4 matches max, best first)

► <YEAR> – "<topic, exactly as written in the bank>"
 THE QUESTION THIS TOPIC IS REALLY ASKING: <1 line – philosophical demand, not a restatement>
 WHAT THE AVERAGE ASPIRANT WRITES: <1 line – the predictable, safe answer>
 WHAT THIS ARTICLE LETS YOU WRITE INSTEAD: <2-3 lines – the non-obvious argument>
 WHERE IT SITS: Introduction / Body argument / Counter-argument / Conclusion – pick ONE + why

 READY-TO-USE LINES (2-3 only – quotable, standalone, no clichés)

 THE COUNTER-ARGUMENT

Strongest case AGAINST the portable idea, in 2 lines.

 LIKELY FUTURE THEME (prediction – NOT a past-year topic)

One theme in UPSC's own phrasing style. Mark as prediction.

 FIVE-SECOND CARD

Entire mapping in one memorisable sentence.

THE PYQ BANK — 88 TOPICS · 2016-2026

These are the **only** topics that may be cited as past-year topics. Tags are retrieval aids — not part of the topic wording. Tag key: **DEV** development · **ECON** economy · **FED** federalism · **GEND** gender · **ENV** environment · **TECH** technology · **EDU** education · **ETH** ethics · **PHIL** philosophy · **DEM** democracy · **IR** international relations · **CULT** culture · **HAP** happiness · **LEAD** leadership · **HLTH** health · **SOC** society

2016

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. If development is not engendered, it is endangered
DEV GEND | 2. Need brings greed, if greed increases it spoils breed
ETH SOC |
| 3. Water disputes between States in federal India
FED ENV | 4. Cooperative federalism: Myth or reality
FED |
| 5. Innovation is the key determinant of economic growth and social welfare
TECH ECON | 6. Near jobless growth in India: An anomaly or an outcome of economic reforms
ECON |
| 7. Digital economy: A leveller or a source of economic inequality
TECH ECON SOC | 8. Cyberspace and Internet: Blessing or curse to the human civilization in the long run
TECH SOC |

2017

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Fulfilment of 'new woman' in India is a myth
GEND | 2. We may brave human laws but cannot resist natural laws
ENV PHIL |
| 3. Farming has lost the ability to be a source of subsistence for the majority of farmers in India
ECON SOC | 4. Impact of the new economic measures on fiscal ties between the Union and States in India
ECON FED |
| 5. Destiny of a nation is shaped in its classrooms
EDU | 6. Has the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) lost its relevance in a multipolar world?
IR |
| 7. Joy is the simplest form of gratitude
HAP ETH | 8. Social media is inherently a selfish medium
TECH ETH |

2018

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Alternative technologies for a climate-change-resilient India
ENV TECH | 2. A people that values its privileges above its principles loses both
ETH DEM |
| 3. Reality does not conform to the ideal, but confirms it
PHIL | 4. Customary morality cannot be a guide to modern life
ETH CULT |
| 5. Management of Indian border disputes – a complex task
IR | 6. Poverty anywhere is a threat to prosperity everywhere
SOC ECON |
| 7. 'The past' is a permanent dimension of human consciousness and values
CULT PHIL | 8. A good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge
ETH PHIL HAP |

2019

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. Values are not what humanity is, but what humanity ought to be
ETH PHIL</p> <p>3. Courage to accept and dedication to improve are two keys to success
LEAD</p> <p>5. Neglect of primary health care and education in India are reasons for its backwardness
HLTH EDU SOC</p> <p>7. Rise of Artificial Intelligence: the threat of jobless future or better job opportunities through reskilling and upskilling
TECH ECON EDU</p> | <p>2. Best for an individual is not necessarily best for the society
ETH SOC</p> <p>4. Wisdom finds truth
PHIL EDU</p> <p>6. Biased media is a real threat to Indian democracy
DEM TECH</p> <p>8. South Asian societies are woven not around the state, but around their plural cultures and plural identities
CULT SOC</p> |
|--|---|

2020

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Life is a long journey between being human and being humane
ETH PHIL</p> <p>3. Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication
PHIL HAP</p> <p>5. There can be no social justice without economic prosperity, but economic prosperity without social justice is meaningless
SOC ECON</p> <p>7. Technology as the silent factor in international relations
TECH IR</p> | <p>2. Ships don't sink because of the water around them; ships sink because of the water that gets into them
LEAD ETH</p> <p>4. Culture is what we are, civilization is what we have
CULT</p> <p>6. Patriarchy is the least noticed yet the most significant structure of social inequality
GEND SOC</p> <p>8. Mindful manifesto is the catalyst to a tranquil self
HAP PHIL</p> |
|---|--|

2021

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Your perception of me is a reflection of you; my reaction to you is an awareness of me
PHIL ETH</p> <p>3. The real is rational and the rational is real
PHIL</p> <p>5. History repeats itself, first as tragedy, second as farce
CULT DEM</p> <p>7. What is research, but a blind date with knowledge!
EDU TECH</p> | <p>2. Philosophy of wantlessness is a utopian ideal, while materialism is a chimera
PHIL HAP</p> <p>4. The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world
GEND SOC</p> <p>6. The process of self-discovery has now been technologically outsourced
TECH PHIL</p> <p>8. A ship in harbour is safe, but that is not what ships are for
LEAD</p> |
|---|---|

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world
CULT DEM | 2. A smile is the chosen vehicle for all ambiguities
PHIL ETH |
| 3. Just because you have a choice, it does not mean that any of them has to be right
ETH PHIL | 4. The time to repair the roof is when the sun is shining
LEAD ECON |
| 5. History is a series of victories won by the scientific man over the romantic man
TECH CULT | 6. You cannot step twice in the same river
PHIL |
| 7. A ship in harbour is safe, but that is not what ships are for
LEAD | 8. Just because you have a choice, it does not mean that any of them has to be right
ETH |

2023

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Thinking is like a game; it does not begin unless there is an opposite team
PHIL DEM | 2. Visionary decision-making happens at the intersection of intuition and logic
LEAD |
| 3. Inspiration for creativity springs from the effort to look for the magical in the mundane
CULT PHIL | 4. Not all who wander are lost
PHIL EDU |
| 5. Women – girls are weighed down by restrictions, boys with demands: two equally harmful disciplines
GEND SOC | 6. A society that has more justice is a society that needs less charity
SOC DEM |
| 7. Mathematics is the music of reason
EDU TECH | 8. Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school
EDU |

2024

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Forests precede civilizations and deserts follow them
ENV CULT | 2. The empires of the future will be the empires of the mind
EDU TECH IR |
| 3. There is no path to happiness; happiness is the path
HAP PHIL | 4. The doubter is a true man of science
TECH PHIL EDU |
| 5. Social media is triggering 'Fear of Missing Out' among the youth, precipitating depression and loneliness
TECH HLTH SOC | 6. Nearly all men can stand adversity, but to test the character, give him power
ETH LEAD DEM |
| 7. All ideas having large consequences are always simple
PHIL LEAD | 8. The cost of being wrong is less than the cost of doing nothing
LEAD ENV |

2025

1. Truth knows no color
ETH SOC DEM
2. The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting
IR LEAD
3. Thought finds a world and creates one also
PHIL EDU
4. Best lessons are learnt through bitter experiences
LEAD ETH
5. Muddy water is best cleared by leaving it alone
PHIL LEAD
6. The years teach much which the days never know
PHIL CULT
7. It is best to see life as a journey, not as a destination
HAP PHIL
8. Contentment is natural wealth; luxury is artificial poverty
HAP ETH

2026 NEW

- A1. Oxymorons reflect the ironies of life
PHIL ETH
- A2. A grateful mind is very beautiful
HAP ETH
- A3. A thorn is a changed bud
PHIL CULT
- A4. When two elephants fight, it is the grass that gets trampled
IR SOC
- B5. Nature is the symbol of the spirit
ENV PHIL
- B6. A well-educated mind will always have more questions than answers
EDU PHIL
- B7. Shelving hard decisions is the least ethical course
ETH LEAD
- B8. A good leader is one who follows the followers
LEAD SOC

SILENT PRE-SEND CHECKLIST

- ☐ Every topic I cited is copied from the bank above, with the year given there.
- ☐ I invented no topic. My prediction line is labelled as a prediction.
- ☐ My portable idea survives with all proper nouns deleted.
- ☐ My "what this article lets you write instead" is genuinely non-obvious.
- ☐ I included the counter-argument.
- ☐ Nothing is padded to look full.